

ACTS

**General Synod
Abbotsford, BC
1995**

of the

Canadian Reformed Churches

ACTS

General Synod 1995

ACTS

General Synod 1995

OF THE

Canadian Reformed Churches

Abbotsford, British Columbia

1995

General Synod 1995
of the Canadian Reformed Churches

Acts

ISBN 0-88756-062-8

PRINTED BY

PREMIER PRINTING LTD.

ONE BEGHIN AVENUE, WINNIPEG, MB, CANADA R2J 3X5

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acts of General Synod 1995	5
----------------------------------	---

Appendices

I. Speeches.....	89
II. Guidelines for Synod'	103
III. Committee for Bible Translations.....	107
IV. Standing Committee for the Publication of the <i>Book of Praise</i> Report to General Synod Abbotsford, 1995	141
V. Report of the Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to General Synod 1995 of the Canadian Reformed Churches	150
VI. Report of Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad	164
VII. Report of Deputies for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity to Synod Abbotsford 1995.....	190
VIII. Report of the Board of Governors of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches to General Synod Abbotsford, 1995	197
Index.....	203



Top Row: G.J. Nordeman, Rev. W. den Hollander, Rev. E. Kampen, H.A. Berends, T. van Popta
Middle Row: Rev. P. Feenstra, I. Veurink, G. van Woudenberg, L. Stam, A. Ruggi,
Rev. J.D. Wielenga, J. Boot
Seated: Rev. R. Aasman, Rev. J. DeGelder, Rev. D.G.J. Agema, Rev. J. Visscher

ACTS

of the
General Synod
of the
Canadian Reformed Churches
held at
Abbotsford, British Columbia
May 9, 1995 - May 23, 1995

MORNING SESSION – TUESDAY, MAY 9, 1995

ARTICLE 1

Opening

On behalf of the convening church at Abbotsford, BC, Rev. M. VanderWel calls the meeting to order. He requests the singing of Psalm 122, reads Micah 6: 1 - 8, and leads in prayer. He welcomes the delegates and opens the meeting.

(For the Opening Words, see Appendix I, p. 89)

Rev. M. VanderWel asks all present to sing Psalm 25: 2 and 6.

ARTICLE 2

Examination of Credentials

Rev. M. VanderWel requests br. J. Pruijm and br. P. Torenvliet to examine the credentials. The credentials are found to be in good order. The following delegates are present:

From Regional Synod East:

Ministers: D.G.J. Agema, J. DeGelder, W. den Hollander, and P.G. Feenstra.

Elders: J. Boot, G.J. Nordeman, A. Ruggi, and G. VanWoudenberg.

From Regional Synod West:

Ministers: R. Aasman, E. Kampen, J. Visscher, and J.D. Wielenga.

Elders: H.A. Berends, L. Stam, T. VanPopta, and I. Veurink.

ARTICLE 3

Election of Officers

The following officers are elected:

Chairman:	Rev. J. DeGelder
Vice-chairman:	Rev. R. Aasman
First Clerk:	Rev. D.G.J. Agema
Second Clerk:	Rev. J. Visscher

ARTICLE 4

Constitution of Synod

On behalf of the convening church, Rev. M. VanderWel declares General Synod 1995 constituted. He invites the officers to take their seats. The chairman, Rev. J. DeGelder, thanks Synod for the confidence placed in the officers. He thanks Rev. M. VanderWel for the opening words and the church at Abbotsford for the preparation of General Synod 1995. He also welcomes the fraternal delegates from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, Rev. A. DeJager and Rev. H. VanVeen.

ARTICLE 5

Time Schedule and Procedures

Synod adopts the following arrangements:

- I. The final date for incoming material for Synod is set for Tuesday, May 9, 1995 at 6:00 p.m. PST.
- II. The time schedule will be:

Monday to Friday	9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
	2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
	7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Upon request of the Foundation for Superannuation, Synod will not convene on Saturday, May 13, 1995.
- III. Synod shall begin and close each day with prayer and thanksgiving in plenary sessions.
- IV. Press Release will not be published until after Synod has been closed.
- V. Advisory committees shall provide each delegate with a copy of their report, plus three copies for the first clerk, before it is dealt with in plenary sessions.
- VI. Copies of documents are available only to members of Synod, and fraternal delegates.
- VII. For all procedures the Guidelines as adopted by the General Synod of Cloverdale 1983, Acts, Article 45, will apply.

It is decided to seat Rev. M. VanderWel as an advisor to Synod.

The chairman confirms that those who have expenses related to travelling to Synod may submit them at any time to sr. R. VanOene. Mileage is set at twenty-five cents per kilometre.

The chairman reads letters of greeting from the Free Reformed Churches in Australia, the Reformed Church of the United States and the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa. These letters are received with thankfulness.

ARTICLE 6

Adjournment

Since so much new material for the agenda arrived on this day, it is decided to adjourn until the next morning, 9:00 a.m., to give the brothers time to acquaint themselves with this material.

The chairman asks that Psalm 67: 1, 2 be sung and leads in prayer.

MORNING SESSION – WEDNESDAY, MAY 10, 1995

ARTICLE 7

Reopening

The chairman calls the meeting to order and requests that Psalm 1 : 1 - 3, be sung. He reads Ephesians 1 : 1 - 14 and leads in prayer. Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 8

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 1 - 6 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 9

Adoption of Agenda

The following agenda is adopted:

- I. Opening on behalf of the convening church at Abbotsford at 9:00 a.m.
- II. Examination of Credentials
- III. Election of the Officers
- IV. Constitution of General Synod
- V. Information from the Convening Church
- VI. Adoption of the Agenda
- VII. Arrangement of Time Schedule and Procedures
- VIII. Incoming Mail
 - A. Protests and Appeals
 1. Appeal from the church at Winnipeg re: General Synod Burlington 1986, Art. 85.
 - a. Supplement to A. 1.
 2. Appeal from the church at Fergus re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 131.
 3. Appeal from the church at Burlington-East re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 131.
 4. Appeal from the church at Cloverdale re: Regional Synod West 1993, Art. 11.
 5. Appeal from the church at Winnipeg re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 127.
 6. Letter from the church at Coaldale re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 72.
 7. Appeal from the church at Orangeville re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 72, 111, 128.
 8. Appeal from the church at Chatsworth re: Regional Synod East 1994, Art. 8.
 9. Appeal from the church at Denver re: Regional Synod West 1994, Art. 11b.
 10. Appeal from the church at Taber re: Regional Synod West 1993, Art. 11.
 11. Appeal from the church at Carman re: Regional Synod West 1993.
 12. Overture from the church at Toronto re: Art. 32 C.O.
 13. Letter from the church at Ottawa re: Chatsworth's appeal of Regional Synod East 1994, Art. 8.
 14. Appeal from br. H. van den Hoven re: Regional Synod West 1993, Art. 11.
 15. Letter from the church at Fergus re: Appeal from the church at Orangeville (see A. 7 above).
 16. Appeal from Mr. G. Kruyswijk re: Regional Synod East 1994, Art. 10.
 17. Appeal from br. L. VanZandwyk re: Previous Appeals.
 18. Overture from the church at London re: Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship.
 19. Letter from sr. R. Lammers, reaction to item A. 9.
 20. Appeal from Rev. P. Kingma and br. T. Kingma re: Ecclesiastical Contact / ICRC

21. Appeal from the church at Blue Bell re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 72, 111, 128; General Synod Coaldale 1977, Art. 91.
 22. Appeal from the church at Barrhead re: Regional Synod West 1993, Art. 11.
- B. Bible Translations
1. Report of the Committee on Bible Translations (CBT)
 - a. Supplement to Report.
 2. Letter from br. R. Duker and br. W. Bredenhof re: Report CBT.
 3. Letter from the church at Port Kells re: Report CBT.
 4. Letter from the church at Chilliwack re: Report CBT.
 5. Letter from the church at Vernon re: Report CBT.
 6. Letter from the church at Guelph re: Report CBT.
 7. Letter from the church at Edmonton (Providence) re: Report CBT.
 8. Letter from the church at Neerlandia re: Report CBT.
 9. Letter from br. B. Degier re: Report CBT.
 10. Letter from the church at Burlington-East re: Report CBT.
 11. Letter from the church at Edmonton (Immanuel) re: Report CBT.
 12. Letter from Rev. H. M. VanEssen re: Report CBT.
 13. Letter from Rev. P. Kingma and br. T. Kingma re: Report CBT.
 14. Letter from the church at Houston re: Report CBT.
 15. Letter from the church at Chatsworth re: Report CBT.
 16. Letter from the church at Langley re: Report CBT.
 17. Letter from br. and sr. L. Terpsma re: Report CBT.
- C. Relations with Churches Abroad
1. Report of Deputies for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity (DPEU)
 - a. Supplement to Report.
 2. Overture from Classis Ontario North Dec.1994 re: Contact with the Eglise Reformee du Quebec.
 3. Report from the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA).
 4. Letter from the church at Ottawa re: additional information regarding the Eglise Reformee du Quebec.
 5. Report from the Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (CCOPC).
 6. Appeal from the church at Carman re: Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the OPC.
 7. Overture from the church at Surrey re: Relationship with the OPC.
 8. Overture from the church at Carman re: Appointments to Synodical Committees.
 9. Appeal from the church at Coaldale re: Regional Synod West 1993, Art. 11.
 10. Appeal from the church at Grand Rapids re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 128.
 11. Appeal from the church at Grand Rapids re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 111.
 12. Appeal from the church at Grand Rapids re: General Synod Coaldale 1977, Art. 91.

13. Overture from the church at Grand Rapids re: Contact with OPC.
14. Overture from the church at Grand Rapids re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 72.
15. Appeal from the church at Watford re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 72.
16. Letter from the church at Watford re: Report DPEU.
17. Letter from the church at Port Kells re: Report CCOPC.
18. Appeal from br. H. van den Hoven re: General Synod 1992, Art. 72.
19. Overture from the church at Langley re: contact with the Free Reformed Churches of North America.
20. Letter from the church at Aldergrove re: contact with the Free Reformed Churches of North America.
21. Letter from the church at Chilliwack re: Report CCOPC.
22. Letter from the church at Chilliwack re: Report DPEU.
23. Appeal from br. J. Hoogerdijk re: Regional Synod West 1993, Art. 11, 12.
24. Letter from the church at Guelph re: Report CRCA.
25. Letter from the church at Carman re: Report CCOPC.
26. Letter from the church at Chatsworth re: Report DPEU.
27. Appeal from the church at London re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 72.
28. Letter from the church at Neerlandia re: Report DPEU.
29. Letter from the church at Neerlandia re: Report CCOPC.
30. Letter from W. De Haan re: Relationship with the OPC.
31. Letter from W. De Haan re: Report DPEU.
32. Appeal from the church at Attercliffe re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 72.
33. Letter from the church at Elora re: Report DPEU.
34. Letter from the church at Burlington-East re: Proposal by Classis Ontario North Dec.1994 (see item C2 above).
35. Letter from the church at Burlington-East re: Report CRCA.
36. Letter from the church at Burlington-East re: Report DPEU.
37. Letter from the church at Burlington-East re: Report CCOPC.
38. Letter from the church at Lincoln re: Report DPEU.
39. Appeal from the church at Lincoln re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 72.
40. Letter from the church at Houston re: Report CRCA.
41. Letter from the church at Houston re: Report CCOPC.
42. Letter from the church at Houston re: Report DPEU.
43. Letter from Rev. B.R. Hofford re: Report DPEU.
44. Letter from the church at Winnipeg re: Report CCOPC.
45. Letter from the church at Smithville re: Relationship with the OPC.
46. Letter from Chatsworth re: Overture by Classis Ontario North Dec.1994 (see item C. 2 above).
47. Appeals from the church at Brampton re: Report CCOPC and Report DPEU.
48. Appeal from br. and sr. B. Jansen re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 72.
49. Letter from the church at Attercliffe re: Report DPEU.

D. *Book of Praise*

1. Report of the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (PBOP).
2. Overture from the church at Burlington-East re: General Synod 1983, Art. 174 and General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 64.
3. Letter from br. M. Kampen re: appointment to Committee.
4. Letter from the church at Surrey re: Report PBOP.
5. Letter from the church at Aldergrove re: Report PBOP.
6. Letter from the church at London re: Report PBOP.
7. Letter from the church at Lynden re: Report PBOP.
8. Letter from the church at Langley re: Report PBOP.
9. Letter from the church at Grand Valley re: Report PBOP.
10. Letter from the church at Fergus re: Report PBOP.
11. Letter from the church at Chilliwack re: Report PBOP.
12. Letter from br. M.M. De Groot re: Hy.1A.
13. Letter from the church at Guelph re: Report PBOP.
14. Letter from John Calvin School, Yarrow re: Hymn 46:2.
15. Letter from the church at Ancaster re: Report PBOP.
16. Letter from the church at Houston re: Report PBOP.
17. Letter from the church at Surrey re: Report PBOP.

E. Miscellaneous

1. Overture from br. C. Lindhout re: Article 32 C.O.
2. Overture from sr. C. VanEerden re: the Place of Women's Voting in the Elections of Office Bearers.
3. Letter from the church at Carman re: Financial Report General Fund and Audit Report.
4. Letter from the church at Burlington-South re: letter from sr. C. VanEerden (item E. 2 above).
5. Overture from the church at Port Kells re: Method of Decision Making and Reporting of General Synods.
6. Overture from the church at Grand Valley re: Art. 39 C.O.
7. Letter from the church at Fergus re: Regional Synod West 1994.
8. Letter from the church at Chilliwack re: Method of Decision Making.
9. Letter from the church at Burlington-West re: Inspection Archives General Synod 1992.
10. Report from the church at Burlington-East as Address Church of the Canadian Reformed Churches.
11. Report from the church at Rockway re: Auditing the Books of General Synod 1992.
12. Overture from the church at Langley re: Guidelines for General Synod.
13. Overture from the church at Langley re: Women's Participation in Voting and Electing of Office Bearers.

F. Theological College

1. Report of the Board of Governors (BoG).
 - a. Supplement to Report.

2. Letter from the church at Chilliwack re: Report BoG.
 3. Letter from the church at Watford re: Report BoG.
 4. Letter from the church at Neerlandia re: Report BoG.
 5. Letter from the church at Elora re: Report BoG.
 6. Letter from the church at Houston re: Report BoG.
 7. Letter from the church at Burlington-East re: Report BoG.
 8. Letter from the church at Guelph re: Report BoG.
- IX. Appointments
- X. Censure according to Art. 34 C.O.
- XI. Publication of the Acts of General Synod
- XII. Financial matters of General Synod
- XIII. Preparation for the next General Synod
- XIV. Adoption of the Acts of General Synod
- XV. Approval of the Press Release of General Synod
- XVI. Closing of General Synod Abbotsford 1995

ARTICLE 10

Advisory Committees

The following Advisory Committees are appointed:

- Committee I Rev. E. Kampen (convener), Rev. J. DeGelder, elder L. Stam and elder G. VanWoudenberg.
- Material: A 6, 7, 15, 21; C: 5, 6, 7, 10 - 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 25, 27, 29, 30, 32, 37, 39, 41, 44, 45, 47, 48; D 10.
- Committee II Rev. J.D. Wielenga (convener), Rev. R. Aasman, elder G.J. Nordeman and elder I. Veurink.
- Material: A 8, 12, 13; B 1 - 17; C 19, 20; D 10; E 1, 2, 4, 6, 13; F 1 - 8
- Committee III Rev. W. den Hollander (convener), Rev. D.G.J. Agema, elder A. Ruggi and elder T. VanPopta.
- Material: A 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 14, 18, 19, 20, 22; C 3, 9, 23, 24, 34, 35, 40; D 10;
- Committee IV Rev. P.G. Feenstra (convener), Rev. J. Visscher, elder H.A. Berends and elder J. Boot.
- Material: A 1, 1a, 2, 3, 16, 17; C 1, 1a, 2, 4, 16, 22, 26, 28, 31, 33, 36, 38, 42, 43, 46, 47, 49; D 1 - 17; E 3, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12
- Executive: C 8; E 5, 8

ARTICLE 11

Format of Decisions

The Executive presents:

Agenda items VIII. E. 5, 8

I. MATERIAL

Letters from the churches at Chilliwack and Port Kells. Both churches request Synod to change the format of the decisions by Synod to that of: Material – Decisions – Grounds.

II. DECISION

Synod decides to use as format for decisions: Material – Decisions – Grounds.

III. GROUNDS

- A. This approach may allow for briefer and more succinct decisions.
- B. It may also make it clearer to see on what basis the decisions are made.

DEFEATED

ARTICLE 12

Adjournment

Synod is adjourned for committee work.

EVENING SESSION – WEDNESDAY, MAY 10, 1995

ARTICLE 13

Closing

Elder J. Boot asks that Psalm 107 : 1, 2 be sung and leads in closing prayer. The chairman adjourns the meeting.

MORNING SESSION – THURSDAY, MAY 11, 1995

ARTICLE 14

Reopening

The chairman asks that Psalm 2 : 1 and 3 be sung. He reads Ephesians 1 : 15 - 23 and in prayer a blessing is asked over the meeting. Roll call is held, and shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 15

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 7 - 13 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 16

Adjournment

Synod is adjourned for committee work.

EVENING SESSION – THURSDAY, MAY 11, 1995

ARTICLE 17

Reopening

The chairman reopens Synod and requests those present to sing Psalm 3 : 1 and 2. Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present. The chairman welcomes the guests present at this plenary session. He gives a special welcome to the fraternal delegates from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

ARTICLE 18

Address Fraternal Delegate RCN

Rev. A. DeJager addresses Synod on behalf of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN). Rev. J. DeGelder responds to this address. (See Appendix I, p. 90)

ARTICLE 19

Contact with Churches Abroad (FRCA, FRCSA, RCN)

Committee III presents:

Agenda items VIII. C. 3, 24, 35, 40

I. MATERIAL

- A. Report of the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad regarding the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA), the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands [Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Vrijgemaakt)] (RCN), and the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa (FRCSA).
- B. Letters from the churches at Burlington-East, Guelph and Houston.

II. INTRODUCTION

The Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) received from Synod 1992 the following mandate:

A. General

1. To continue the Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the FRCA, the RCN and the FRCSA in accordance with the adopted rules.
2. To charge the CRCA to send an invitation to our sister churches abroad to attend the next General Synod as soon as its date has been established and published by the convening church and to have our churches represented by a delegate to General Synods of such churches abroad if invited and when feasible.

B. The Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA)

1. To request the CRCA to convey our appreciation for support given by the FRCA to our Theological College in Hamilton.
2. To mandate the CRCA delegates to attend, if possible, the meeting organized by the FRCA to discuss their concerns regarding the ICRC and report about this to General Synod.
3. To mandate the CRCA to convey our reservations about the rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship adopted by the FRCA.

III. OBSERVATIONS

A. The Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA)

The CRCA notes

1. The Acts of Synods (Lincoln 1992, Bedfordale 1992, Byford 1994) were exchanged.
2. Rev. E. Kampen and Rev. M. VanBeveren visited the FRCA General Synod Byford June 14 - 27, 1994 as delegates of the CRCA.
3. Rev. Cl. Stam and Rev. J. Visscher attended an informal meeting held in Zwolle, the Netherlands, in conjunction with the meeting of the ICRC (September 1 - 9, 1993) together with delegates from the RCN, the FRCSA and the Presbyterian Churches of Korea (PKN) to discuss the concerns of the FRCA in regard to the expression "unity of faith" at the ICRC. The Australian opinion that closer unity in credal statements and church

polity must be reached before we can speak of such unity, was not shared by others at the meeting.

4. Synods Bedfordale 1992 and Byford 1994 decided to continue membership in the ICRC.
 5. Both FRCA Synods (1992 and 1994) decided to continue their support for the Canadian Reformed Theological College.
 6. With respect to interchurch relationships, Synod Byford 1994 decided
 - a. to continue sister church relationships with the Canadian Reformed Churches, the RCN, the PCK, the FRCSA and the Reformed Churches of Sumba Timor Savu (RCSTS);
 - b. to continue contact with other churches in Indonesia;
 - c. with respect to the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (PCEA), the Free Church of Scotland (FCS), the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland (RPCI), to continue contact/relations at a low level (passing on Acts and greetings) leaving discussions in abeyance while the churches study relations with Presbyterian Churches in general.
 7. Synod Bedfordale 1992 instructed their deputies “once more to communicate to our sister churches our rules for declarations for ministers who visit abroad or who visit us.”
 8. Synod Bedfordale 1992 adopted rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship which are similar to ours. Although Synod Lincoln 1992 mandated the CRCA to convey our reservations about the rules adopted by the FRCA in so far as they differ from ours concerning entering into third party relationships (Acts 1992, Art. 49.III.A.9), there is no evidence in the CRCA report that these concerns were responded to.
- B. The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN)

The CRCA notes:

1. The Acts of Synod (Lincoln 1992 and Ommen 1993) were exchanged. Rev. J. Visscher attended Synod Ommen on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches.
2. The CRCA notes from the Acts of Synod Ommen 1993 and from correspondence that
 - a. New rules for sister church relationships were adopted by Synod Ommen. These rules are almost identical to the rules which were adopted by the Canadian Reformed Churches in 1992 and therefore show a desired harmony for which we have pleaded in the past.
 - b. Synod Ommen decided to grant women the right to vote. According to the CRCA this should not affect the relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches who have in the past also struggled with this issue and concluded that “there is an obvious lack of consensus on this matter.”
 - c. Synod Ommen decided it was permissible for elders to extend the benediction. The CRCA raises questions concerning the distinction between the offices of elder and of minister.
 - d. The RCN show increased activity with respect to relations with churches abroad. While this is in itself laudable according to the CRCA, it also points out that care must be taken to consult with sister churches, especially in areas where the sister churches are actively involved (for example, in Brazil).

3. The churches at Burlington-East, Guelph and Houston all address Synod concerning the RCN's relationship with third parties.
 - a. The church at Burlington-East overtures Synod to instruct the CRCA to convey concerns about the "perceived relative ease" with which the RCN "establish contacts all over the world" and about the need for consultation with sister churches especially in areas where sister churches are already involved.
 - b. The church at Guelph overtures Synod to instruct the CRCA to seek clarification concerning the RCN's practices with respect to consulting sister churches when entering into third party relationships.
 - c. The church at Houston overtures Synod to instruct the CRCA to seek improved consultation with the RCN especially with respect to establishing third party relationships on the North-American continent.
- C. The Free Reformed Churches of South Africa (FRCSA)

The CRCA notes

 1. Acts of Synod (Lincoln 1992 and Pretoria 1992) were exchanged.
 2. The CRCA did not send a delegation to Synod Pretoria but appropriate correspondence was sent.
 3. The FRCSA were informed of our new rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship. The CRCA was informed that the FRCSA planned to discuss this matter at its Synod Johannesburg 1994.
 4. From the Acts of Synod Pretoria 1992 the CRCA observed that the FRCSA re-evaluated their contacts with the Reformed Churches in South Africa (RCSA) after concluding that the RCSA recognize Scripture as the infallible Word of God, accept the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed and the Three Forms of Unity and have a similar Church Order and Subscription Forms.

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. From the correspondence and the Acts of the FRCA, the RCN and the FRCSA we may gratefully conclude that these churches are faithful to the Word of God, the Confessions and the Church Order.
- B. The CRCA has fulfilled its mandate regarding our Ecclesiastical Fellowship with these churches.
- C. The FRCA are to be commended for the generous support they give to the Theological College in Hamilton.
- D. The FRCA should as yet be requested to consider our concerns regarding their Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship relating to third party relationships.
- E. The question raised by the CRCA concerning the blessing elder and its impact on the distinction between the offices of elder and of minister in the RCN merits further discussions pursuant to our Rule Six.
- F. In light of concerns raised by the churches and the CRCA, the issue of consultation prior to entering into third party relationships merits further discussion with the RCN. The discrepancy between the RCN's use of the word "inform" and our use of the word "consult" could lead to difficulties where both church federations are working toward a relationship with the same third party.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide

- A. To thank the CRCA for its work done since 1992.

- B. To continue the Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Free Reformed Churches in Australia, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa in accordance with the adopted rules.
- C. To request the CRCA to convey our appreciation for the support given by the Free Reformed Churches in Australia to our Theological College in Hamilton.
- D. To charge the CRCA to send an invitation to our sister churches abroad to attend the next General Synod as soon as its date has been established and published by the convening church and to have our churches represented by a delegate to General Synods of such churches abroad if invited and when feasible.
- E. To mandate the CRCA to solicit a response to our reservations about the Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship adopted by the Free Reformed Churches in Australia.
- F. To mandate the CRCA to discuss with the Dutch deputies, pursuant to our Rule Six, our questions concerning the blessing elder and its possible consequences regarding the distinction between the offices of elder and minister in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.
- G. To mandate the CRCA to seek clarification from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands concerning the use of the word “inform” in Rule Three.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 20

Proposal to Change Art. 39 C.O.

Committee II presents:

Agenda item VIII. E. 6

I. MATERIAL

Overture from the church at Grand Valley requesting a change to the last line of Article 39 C.O.

II. ADMISSIBILITY

Synod declares this overture inadmissible on the ground that according to Article 30 C.O., new matters not previously presented to General Synod should first be dealt with by the minor assemblies.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 21

Proposal to Change Art. 32 C.O.

Committee II presents:

Agenda item VIII. A. 12, E. 1

I. MATERIAL

Letters from brother C. Lindhout and the church at Toronto requesting a change to Article 32 C.O. regarding the sending of delegates to broader assemblies.

II. ADMISSIBILITY

Synod declares these letters inadmissible on the ground that according to Article 30 C.O., new matters not previously presented to General Synod should first be dealt with by the minor assemblies.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 22

Point of Order

As a matter of procedure the question is asked whether individual church members have the right to bring matters directly to Synod without involving their local consistories. The chair rules that this question should not be discussed at this point.

ARTICLE 23

Adjournment

Elder G.J. Nordeman requests that Psalm 66 : 1, 2 be sung and leads in closing prayer. The chairman adjourns the meeting.

MORNING SESSION – FRIDAY, MAY 12, 1995

ARTICLE 24

Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting. Synod sings Ps 4 : 1, 2, 3. Scripture reading is Ephesians 2 : 1 - 10. Roll call is held and shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 25

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 14 - 23 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 26

Closed Session

Synod meets in closed session.

ARTICLE 27

Closed Session

Synod continues in closed session.

ARTICLE 28

Closed Session

Synod continues in closed session.

ARTICLE 29

Closed-Restricted Session

Synod meets in closed-restricted session.

ARTICLE 30

Adjournment

The chairman adjourns the meeting.

AFTERNOON SESSION – FRIDAY, MAY 12, 1995

ARTICLE 31

Reopening

The chairman reopens Synod. Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 32

Closed Session

Synod meets in closed session.

ARTICLE 33

Closed-Restricted Session

Synod meets in closed-restricted session.

ARTICLE 34

Adjournment

Chairman adjourns Synod for committee work.

EVENING SESSION – FRIDAY, MAY 12, 1995

ARTICLE 35

Reopening

The chairman reopens General Synod in plenary session. He requests all present to sing Psalm 5 : 1 - 4. Roll call is held. All members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 36

Book of Praise

Committee IV presents:

Agenda items VIII. D. 1 - 17

The Committee takes the proposal back for further consideration.

ARTICLE 37

Adjournment

Elder A. Ruggi request that Psalm 33 : 1, 6 be sung and leads in prayer of thanksgiving. The chairman adjourns the meeting.

MORNING SESSION – MONDAY, MAY 15, 1995

ARTICLE 38

Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting. He asks the members of Synod to sing Ps 6 : 1, 2, 5. He reads Ephesians 2 : 11 - 22 and leads in prayer. Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 39

Adoption of the Acts

The Acts, Articles 24 - 37 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 40

Closed-Restricted Session

Synod meets in closed-restricted session.

ARTICLE 41

Appeals from Rev. P. Kingma, br. T. Kingma, br. H. van den Hoven, br. W. DeHaan, br. and sr. B. Jansen

Committee I presents:

Agenda items VIII. A. 20, B. 18, 30, 48

Having heard the discussion the Committee takes the proposal back for reconsideration.

ARTICLE 42

Adjournment

Synod is adjourned for committee work.

EVENING SESSION – MONDAY, MAY 15, 1995

ARTICLE 43

Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting. He requests all present to sing Psalm 7 : 1 and 2. Roll call is held. All members of Synod are present. He welcomes the fraternal delegate from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Rev. J.J. Peterson.

ARTICLE 44

Book of Praise

Committee IV presents:

Agenda items VIII. D. 1 - 17

I. MATERIAL

- A. Report of the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise*
- B. Letter from the church at Burlington-East re: General Synod 1983, Art. 174 and General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 64.
- C. Letter from br. M. Kampen
- D. Letters from the church at Surrey re: Report
- E. Letter from the church at Aldergrove re: Report
- F. Letter from the church at London re: Report
- G. Letter from the church at Lynden re: Report
- H. Letter from the church at Langley re: Report
- I. Letter from the church at Grand Valley re: Report
- J. Letter from the church at Fergus re: Report

- K. Letter from the church at Chilliwack re: Report
- L. Letter from br. M. M. De Groot re: Hy. 1A
- M. Letter from the church at Guelph re: Report
- N. Letter from John Calvin School re: Hy. 46:2
- O. Letter from the church at Ancaster re: Report
- P. Letter from the church at Houston re: Report

II. OBSERVATIONS

- A. A new printing of the revised edition appeared in 1993. This edition contains several typographical errors which must be corrected. Several of these errors are mentioned by the Committee and the church at Grand Valley.
- B. A proposed introduction to the Church Order was drafted by the Committee according to their mandate. The church at Grand Valley suggests the last sentence of the first paragraph read “on the church orders of the reformed churches in France and Geneva.”
- C. Regarding the historical prefaces to the Canons of Dort and the Heidelberg Catechism
 - 1. The Committee recommends that the Synod refrain from including them in the *Book of Praise*.
 - 2. The church at Burlington-East overtures that Synod rescind the decision of Synod 1983, Art. 174, and Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 64, and instruct the Committee not to insert these prefaces in the *Book of Praise*.
 - 3. The church at Grand Valley supports the recommendation of the Committee.
- D. The Nicene Creed was revised by the Committee.
 - 1. The church at Fergus does not support the change from “I believe” to “We believe” or the alleged change from “Creator” to “Maker”
 - 2. The churches at Burlington-East and Grand Valley overture Synod to delete the words “God of God” since these words are not part of the original Greek text, and since the Creed already contains the words “true God of true God.”
 - 3. The church at Guelph prefers the reading “begotten from the Father before all ages; God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God.”
 - 4. The church at Grand Valley notes that the Committee is not consistent in the translation of the word “and” and proposes the following translation: “he arose on the third day, in accordance with the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; and will come again....”
 - 5. The church at Grand Valley questions breaking the paragraph on the Holy Spirit into three sentences. To retain the unity of the paragraph they suggest that the text read, “We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.”
 - 6. The church at Grand Valley also requests consistency in the capitalization of pronouns referring to God.
 - 7. The churches at Aldergrove, Ancaster, Chilliwack, Fergus, Grand Valley, Lynden and Surrey request that the word “in” be left out of the phrase “We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.”

8. The church at Guelph recommends the final paragraph read, "We confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins."
- E. Regarding the melodies of the Apostles' Creed
 1. The Committee gives an evaluation of the "alternate melody," the "Teitsma adaptation," and the "Schoof version" but does not make any recommendations on these.
 2. The Committee recommends that Synod give serious consideration to adopt as an alternate melody to Hymn 1A, a rendition of the creed as found in the church book of Martin Bucer in Strasbourg 1539.
 3. The church at Burlington-East and Langley overture Synod that the matter regarding an "alternate melody" be put to rest and not to renew this part of the Committee's mandate.
 4. Br. M.M. De Groot informs Synod that he considers himself the owner of the copyright because he commissioned and paid J. Schouten. He grants Synod the permission "to make the necessary changes to the Hymn 1A tune in order to accommodate the text."
 - F. The question of br. L. VanZandwyk regarding the wording of two articles of the Canons of Dort is answered by the Committee. They recommend that the emendations proposed by br. VanZandwyk not be adopted into the *Book of Praise*.
 - G. With respect to future revisions
 1. The Committee proposes that a running file be kept of possible improvements to all sections of the *Book of Praise*.
 2. The church at Houston agrees with the Committee and proposes that the adopted changes be included "at one time in the publication of a final edition of the *Book of Praise* at some much later date."
 3. The church at London proposes that Synod
 - a. request the publisher of the *Book of Praise* to repeat the musical notation when a psalm or hymn continues overleaf for the improvement of congregational singing;
 - b. instruct the Committee to replace the present marginal proof texts to the Canons of Dort with endnotes and the marginal proof texts to the Liturgical Forms with footnotes since this will aid study and understanding of the Canons and Liturgical Forms.
 - H. The church at Chilliwack requests to have a Subscription Form added to the forms in the back of the *Book of Praise* for the benefit of the general membership who will then know what their office bearers subscribe to.
 - I. The church at Surrey proposes that Synod instructs the Committee to add the Scripture references to the articles of the Church Order, wherever applicable.
 - J. Synod is informed that after many years of service, br. W. Helder and M. Kampen wish to retire from the Committee.
 - K. The students of Grade 4a of the John Calvin School of Yarrow ask Synod to change the references to the church in Hymn 46 : 2 from "it" to "her."
- ### III. CONSIDERATIONS
- A. Synod expresses its gratitude for the many years of service offered by br. W. Helder and br. M. Kampen.
 - B. The church at Grand Valley raises a valid point regarding the wording of the introduction to the Church Order.

Seeing that two of the basic pillars of Reformed church polity are its opposition to hierarchy and independentism (Art. 31 and 74 C.O.) the statement “At Emden the dominant principle of the church order was expressed in the first article: ‘No church may lord it over another church and no minister may lord it over another minister’ ” is incomplete.

- C. The contents of the prefaces to the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort are not readily understandable to one who is not familiar with their historical context. Even though they have historical value, they need not be included in the *Book of Praise*.
- D. The proposed revision of the Nicene Creed is more than a linguistic revision. It is also a structural change. The Committee has followed the suggestion of Dr. N.H. Gootjes and translated the original text making allowances for English language and theological development. Based on the submissions of a number of churches, it becomes clear that some allowances for the English language have taken away from the flavour of the original text and some of the changes are not convincing.
 - 1. The deletion of the words “God of God” as suggested by the church at Grand Valley is based on a particular text of the Nicene Creed. Other Greek texts of the creed and the received Latin include it.
 - 2. The proposal of the church at Fergus to retain the word “I” instead of “we” is based on their preference and not on any of the original texts of the Nicene Creed.
 - 3. The church at Fergus is incorrect when it suggests that the revised text as proposed by the Committee has changed “Creator” to “Maker.”
 - 4. There is no compelling reason to change “God of God” to “God from God” since both “of” and “from” are good translations of the word used in the original text.
 - 5. “And” has an important structural function in the Nicene Creed and should be retained wherever possible.
 - 6. The Committee’s reasoning is debatable when it says that “one may state that he believes in the church as an indestructible reality, and a life giving divine work present on earth” it may be better to leave out the “in” in the phrase “I believe (in) a holy catholic and apostolic church” to avoid confusion.
 - 7. There is no need to change “we acknowledge” to “we confess” since both are possible translations of the Greek verb and are used interchangeably throughout Scripture as well.
- E. [The matter of the “alternate melody” for Hymn 1A has been a part of the Committee’s mandate for many years. In its report the Committee does not recommend any of the following: the Schoof Melody, Teitsma ‘adaptation’, or Zwart melody. The Committee suggests another melody [the version found in the church book of Strasbourg] but this was not recommended by any of the churches.]
(this consideration has been replaced, see below)
- F. Although the Committee dismisses the concerns of br. L. VanZandwyk it does admit that the Latin word “valor” has the nuance of “power” and seeing that the Dutch translation uses “power” (“kracht”) this matter deserves more attention.
- G. New editions (printing) of the *Book of Praise* should appear as infrequently as possible to avoid financial costs and for the benefit of the church members. In this connection it would be appropriate (as suggested by the Committee and the church at Houston) that a running file of adopted improvements to the *Book of Praise* be kept by the Committee.

- H. Repeating the musical notation when a psalm or hymn continues on the overleaf (as is done in the Dutch church book) has merit. The possibility of incorporating these changes into a future revision of the *Book of Praise*, should be investigated by the Committee.
- I. The church at London does not give compelling arguments to warrant replacing the present marginal proof texts to the Canons of Dort with endnotes and the marginal proof texts to the Liturgical Forms with footnotes.
- J. The character of the Subscription Form is different from the Liturgical Forms. There are different ways in which the members of the congregation can familiarize themselves with what their office bearers subscribe to.
- K. Even though the Church Order is based on Biblical principles, it would be rather difficult to find specific Scripture references for each article.
- L. It is appropriate that requests regarding changes to the wording of psalms and hymns be submitted to the Committee. Seeing that the submission of the students of the John Calvin School has been passed on to the Committee, no further action is necessary.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide

- A. To acknowledge the work done by the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise*.
- B. To send a letter to br. W. Helder and br. M. Kampen expressing the appreciation of Synod for the work they did as members of the Committee.
- C. To continue the Committee, consisting of four members and to appoint two members (at least one with musical talents).
- D. To adopt the introduction of the Church Order including the change suggested by the church at Grand Valley but deleting the sentence quoted in CONSIDERATION B.
- E. Not to adopt the historical prefaces of the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort and to rescind the decision of Synod Cloverdale 1983, Art. 174, and Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 64 regarding this matter.
- F. To adopt provisionally the following revised edition of the Nicene Creed requesting the churches to test it and to send their comments (if any) to the Standing Committee of the *Book of Praise* for evaluation:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages; God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten, not made; of one substance with the Father; through whom all things were made.

Who, for us men and our salvation, came down from heaven and became incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He arose, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father; and He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified; who spoke through the prophets.

And we believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins; and we look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

- G. That the question of br. L. VanZandwyk be given further consideration by the Committee.
- H. [That the matter of an alternate melody for Hymn 1A be put to rest and no longer be added to the Committee's mandate.]
(this recommendation has been replaced, see below)
- I. Not to accede to the request of the church at Chilliwack regarding the Subscription Form.
- J. Not to grant the request of the church at London regarding the marginal notes in the Canons of Dort and Liturgical Forms.
- K. Not to accede to the church at Surrey with respect to adding Scripture references to the Church Order.
- L. To give the Committee the following mandate:
 - 1. to function according to the arrangements for publishing and distribution accepted by General Synod Cloverdale 1983 (see Acts 1983, pages 297-299);
 - 2. to maintain its corporate status in order to be able to protect the interests of the Canadian Reformed Churches in all matters concerning the *Book of Praise*;
 - 3. to foster an increased awareness of the existence of the *Book of Praise* among others promote the availability of a book of harmonizations facilitating the use of the *Book of Praise* in the English speaking world;
 - 4. to serve as the address to which any correspondence regarding the *Book of Praise* can be directed;
 - 5. to correct the errors in the present edition of the *Book of Praise*;
 - 6. to investigate the possibility of repeating the musical notation when a psalm or hymn continues overleaf and to make a recommendation to the next General Synod;
 - 7. to receive comments from the churches on the revised text of the Nicene Creed, to evaluate these comments and to make final recommendations to the next General Synod;
 - 8. to keep a running file of adopted improvements to the *Book of Praise* for a future edition of the *Book of Praise*;
 - 9. to implement all Synod decisions regarding the contents of the *Book of Praise*;
 - 10. to serve the following General Synod with a report to be sent to the churches at least six months before the beginning of this Synod.

The following motion to amend is made:

Synod decide

To adopt the suggestion of one of the musical experts advisors to give "the alternate melody" (Zwart) a "testperiod" in the churches as also the Strasbourg melody (Bucer) of 1539 recommended by the Standing Committee.

Ground:

the mandate of previous Synods to provide the churches with a melody which allows for singing the Apostles' Creed in the form adopted by the churches.

This motion replaces CONSIDERATION E and RECOMMENDATION H.
This amendment is ADOPTED
A motion to delay voting on the proposal is DEFEATED.
The amended proposal of the advisory committee is

ADOPTED.

ARTICLE 45

Women's Participation in Election of Office Bearers

Committee II presents:

Agenda items VIII. E. 2, 4, 13

The Committee presents a majority and a minority report.

The reports are taken back for further consideration.

ARTICLE 46

Adjournment

Elder G. VanWoudenberg requests that Psalm 25 : 2, 6 be sung and leads in prayer. The chairman adjourns the meeting.

MORNING SESSION – TUESDAY, MAY 16, 1995

ARTICLE 47

Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting. He requests the members of Synod to sing Psalm 8 : 1 - 5. He reads Ephesians 3 : 1 - 13 and leads in prayer. Roll call is held and shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 48

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 38 - 46 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 49

Adjournment

Synod is adjourned for committee work.

EVENING SESSION – TUESDAY, MAY 16, 1995

ARTICLE 50

Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting. He asks that Psalm 9 : 1, 4, 5 be sung. Roll call is held. All members of Synod are present. The chairman welcomes the fraternal delegate from the Free Church of Scotland, Rev. K. Stewart.

ARTICLE 51

Women's Participation in Election of Office Bearers

Committee II presents:

Agenda items VIII. E. 2, 4, 13

Majority Report:

I. MATERIAL

Letters from sr. C. VanEerden, the church at Burlington-South and the church at Langley.

II. ADMISSIBILITY

Synod declares the letters of sr. C. VanEerden and the churches at Burlington-South and Langley admissible because they present new grounds to reconsider a matter dealt with by a previous Synod (Art. 30 and 33 C.O.). Moreover, members have the right to request a revision of decisions by which they feel aggrieved (Art. 31 C.O.).

III. OBSERVATIONS

- A. Sr. C. VanEerden requests "to re-establish a committee to study the new grounds and concerns pertaining to the place of women's voting in the elections of office bearers." She adduces as grounds
 1. the fact that this matter now lives in the churches as evidenced by the fact that it is discussed in her congregation of Burlington-South, Classis Ontario North of March and September 1991 and *Clarion* (in *Clarion* there are recent discussions about the decision of the Synod of Ommen to give voting to women);
 2. women's voting is a matter which belongs to the churches in common.
- B. The church at Burlington-South endorses the overture of sr. C. VanEerden calling attention especially to the "new grounds (Art. 30 C.O.) such as Synod Ommen's recent decision in the Netherlands and that this issue lives in the churches."
- C. The church at Langley overtures Synod: "We believe that the Canadian Reformed Churches would be well served by a new committee studying the issue of women's participation (especially single sisters and widows) in the voting and election of office bearers in the light of developments in the last twelve years. We request Synod Abbotsford (1995) to appoint such a committee." The church at Langley outlines the developments by referring to the discussions of Synods 1977, 1980, 1983, 1986, the Synod of Ommen 1993 in the Netherlands and overtures to this Synod regarding the matter of women's voting.
- D. The Synod of Cloverdale 1983 gave the following grounds for its decision not to grant women's voting and not to reappoint a committee on this matter:
 1. the obvious lack of consensus on this matter in the churches;
 2. the explanations of Scripture passages by the study committee are considered rather unusual and not generally accepted explanations;
 3. the Dutch sister churches judged that the submissiveness of women does not allow them an independent vote;
 4. various churches indicate that the "matter of 'women's voting rights' does not live in the midst of the churches," and that "granting voting rights would definitely cause great concern and even division."

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. It is debatable whether the matter of women's voting does or does not live within the churches.
- B. Whether women's voting would cause division in the churches is to be assessed by the Synod which is called to make a decision, and not by the Synod which appoints a study committee.
- C. The decision of Synod Ommen in the matter of women's voting takes away one essential ground of Synod Cloverdale which opens the way for reconsidering the matter of women's voting (Art. 33 C.O.). It should be noted that the ecclesiastical fellowship with the Dutch churches makes it desirable to consider this change in their voting practices.

V. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide

To grant the request to appoint a committee to study the issue of women's participation in the voting and election of office bearers with the following mandate:

- A. to make use of previous reports of study committees on women's voting;
- B. to evaluate the decision of the Synod of Ommen in the Netherlands on this matter;
- C. to serve General Synod 1998 with a report, to be sent to the churches at least six months prior to the beginning of the next General Synod.

DEFEATED

Minority Report:

Committee II presents:

Agenda items VIII. E. 2, 4, 13

I. MATERIAL

Letters from sr. C. VanEerden, the church at Burlington-South and the church at Langley, requesting Synod to re-establish a committee to study the new grounds and concerns pertaining to the place of women's voting in the election of office bearers.

II. ADMISSIBILITY

Synod declares these requests inadmissible on the grounds:

- A. that according to Art. 33 C.O. matters once decided upon may not be proposed again unless they are substantiated by new grounds;
- B. a new matter which has not been previously presented to that major assembly may be put on the agenda only when the minor assembly has dealt with it (Art. 30 C.O.).

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 52

Contact with the Free Reformed Churches of North America

Committee II presents:

Agenda items VIII. C. 19, 20

I. MATERIAL

Overtures from the church at Aldergrove and the church at Langley requesting Synod to appoint a committee to take up contact with the Free Reformed Churches of North America with a view to work towards a union of our respective churches.

II. ADMISSIBILITY

Synod declares these overtures inadmissible on the ground that according to Art. 30 C.O., new matters not previously presented to General Synod should first be dealt with by the minor assemblies. See also Acts of General Synod 1983, Art. 150 C.4., which deals with a request from a church to General Synod to initiate contact with another church federation: "the church at Ottawa introduces a new matter which has not been dealt with at the minor assemblies and therefore has not adequately involved and prepared the churches re its overture."

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 53

Appeal Winnipeg re: General Synod 1986, Art. 85

Committee IV presents:

Agenda item VIII. A. 1

A motion to change in consideration E the words ". . . the fact that such a procedure has been adopted and implemented by the churches in Regional Synod East . . ." to: ". . . the fact that such a procedure has been adopted by General Synod 1986 and implemented by the churches in Regional Synod East and Regional Synod West" is DEFEATED

I. MATERIAL

Letter from the church at Winnipeg re: Art. 85, ACTS 1986.

II. OBSERVATIONS

- A. The church at Winnipeg appeals to General Synod 1995 to rescind Art. 85 III, Acts 1986 because it questions the validity of Consideration 1, namely, that admitting other churches to the federation has always been a matter of local churches with the judgments of classis and the concurring advice of Deputies of Regional Synod.
- B. The church at Winnipeg states that Classis Ontario South "dealt with Denver's request in several classis meetings without the deputies" and asks, "why did our classis do the same before its October 1993, even denying the request without the presence of the deputies?"
- C. The church at Winnipeg also states that the reference in Art. 85 to "concurring" advice says too much, seeing that the Church Order and the church political commentaries do not give Deputies ad Art. 48 C.O. such "importance."
- D. The church at Winnipeg is of the conviction that if rules are needed for admitting other churches than a "minor meeting itself must come with clear proposals" and that in the case of Ottawa's request, that church should have come with a clear recommendation(s).

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. The church at Winnipeg is correct when it questions Consideration 1 which states that the admission of local churches into the federation has always been a matter of classis and the concurring advice of the Deputies ad Art. 48 C.O., seeing that prior to 1986 no clear procedures had ever been adopted by the churches requiring the concurring advice of the Deputies ad Art. 48 C.O. in these matters.
- B. The church at Winnipeg is wrong when it states that Classis Ontario South dealt with Denver's request "without the deputies" seeing that the deputies were present but were not asked for concurring advice because Classis referred the matter to Classis Alta-Man. Furthermore, Regional Synod East 1987 ruled that in the admission of the church at Laurel to the federation, Classis Ontario South

should have followed the procedure mentioned in Consideration 1 and requested the concurring advice of the deputies (Acts Regional Synod East 1987). In addition, Classis Ontario North of March 12, 1987, followed this same procedure when it admitted the church at Lower Sackville.

- C. The church at Winnipeg is correct when it says that the Church Order and the Church Polity commentaries of Bouwman and Rutgers are silent on this matter.
- D. The conviction of the church at Winnipeg that a “minor meeting itself,” such as the consistory of the church at Ottawa, must come to Synod with recommendations on this matter, would have been helpful but was not required seeing that it can be argued that such recommendations belong to the churches in common (Art. 30 C.O.).
- E. Although General Synod 1986 neither proved that there was an established procedure for admitting churches into the federation nor that the Church Order requires “concurring” advice, the fact that such a procedure has been adopted and implemented by the churches in Regional Synod East must be given serious consideration. Furthermore, it cannot be said that the adoption and use of such a procedure is in conflict with the Church Order.

V. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide not to grant the appeal of the church at Winnipeg.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 54

Adjournment

Rev. D.G.J. Agema asks all present to sing Psalm 105 : 1, 3, 4 and leads in thanksgiving prayer. The chairman adjourns the meeting.

MORNING SESSION – WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 1995

ARTICLE 55

Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting. He requests that Psalm 10 : 1, 2, 5 be sung. Scripture reading is Ephesians 3 : 14 - 21. The chairman leads in prayer. Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 56

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 47 - 54 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 57

Letter from Fergus re: Regional Synod West 1994

Committee IV presents:

Agenda item VIII. E. 7

I. MATERIAL

Letter from the church at Fergus regarding the appointment by Regional Synod West 1994 of two brothers as delegates to the General Synod 1995.

II. OBSERVATION

The church at Fergus “questions whether these two brothers are suitable delegates to the forthcoming Synod . . . (because) these brothers do not agree with and may not abide by the decisions taken by the broader assemblies” on the Denver matter. In addition, Fergus deems it improper for these brothers to take part in discussions and voting.

III. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. The church at Fergus fails to take into account that brothers and churches may disagree with the decisions of broader assemblies within the parameters of Art. 31 C.O.
- B. The church at Fergus overlooks the provisions contained in Art. 32 C.O. on voting.
- C. Synod regrets that the church at Fergus questions the integrity of brothers who are legitimately delegated to General Synod in suggesting, without any further proof, that they intend not to abide by the decisions of major assemblies.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

General Synod 1995 decide not to uphold the complaint of the church at Fergus.

ADOPTED

Elder I. Veurink and Rev. J.D. Wielenga do not vote according to Art. 32 C.O.

ARTICLE 58

Contact with the OPC

Committee I presents preliminary observations and considerations.

ARTICLE 59

Adjournment

Synod is adjourned for committee work.

EVENING SESSION – WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 1995

ARTICLE 60

Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting. He asks all present to sing Psalm 11 : 1 and 2. Roll call is held. All members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 61

Address Fraternal Delegate OPC

Rev. J.J. Peterson, fraternal delegate of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, addresses Synod on behalf of the OPC. Elder G.J. Nordeman responds his words. (See Appendix I, p. 94)

ARTICLE 62

Address Fraternal Delegate FCS

Rev. K. Stewart, the fraternal delegate of the Free Church of Scotland, addresses the assembly. Elder H.A. Berends responds to this address. (See Appendix I, p. 98)

ARTICLE 63

Bible Translations

Committee II presents:

Agenda items VIII. B. 1 - 17, D. 10

The proposal of the Committee is discussed. The Committee takes it back for further consideration.

ARTICLE 64

Adjournment

Rev. W. den Hollander requests that Psalm 86 : 3, 4 be sung and leads in prayer. Synod is adjourned.

MORNING SESSION – THURSDAY, MAY 18, 1995

ARTICLE 65

Reopening

Synod is reopened. The chairman requests Synod to sing Psalm 12 : 1 - 5. He reads from Scripture Ephesians 4 : 1 - 16. In prayer a blessing is asked over the work of Synod. Roll call is held and shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 66

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 55 - 64 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 67

Appeal Winnipeg re: General Synod 1992, Art. 127

Committee III presents:

Agenda item VIII. A. 5

I. MATERIAL

Appeal from the church at Winnipeg against General Synod 1992, Art.127.

II. ADMISSIBILITY

Synod decides to declare this appeal admissible.

III. OBSERVATIONS

A. The church at Winnipeg asks Synod to note its view on the validity of Denver's request to be admitted into our federation. It is of the opinion that the refusal of admitting Denver on the mere grounds that the Canadian Reformed Churches have recognized the OPC as a true church is illegitimate and that there is an interim situation between the OPC and the Canadian Reformed Churches.

B. The church at Winnipeg requests Synod to judge that Synod 1992 was inaccurate in stating that no church specifically requested Regional Synod that further investigation be undertaken to examine the request from the church at Denver. The church at Winnipeg requested Regional Synod to judge that Denver should be granted "a full and fair hearing!"

- C. The church at Winnipeg requests Synod to judge that Synod 1992 was incorrect to send considerations as its judgment on appeals from the churches.

II. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Synod is not called upon to note certain views of churches.
- B. It is correct that the church at Winnipeg asked Regional Synod West 1992 for a full and fair hearing.
- C. General Synod 1992 decided to send considerations to the churches which had appealed this matter. It did this in light of Consideration B (Acts 1992, Art. 127) which reads: "General Synod Lincoln refers in this connection to the consideration that such requests be dealt with "in open consultation with the ecclesiastical assemblies involved" (Acts 1992, Art. 72,IV,A,2,b, and c,vi). This would imply that such consultation between Classis AB/MB, the Presbytery of the Dakotas, and the Christ American Reformed Church as yet may be beneficial." General Synod refrained from granting or denying the appeals because further consultation was considered beneficial and deemed feasible. On the basis of Art. 30 C.O. General Synod 1992 was correct to sent its considerations as its judgement to the churches which appealed.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide

- A. That General Synod 1992 was inaccurate in Art. 127 IV.B.
- B. That General Synod 1992 was correct in sending its considerations as its judgement on the appeals from the churches.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 68

Appeal Carman re: Regional Synod West 1993

Committee III presents:

Agenda item VIII. A. 11

The Committee takes its proposal back for further consideration.

ARTICLE 69

Closed Session

Synod meets in closed session.

ARTICLE 70

Adjournment

Synod is adjourned for committee work.

EVENING SESSION – THURSDAY, MAY 18, 1995

ARTICLE 71

Reopening

The chairman reopens Synod and asks that Psalm 13 : 1, 2, 3 be sung. Roll call is held. All members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 72

Bible Translations

Committee II presents:

Agenda items VIII. B. 1 - 17, D. 10

I. MATERIAL

- A. Report of the Committee on Bible Translations which includes ten appendices and seven text studies; and a Supplement to the Report.
- B. Letters from the churches at Port Kells, Chilliwack, Vernon, Guelph, Edmonton-Providence, Neerlandia, Burlington-East, Edmonton-Immanuel, Houston, Chatsworth, Langley and Fergus.
- C. Letters from the brs. R. Duker, W. Bredenhof, B. Degier, Rev. H.M. VanEssen, Rev. P. Kingma, T. Kingma, and L. Terpsma.

II. ADMISSIBILITY

Several letters are from individuals and not from churches. This raises the question whether individual members have the right to address their concerns and views about a report directly to a General Synod, without first addressing them to their local consistory/council for consideration. However, it would be unfair to declare the personal submissions mentioned above invalid for this Synod because past Synods have been inconsistent on this.

III. OBSERVATIONS

A. Committee Mandate

The Committee on Bible Translations received the following mandate from Synod Lincoln 1992 (Acts, Art. 35):

1. To do a comparative study of the NASB, NIV and NKJV, making use of past studies, in order to determine which one translation can be positively recommended for use by the churches, whereby the criteria are: faithfulness to the original text and linguistic character of the translation.
2. To investigate the direction of the Bible Societies/Publishers behind different translations and whether there is the possibility to suggest improvements in the translation to the Bible Societies/Publishers which can be incorporated into future editions; as well, to investigate the future availability of the translations.
3. To give due consideration to the decision of Synod Bedforddale 1992, regarding Bible translations.
4. To report to the churches and the next General Synod six months prior to the next General Synod.

B. Committee Report

1. Faithfulness to the Original Text
 - a. The Committee reports that the translators of NASB, NIV and NKJV all agree that the Bible alone, in its entirety, is the written Word of God, inerrant and infallible in the autographs.
 - b. The text type underlying the NKJV is the Textus Receptus of approximately 1600 A.D. The Committee has serious reservations about the Textus Receptus.
 - c. The NASB and NIV are based on an eclectic text. The Committee makes the point that the differences between the types of manuscripts are relatively minor, "scholars from all camps agree that 95-97% of the

text is established without doubt or debate.” (Report of Bible Translation of the Free Reformed Church of Australia 1990). The Committee recommends that the churches would do well neither to accept or reject any translation simply on the basis of a text type used – except in the case of the *Textus Receptus*.

2. Linguistic Character of Translation

- a. The Committee considers among the acceptable types of translation the modified literal and idiomatic, and rejects as unacceptable translations the extremes of highly literal and unduly free. With reference to Prof. B. Holwerda, the Committee is of the opinion, and demonstrates in the study of a random sample of texts, that an idiomatic translation is not only more readable and clear but often also more accurate. The Committee concludes, “As God’s people have done in the past, so today, they should strive for an idiomatic translation of Scripture.”
- b. With respect to the NASB the Committee reports that the NASB is very helpful in studying God’s Word because often the reader can judge what is happening in the original language by referring to this translation. However the Committee points out that “It is however with respect to its clarity and readability that the NASB is too often found wanting. The translation is simply too stiff, not lucid enough, and fails to use words the way they are used today. Proper sentence structure is often lacking. Young people would encounter numerous unnecessary problems in reading this translation; even adults often will not grasp its meaning.”
- c. With respect to the NKJV the Committee reports: “in terms of its clarity and readability it falls short. The English language is given a form which our membership is simply not used to speaking or writing.” The Committee also makes the point, “whatever strengths the NKJV has are more than adequately shared by the translation that has had our attention before, the NASB; we see no compelling reason why we should recommend a change in that course now.”
- d. With respect to the NIV the Committee reports: “Having examined the NIV, it can be concluded that the NIV is more idiomatic than the NASB and NKJV, but at the same time, as accurate as the NASB and NKJV. When all factors are taken into consideration, it can be said that the NIV is more accurate since it more easily communicates the message as the original text did to the original hearers.” The Committee emphasizes that the NIV has dynamic equivalent aspects, as do other translations, but that this does not make it a dynamic equivalent translation. The Committee demonstrates in its Report and Supplementary Report that the numerous criticisms voiced against the NIV are predominantly incorrect and often unfair and biased. The Committee points out about the NIV, “That does not mean it is a perfect translation. There are no perfect translations. We have found occasions when the NIV is more free than we believe to be acceptable and on these points the translators really should be called to account on the basis of their own commitment to the authority of Scripture.” However the Committee concludes about the NIV that it “is simply the finest translation when all the criteria and the relative importance of the different factors are taken into consideration. Furthermore, this translation takes all of Scripture into account and is true to the Word of God. The clarity and readability of the NIV may spark a renewed interest in personal Bible reading and study among young and old and stimulate anew the exploring of the treasures of God’s Word. It is somehow difficult to imagine the English of the NASB and NKJV sparking that kind of response.”

- e. The Committee reports: "Both the NIV and NKJV have opted for the use of "you" and "your" for God, and it is expected that the NASB will do the same in its next edition.... it must be noted that in none of the original languages of Scripture is any linguistic distinction made between addressing a human being and addressing God. Since Biblical usage is our norm, one cannot have principle objections against the deletion of these archaic forms." Synod notes at this time that the NASB revision is complete and has adopted the use of "you" and "your" for God.

3. Past Studies

The Committee did an extensive investigation to see how the NASB, NIV and NKJV measured up with respect to criticisms raised against the RSV in studies of previous bible translation committees. The Committee concludes that the three mentioned translations are better than the RSV.

4. Bible Societies

The NKJV is a completed project with no room for future improvements. The NASB has plans for a minor revision and is open to any comments that we might wish to make with regards to this minor revision. The NIV is committed to changing the NIV from time to time and welcomes comments and suggestions for improved translations. Synod observes at this time that the NASB revision is complete.

5. Australia

Synod Bedforddale 1992 appointed deputies to continue studies of the NKJV in comparison with the NIV, to determine whether the NKJV can be endorsed as a final recommendation to the churches. Synod Byford 1994 decided, "to endorse the NKJV as a faithful and reliable translation for use in the churches, as well as for study, instruction and family purposes. To allow the NIV to be used in the church services, and for study, instruction and family purposes." Among the grounds adduced, Synod Byford mentioned, "Since the weaknesses of NIV are the strengths of the NKJV (and vice versa) the NIV should be considered for the use in the churches, and as with the NKJV a period of evaluation should be given before final endorsement. It is highly desirable that all the churches in the bond use the same translation of the Bible. However, since the question of which Bibles translation to use is not one of principle but rather one of preference, room should be left in the churches for a degree of variation."

6. Recommendations of the Committee

- a. To recommend the New International Version for use within the churches.
- b. To remind the churches about the usefulness of the New American Standard Bible for study purposes.
- c. To appoint a committee which would receive comments from churches and/or members about passages in the NIV in need of improvement, scrutinize those comments, and pass on valid concerns to the NIV Translation Centre. This committee should also glean from previous Synod reports as well as from this report and its appendices any recommendations for change which need to be presented to the NIV Translation Centre.

C. Correspondence Received

1. The church at Port Kells recommends the NASB or the NKJV rather than the NIV because of the more literal approach of the NASB and NKJV. Port Kells refers to the Report of the Committee on Bible Translations which

reported to Synod 1980 that the NIV lacked exactness and faithfulness for its “free” translation.

2. The church at Chilliwack recommends to retain the use of the present RSV, and to strengthen it by correcting inaccuracies and weaknesses it may contain.
3. The church at Vernon recommends the NIV for use within the churches for a testing period of three years which would allow further testing of this translation.
4. The church at Guelph favours the NIV but with the stipulation that the Committee on Bible Translation recommends to the NIV the Byzantine text for future revisions. The church at Guelph also recommends to involve a larger group of ministers for testing the NIV with a view to future improvements.
5. The church at Edmonton-Providence requests Synod to accede to the recommendations of the Committee regarding the NIV and the reappointment of a Committee.
6. The church at Neerlandia recommends to postpone the adoption of the NIV until more study has been made regarding the criticisms against the NIV.
7. The church at Burlington-East supports the recommendation of the Committee regarding the NIV.
8. The church at Edmonton-Immanuel recommends further study on the NIV and that imperfections in the NIV be corrected before it is recommended.
9. The church at Houston recommends keeping the RSV until more study is made of the NIV and the NIV is compared to the NKJV and NASB by ministers and study societies.
10. The church at Chatsworth requests Synod not to recommend the NIV for use in the churches and to request the churches that each local church study a specific Bible book to verify whether the NIV is the most reliable translation for use in the churches.
11. The church at Langley recommends the use of the NIV but also leave the local churches free to use the NASB, NKJV or even the KJV.
12. The church at Fergus requests Synod not to adopt Committee’s recommendation 1 and to adopt the decision of the Australian churches (see observation 5). It further requests to give opportunity to the churches to make further study of both the NKJV and the NIV
13. The brothers R. Duker, W. Bredenhof, B. Degier and L. Terpsma request of Synod to return to the KJV.
14. Rev. H.M. VanEssen recommends the NASB for use in the churches.
15. Rev. P. Kingma and br. T. Kingma recommend to evaluate and use the 21st Century King James Version.

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. It is clear from the entire Report that the Committee fulfilled its mandate. By means of the Report, its appendices and also text studies of a random sampling of Bible passages, and the supplementary report, the Committee demonstrates adequately the strengths and weaknesses of the NKJV, the NASB and the NIV, coming to the conclusion that the NIV is the best translation of the three.
- B. In its calling to proclaim the Word of God to God’s people and to the world, the Church has a responsibility to use the Scriptures in the most faithful and understandable translation available. The NIV fulfils the criteria stipulated by

Synod 1992, namely faithfulness to the original text and clarity of language, and does so better than the NKJV and the NASB.

- C. The acknowledged weaknesses in the NIV are no decisive ground for not recommending this translation for use in the churches, considering that there is no such thing as a perfect translation. An example is the Greek translation of the OT (the Septuagint) which was the Church Bible from approximately 300 BC to 300 AD, also used by Christ and the apostles and quoted by the NT in spite of considerable difference between the Septuagint and the original Hebrew text.
- D. General Synod cannot continue to recommend the use of the RSV since there are better translations available according to the judgment of both the Australian and Canadian study committees. Moreover, as Synod 1992 pointed out, continued usage of the RSV would lead to possible isolation of the Canadian Reformed Churches. (Acts 1992, Art. 35 III).
- E. It is unacceptable to recommend a return to the KJV because of its lack of clarity and its use of the Textus Receptus. This is a text which is based on only a few manuscripts of the Byzantine text type available at that time and which differs relatively significantly from the Majority Text. The same applies to the 21st Century KJV.
- F. A testing period of the NIV with the involvement of ministers and the churches before a final recommendation of the NIV is not necessary since the Committee has already thoroughly studied the NIV, and has come to a conclusion of its strengths and weaknesses. Therefore it can be expected that further testing will only demonstrate the same strengths and weaknesses.
- G. It is of importance that the NIV Translation Centre welcomes comments and suggestions for improved translations; the NASB Lockman Foundation indicated they were open to comments, especially in light of the light revision (which is now completed), but give no indication of being open for comments for a future revision; the NKJV is a completed project.
- H. It is advisable to continue the Committee on Bible Translation which would receive comments from churches and/or members about passages in the NIV in need of improvement, scrutinize those comments, and pass on valid concerns to the NIV Translation Centre. The committee should also glean from previous Synod reports as well as from the Report and its appendices any recommendations for change which need to be presented to the NIV Translation Centre. The letters which were sent to Synod expressing concerns about certain Bible passages are not of such a nature that they need to be answered before a final recommendation is made and therefore should be sent on to the Committee.
- I. It is appreciated that our Australian sister churches desire the same translation for "all the churches in the bond." It is also appreciated that although the Australian churches "endorse the NKJV," they also allow the use of the NIV. Since they are awaiting our decision regarding the NKJV and the NIV, we should inform them of our conclusions.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide

- A. To thank the Committee for its work and the Report submitted to Synod.
- B. To recommend the NIV for use within the churches.
- C. To leave it in the freedom of the churches if they feel compelled to use another translation.

- D. To continue the Committee on Bible Translation which would receive comments from churches and/or members about passages in the NIV in need of improvement, scrutinize those comments, and pass on valid concerns to the NIV Translation Centre. The Committee should also glean from previous Synod reports as well as from the Report and its appendices any recommendations for change which need to be presented to the NIV Translation Centre. The letters which were sent to Synod expressing concerns about certain Bible passages should also be sent on to the Committee.
- E. To send a copy of the Report of the Committee on Bible Translation and Synod's decision to our sister churches in Australia.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 73

Contact with the Reformed Church in Quebec (ERQ)

Committee IV presents:

Agenda items VIII. C. 2, 3, 4, 34, 46

I. MATERIAL

- A. Overture from the Église Réformée du Québec
- B. Overture from Classis Ontario North December 9, 1994 re: contact with the Église Réformée du Québec
- C. Letter from the church at Burlington-East
- D. Letter from the church at Chatsworth
- E. Letter from the church at Ottawa
- F. Report from the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad

II. OBSERVATIONS

- A. The church at Ottawa submitted an extensive report to Classis Ontario North on their contact with the Église Réformée du Québec (ERQ). Based on this report Classis decided: "The information provided by the church at Ottawa demonstrates that l'Église Réformée du Québec can be recognized as a true Church of Christ. Therefore, Classis requests Synod 1995 to respond to the request of l'ERQ by mandating the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad to intensify and confirm the contact initiated by the church at Ottawa with a view to entering a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship."
- B. The church at Burlington-East overtures Synod not to deal with this matter since it has not been finished in the minor assemblies. They content that a classis may not place a matter on the agenda of a General Synod.
- C. The Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad states "It should be mentioned that from the very beginning the CRCA questioned and debated whether or not this was really a matter for our Committee seeing that, as our name indicates, we are to deal with "churches abroad" i.e. foreign churches."
- D. The church at Ottawa urges General Synod to follow through with the consequences of recognizing the ERQ as a true church by agreeing "to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with l'Église Réformée du Québec."
- E. The church at Ottawa urges Synod to add the ERQ to the mandate of the CRCA because historical, cultural and linguistic differences make it impossible to work in the same federation.
- F. The church at Chatsworth believes the decision of Classis Ontario North to recognize the ERQ as a true church and to recommend Ecclesiastical Fellowship was done without due consideration to a number of points, for

example, the relationship of the ERQ to the Christian Reformed Church and the Presbyterian Church in America, the ordination of women deacons, the development of church life, fencing of the Lord's Supper, the possibility of working within the same federation.

- G. The church at Chatsworth also requests Synod to appoint separate deputies with the following mandate:
1. to discuss with the ERQ deputies the differences in Confession, Church Polity and worship which exist between our two federations.
 2. to discuss with the deputies their relation with the PCA and the CRC and the need for severing these ties.
 3. to further investigate whether it is possible to have the churches of the ERQ become part of the same federation.
 4. to keep the churches informed about the ERQ so that their needs as missionary churches can be responded to in a positive manner.

III. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. According to the Word of God and the Confessions (John 17:11,17, 20, 21; Ephesians 3:14-4:16; 2 Tim. 3:15,16; L.D. 21 H.C. and Art. 27-29 B.C.), true believers and churches have the calling to seek fellowship with those who with them confess the same faith and maintain and practise it in preaching, worship, discipline and government.
- B. It belongs to the jurisdiction of the federated churches (Article 27 B.C. and Article 50 C.O.) to seek unity with other federations of true believers. The church at Burlington-East is incorrect when it suggests that a classis was wrong to place the matter of the ERQ on the agenda of a General Synod, since the original request for ecclesiastical fellowship did not come from Ottawa but from the ERQ. The federation has its own task and responsibility (in its Synods) to deal with requests from other church federations. Even though it was wise on Ottawa's part to involve the churches in Classis Ontario North, they were not under obligation to do so.
- C. The church at Ottawa is to be commended for its extensive submission.
- D. Fellowship with other churches should be initiated only after a thorough and serious investigation is made and it is clear that these churches not only accept the Reformed confessions and regulations of Reformed church government but also abide by them (Synod Edmonton 1965, Acts, Art. 141 II).
- E. Churches that seek unity with one another and live in the same country normally work toward federative unity in spite of differences in history, culture or language. The history of the Reformed churches indicate that language is not always a barrier for living together in the same federation. The English and French churches in the Netherlands had their own separate Classes within the federation of Reformed Churches during the sixteenth century (see Acts of Synods Emden 1571 and Dordrecht 1578).
- F. Even though there is no official relationship with the ERQ, the information provided by the church at Ottawa, which was also evaluated by Classis Ontario North contains sufficient evidence to recommend to our churches that they seriously consider extending financial and other assistance to these churches.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide

- A. To note with gratitude the overture from the Église Réformée du Québec.

- B. To note with gratitude the contact and developing relationship with the Église Réformée du Québec as initiated by the church at Ottawa.
- C. To ask the Église Réformée du Québec to appoint deputies for contact.
- D. To appoint deputies with the following mandate:
 - 1. to discuss with the deputies of the Église Réformée du Québec the differences in Confession, Church Polity and worship which exist between our two federations;
 - 2. to discuss with their deputies their relations with the Christian Reformed Church and the Presbyterian Church in America, and evaluate them;
 - 3. to further investigate whether it is possible to have the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Église Réformée du Québec as part of the same federation;
 - 4. to make use of the report submitted by the church at Ottawa and Classis Ontario North;
 - 5. to keep the churches informed about the Église Réformée du Québec so that their financial and other needs as missionary churches can be responded to in a positive manner;
 - 6. to serve Synod 1998 with a report to be sent to the churches at least six months prior to the beginning of Synod.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 74

Adjournment

Rev. P.G. Feenstra requests all present to sing Hymn 46 : 1, 2 and leads in prayer of thanksgiving. The chairman adjourns the meeting.

MORNING SESSION – FRIDAY, MAY 19, 1995

ARTICLE 75

Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting. Synod sings Psalm 14 : 1, 2, 5. Scripture reading is Ephesians 4 : 17 - 32. The chairman leads in prayer.

ARTICLE 76

Roll Call

The chairman calls the roll. All members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 77

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 65 - 74 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 78

Appeal Carman re: Regional Synod West 1993

Committee III presents:

Agenda item VIII. A. 11

I. MATERIAL

Appeal from Carman re: Regional Synod West 1993

II. ADMISSIBILITY

Synod declares this appeal admissible (Art. 31 C.O.).

III. OBSERVATIONS

- A. Carman asks Synod to decide “[t]hat Regional Synod West, December 1993 was incorrect in not acceding to the appeals of Edmonton-Immanuel and Neerlandia because: Regional Synod did not deal properly with the reasons for the appeal, namely, that this ground (General Synod 1986, Acts, Art. 85 III B (1)) is not valid because it is part of the consideration and is unsubstantiated.”
- B. The churches at Edmonton-Immanuel and Neerlandia had appealed the decision of Classis AB/MB Oct. 1993 to seek advice of the Deputies Regional Synod ad Art. 48 C.O. They considered the ground given by Classis, Art. 85.III.B.1, invalid, because it is a consideration and is unsubstantiated. Regional Synod West 1993 in denying the appeals considered that the consideration of General Synod Burlington-West 1986 formed an integral part of the synodical decision.
- C. Classis AB/MB gives as ground for its decision to invite the Deputies for advice: Art. 85.A.III.B. & C. of the Acts of General Synod 1986.

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. The church at Carman, as well as the churches at Edmonton-Immanuel and Neerlandia misrepresented the decision of Classis AB/MB Oct.1993. Carman, Edmonton-Immanuel and Neerlandia present the decision of Classis as having been grounded solely on Consideration 1 of Acts 1986, Art. 85.A.III.B, whereas the decision of Classis was based on Acts 1986, Art. 85.A.III.B. & C.
- B. Regional Synod West 1993 was correct when it answered the appeals of Edmonton-Immanuel and Neerlandia in considering that this particular consideration of Synod 1986 formed an integral part of the synodical decision.
- C. Although General Synod 1986 did not prove that there was an established procedure for admitting churches into the federation, this in itself does not make the decision of Classis AB/MB Oct. 1993 invalid.

V. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide to deny the appeal of Carman.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 79

Closed Session

Synod meets in closed session.

ARTICLE 80

Deputies Ecclesiastical Unity

Committee IV presents:

Agenda items: VIII. C. 1, 1a, 16, 22, 26, 28, 31, 33, 36, 38, 42, 43, 47, 49, D. 10.

The Committee takes the proposal back for further consideration.

ARTICLE 81

General Fund

Committee IV presents:

Agenda item VIII. E. 3

I. MATERIAL

Report from the church at Carman re: General Fund

II. OBSERVATIONS

- A. The church at Carman submits a financial report of the General Fund for the period from December 1992 to February 6, 1995. The income was \$24,063.07. The disbursements were \$25,860.79. The final balance was a deficit of \$1,797.72.
- B. The books were audited by two office bearers of the church at Carman and found to be in good order.
- C. The church at Carman notes that the churches have already been assessed \$2.00 per communicant member to cover the costs of the General Fund.
- D. The church at Carman requests Synod to thank br. G. Vandersluis who has taken care of the books for the General Fund.

III. CONSIDERATION

It is within the mandate of the church at Carman to request more funding from the churches, if required.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide

- A. To express gratitude to the church at Carman for the administration of the General Fund, to the office bearers who audited the books, and to br. G. VanderSluis for keeping the books.
- B. To authorize the church at Carman to collect funds from the churches as required.
- C. To discharge the church at Carman of duties completed during the period of December 1992 to February 6, 1995 and re-appoint the church at Carman for the General Fund.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 82

Archives

Committee IV presents:

Agenda item VIII. E. 9

I. MATERIAL

Letter from the church at Burlington-West re: inspection of the General Archives.

II. OBSERVATION

The church at Burlington-West informs Synod that the archives of Synod Lincoln 1992 were inspected by two members of their consistory and found to be in good order.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide to thank the church at Burlington-West for examining the archives and reporting to Synod.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 83

Address Church

Committee IV presents:

Agenda item VIII. E. 10

I. MATERIAL

Report from the address church, the church at Burlington-East.

II. OBSERVATION

The church at Burlington-East reports on its correspondence as address church.

III. CONSIDERATION

The church at Burlington-East has fulfilled its mandate as address church.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

- A. To thank the church at Burlington-East for the work done as address church.
- B. To reappoint the church at Burlington-East as address church for the Canadian Reformed Churches.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 84

Adjournment

Synod is adjourned for committee work.

AFTERNOON SESSION – FRIDAY, MAY 19, 1995

ARTICLE 85

Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting. Roll call is held. All members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 86

Deputies for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity

Committee IV presents:

Agenda items: VIII. C. 1, 1a, 16, 22, 26, 28, 31, 33, 36, 38, 42, 43, 47, 49, D. 10.

A motion to insert in Recommendation B the words “to promote the unity of Reformed believers who have left the Christian Reformed Church” is ADOPTED.

A motion to remove Consideration B is DEFEATED.

The amended proposal

I. MATERIAL

- A. Report of the Deputies for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity, plus a Supplementary Report.
- B. Letters from the churches at Attercliffe, Brampton, Burlington-East, Chatsworth, Chilliwack, Elora, Houston, Lincoln, Neerlandia, Watford, and from br. W. DeHaan and Rev. B.R. Hofford.

II. ADMISSIBILITY

Several letters are from individuals and not from churches. This raises the question whether individual members have the right to address their concerns and views about a report directly to a General Synod, without first addressing them to their local consistory/council for consideration. However, it would be unfair to declare the personal submissions mentioned above invalid for this Synod because past Synods have been inconsistent on this.

III. OBSERVATIONS

- A. The Deputies received the following mandate from Synod Lincoln 1992 (Acts 1992, Art. 36):

1. to make their presence known for the purpose of information and consultation;
 2. to represent the churches, whenever invited, at assemblies or meetings for the purpose of coming to ecclesiastical unity;
 3. to report on its activities to the churches and to the next General Synod.
- B. The report of the Deputies includes a list of their activities: attending public meetings, writing and distributing a discussion paper, keeping the churches informed about the activities of the Alliance of Reformed Churches, correspondence received and sent. The Deputies bring the following matters to the attention of General Synod:
1. that the Alliance of Reformed Churches is making slow but steady progress toward federation and Deputies consider it important that deputies be re-appointed;
 2. they also request the churches to keep them informed in order that they may more effectively speak for the churches in ecumenical settings;
 3. the church at Port Kells raises the question as to how far a local church can go after two local churches have recognized each other as true;
 4. the deputies thus far have not met together but ask Synod to take into account the budgetary implications of periodic meetings.
- C. The Deputies request Synod 1995
1. To approve the work of deputies.
 2. To adopt the discussion paper so that future deputies to be appointed can build on this work.
 3. To express officially that the Canadian Reformed Churches truly desire a Biblical ecclesiastical unity with the Independent Churches, Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches and all those who wish to be church on the basis of the Scriptures as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity and that Canadian Reformed deputies are available to discuss with them any issues that may form a stumbling block to realize this ecumenical goal.
 4. To ask the churches to keep the deputies fully informed of activities or decisions in their discussions with those who have left the Christian Reformed Church.
 5. To appoint again Deputies for Ecclesiastical Unity with the following mandate:
 - a. to make their presence known for the purpose of information and consultation where still necessary;
 - b. to authorize Deputies to officially approach the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches and the future federation of Independent Christian Reformed Churches with the request that these respective churches appoint deputies for church unity who are mandated by their respective assemblies to speak on their behalf and to meet with their Canadian Reformed counterparts;
 - c. to receive reports from the Canadian/American Reformed Churches on local ecumenical developments;
 - d. to be available to consistories for counsel as necessary in local ecumenical discussions or developments;
 - e. to represent the churches, whenever invited, at assemblies or meetings held for the purpose of coming to ecclesiastical unity;
 - f. to report on its activities to the churches and to the next General Synod.

- D. The Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches were contacted by the Deputies but no response was received because the letter had never been tabled at the major assemblies of these churches.
- E. In a Supplementary Report, dated April 20, 1995, the Deputies describe several additional activities by them and by the churches. They also request that Dr. J. DeJong be appointed seeing that church polity matters will figure prominently in future discussions.
- F. The church at Watford, disagrees with the Deputies' request that Synod "adopt the discussion paper" and with a reference to Prof. B. Kamphuis in which "covenantal thinking, view of the church, and historic redemptive preaching" are described as "our own specialities."
- G. The church at Chilliwack takes issue with the same reference and states that there should be no pulpit exchange, exchange of attestations, and admission to the Lord's Supper, until there is full ecclesiastical unity.
- H. The church at Chatsworth informs Synod that it is not in favour of granting any of the requests made by the Deputies. Chatsworth also recommends not to re-appoint the Deputies.
- I. The church at Neerlandia appreciates the work of the Deputies but would like the Deputies "to elucidate" on the statement of Prof. B. Kamphuis and explain "how this would function within the parameters of the Three Forms of Unity."
- J. Br. W. DeHaan requests Synod to declare that the Deputies went beyond their mandate in making suggestions about some of the matters mentioned above.
- K. The church at Elora objects against both the reference to Prof. B. Kamphuis, as well as the statement "that we stress in our contacts with other Reformed churches and bodies that we do not bind them to our idiosyncracies..." It urges Synod to remove this reference and to "adopt a statement which is informative and instructive, and reflects the thinking of our federation."
- L. The church at Burlington-East expresses its appreciation for the work done by the Deputies.
- M. The church at Lincoln also disagrees with the reference to Prof. B. Kamphuis and the use of the word "idiosyncrasy." They also express concern about the Deputies response to the church at Grand Rapids and say that there was no need for the Deputies to respond to this church. Lincoln considers the Deputies request 3 to be "redundant" and wants Deputies to be re-appointed on the basis of their existing mandate.
- N. The church at Houston requests Synod to add the following to the Discussion Paper: "We will not consider providing for pulpit exchange, speaking an edifying word, admitting of their members to another's Holy Supper, and recognizing one another's attestations, until the following situation has developed:
 1. that the independents have provisionally federated.
 2. and that they have agreed to federative unity."
- O. Rev. B.R. Hofford expresses a number of concerns about the Discussion Paper and requests of the Deputies that deal with the same matters mentioned above.
- P. The church at Brampton objects to the reference to Prof. B. Kamphuis.
- Q. The church at Attercliffe is concerned about the first three requests of the Deputies about Synod approving their work, adopting the discussion paper, an official expression of unity, as well as the wording of their proposed new mandate.
- R. The church at Fergus requests Synod to approve the work of the Deputies but not to re-appoint them.

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. It is not normal procedure for a Synod “to approve” the work of its deputies or committees, but “to take note” of the work done and to express thankfulness for their efforts. Seeing that Synod did not mandate the Deputies to produce a discussion paper, the Discussion Paper that has been presented need not be altered or adopted by Synod.
- B. The use of the terms “specialities” and “idiosyncrasy” in the Discussion Paper have created controversy and confusion and as such detract from the overall value of the paper. It would also have been better procedure if the Discussion Paper had been used internally and sent to the churches for their comments and interaction and had not become a public document.
- C. Because of our Lord’s prayer in John 17, it is essential that the unity of the church be promoted and that the Canadian Reformed Churches seek to be one with all those who desire to be church on the basis of the Scriptures as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity. In order to promote this unity, it is fitting that there be deputies who can discuss, on behalf of our churches, issues that may form a stumbling block to realizing this ecumenical goal.
- D. While maintaining the task of each local church to pursue unity in its area, there still remains opportunity for contact beyond the local level. It is therefore warranted to continue the Deputies for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity with a carefully defined mandate.
- E. The request of the deputies to approach the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches and a future federation of Independent Christian Reformed Churches, asking them to appoint deputies to meet together, is problematic seeing that the mandate of the deputies was “for the purpose of providing information, consultation and representation on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches, whenever invited, at assemblies or meetings, for the goal of achieving ecclesiastical unity” (Acts 1992, Consideration F). Official approaches to other federations should be requested by the churches and conducted by deputies appointed by Synod for that purpose.
- F. It is not within the province of General Synod to instruct the churches that they have to send documents to deputies, yet it would be desirable for them to do so.
- G. While respecting the initiative of the local church to pursue contacts with churches in their area, it is desirable that as much as possible the churches follow a common approach and make use of the advice of the deputies.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide

- A. To thank the Deputies for their labours.
- B. To re-appoint Deputies for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity to promote the unity of Reformed believers who have left the Christian Reformed Church, with the mandate
 1. to make their presence known for the purpose of information and consultation wherever necessary;
 2. to make themselves available to consistories for advice on local developments;
 3. to represent the churches, whenever invited, at assemblies or meetings held for the purpose of pursuing ecclesiastical unity;
 4. to report on its activities to the churches and to the next General Synod.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 87

Adjournment

Elder H.A. Berends requests Synod to sing Psalm 118 : 1, 8 and leads in prayer of thanksgiving. The chairman adjourns the meeting.

MORNING SESSION – SATURDAY, MAY 20, 1995

ARTICLE 88

Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting. He requests all present to sing Psalm 15 : 1 - 3, reads from Ephesians 5 : 1 - 20 and leads in prayer. Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 89

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 75 - 87 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 90

Contact with the OPC

Committee I presents its proposal regarding the OPC for discussion. The proposal is taken back for further consideration.

ARTICLE 91

Appeals re: Regional Synod West 1993, Art. 11

Committee III presents several proposals with regard to these appeals. After discussion they are taken back for further consideration.

ARTICLE 92

Adjournment

Elder L. Stam asks that Psalm 84 : 1, 6 be sung and leads in prayer of thanksgiving. The chairman wishes the brothers a blessed Lord's Day and adjourns the meeting.

MORNING SESSION – MONDAY, MAY 22, 1995

ARTICLE 93

Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting. He requests that Psalm 16 : 1, 2, 3 be sung. Scripture reading is Ephesians 5 : 21 - 31. In prayer a blessing is asked over the work of Synod. Roll call is held. Rev. J. Visscher is absent with notice.

ARTICLE 94

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 88 - 92 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 95

Adjournment

Synod is adjourned for committee work.

AFTERNOON SESSION – MONDAY, MAY 22, 1995

ARTICLE 96

Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting. Roll call is held and shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 97

Theological College

Committee II presents:

Agenda items VIII. F. 1 - 8

I. MATERIAL

- A. Nominations for the Board of Governors from Regional Synod East November 16-17, 1994 and Regional Synod West December 6-7, 1994
- B. Report of Board of Governors to General Synod 1995
- C. Report of the Board of Governors (Finance and Property Committee) to General Synod 1995
- D. Report from the Board of Governors on Tenure Policy
- E. Submission from the Board of Governors re Possible Expansion of College facilities.
- F. Report to the Board of Governors by the Publication Foundation
- G. Letters from the churches at Chilliwack, Watford, Neerlandia, Elora, Houston, Burlington-East and Guelph.

II. OBSERVATIONS

- A. With respect to the appointments to the Board of Governors Synod observes:
 1. The Board of Governors recommends that Synod “appoint, elect or re-appoint six active ministers to hold office until the next General Synod and to appoint at least three substitutes from each Regional Synod area.”
 2. Regional Synod East November 16-17, 1994 nominated the following ministers to serve as Governors of the Theological College: D.G.J. Agema, W. den Hollander, P.G. Feenstra; alternates (in order): G. Nederveen, P. Aasman and C. Bosch.
 3. Regional Synod West December 6-7, 1994 nominated the following ministers to serve as Governors of the Theological College: R. Aasman, C. VanSpronsen, J. Visscher; alternates (in order): J. Moesker, P.K.A. DeBoer and R.A. Schouten.
 4. The Report of the Board of Governors makes the following recommendation with regard to the Governors who will serve on the Finance and Property Committee:
 - a. to re-appoint the brs. K.J. Veldkamp and A. Van Egmond as Governors for a term from the date of their re-appointment until the first General Synod held after the date of their re-appointment;

- b. to re-appoint br. H.J. Sloots as a Governor for a term from the date of his re-appointment until the second General Synod held after the date of his re-appointment;
 - c. to appoint the brs. M. Kampen of Burlington and J. VanderWoude from Hamilton as Governors for a term from the date of their appointment until the third General Synod held after the date of their appointment (with as alternates the brs. F. Stoffels of Hamilton and L. Jagt of Burlington, in that order).
- B. The Report of the Board of Governors covers its work and decisions since November 1992. From this Report the following highlights are observed:
1. The Board notes with great thankfulness that the work in the College could continue unhindered during the past two and a half years. The Board itself could meet regularly. Also the professors and students enjoyed health and strength so that the instruction at the College could continue without major interruptions. The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the College was remembered on the Convocation in September 1994.
 2. The Board expresses thankfulness for the substantial help which the College continues to receive from the sister churches in Australia. It is noted that support is witnessed in the students who come from Australia, financial contributions and prayers by our Australian sister churches.
 3. The Board reports with thankfulness that the professors are faithful in teaching their courses. At times guest lecturers were invited. The bond between the College and churches is strengthened by having one professor visit the churches in the West on a yearly basis.
 4. On December 18, 1993 the Board organized an "Open House" for Prof. and Mrs. J. Geertsema on the occasion of their thirtieth wedding anniversary and Prof. Geertsema's thirtieth anniversary in the ministry.
 5. It is noted that on March 4, 1993 the Lord took Prof. L. Selles to Himself. The Board remembers with thankfulness the work of Prof. Selles as one of the first professors at the College. The Board also remembers with thankfulness the work of Prof. Drs. H.M. Ohmann who retired in 1993 from his position as professor at the Theological University at Kampen.
 6. On September 10, 1993 the principalship of the College was transferred from Dr. C. Van Dam to Prof. J. Geertsema. The Board recommends that Synod appoint "Prof. Dr. N.H. Gootjes as Principal for the period of September 1996 to September 1999, and to designate Prof. Dr. J. DeJong as Principal for the years 1999 to 2002, the Lord willing. The transfer of principalship will take place the day after the Convocation in 1996."
 7. Regular visits were made by the Governors to the lectures at the College. The Board reports with thankfulness that the work at the College is done in faithfulness to the Word of God and in harmony with our Reformed Confessions.
 8. In response to a Survey/Questionnaire sent out to all former students at the College, the Board made the following decision in September 1994:
 - to appoint a study committee consisting of the Principal, the Professor of Diaconology and two members of the Academic Committee to
 - a. evaluate moving from the present history-oriented approach to a more practice-oriented approach in certain courses in the diaconological department;
 - b. consider the suggestions from the ministers and churches regarding the practical aspect of the training (for example, catechism teaching,

speaking an edifying word, involving experienced ministers and guest lecturers, the use of workshops and seminars).

9. With thankfulness the Board reports that each year several brothers are admitted to the College. In 1993 five brothers graduated of whom four are now serving the churches. In 1994 two brother completed their studies, of whom one is now serving the churches. At present there are fifteen students at the College.
10. Miss Margaret VanderVelde was hired as full time associate librarian to speed up the transfer of the cataloguing of books to the Library of Congress system. The Senate appointed Miss Margaret VanderVelde to the function of Librarian, and Dr. N.H. Gootjes to the function of Associate Librarian.
11. The Women's Saving Action supplies the main source of income for purchasing new books. This work of the Women's Saving Action is greatly appreciated.
12. The Board reports that the growth of the College Library necessitates more room. Currently the library consists of 162 book cases and these are filled to capacity. The Board mentions that although according to the Incorporating Act of the College, the Board can act unilaterally regarding the acquisition and conversion of property, still it seeks advice and direction from Synod. A proposal is added to the Report which has been prepared by the Finance and Property Committee which outlines possible expansion of the present facilities. The Board requests a mandate from Synod with regard to future expansion of the College facilities.

In an enclosed submission from the Board of Governors, two alternative plans are described. The first plan (A) contemplates a two-level addition which would be added as an entirely separate wing, providing the College with approximately 8377 additional square feet of space. This would include not only library space and 540 book cases, but also faculty and staff lounge, chapel/large meeting room, handicapped washrooms on two levels, and better supervision of the library itself. The cost of this plan is estimated at \$848,750.00, excluding furniture, bookcases, fixtures, etc. The second plan (B) contemplates a two-level addition which would be immediately adjacent to the existing library, providing the College with approximately 3177 additional square feet of space. This would increase library space and facilities and allow 344 bookcases. The cost of this plan is estimated at \$397,000.00. Plan A is the preferred proposal by the Board of Governors.

13. In response to a request by General Synod 1992, the Board asked the Faculty to prepare a Report on Tenure Policy. This Report is submitted by the Board to Synod. The Board proposes that the suggestions of the Faculty be adopted by Synod 1995 as the policy for tenure for professors at the College. The suggested policy on tenure is as follows:

- a. Definition

The granting of tenure means that a professor's teaching responsibilities at the Theological College continue indefinitely.

In accepting tenure, a professor indicates a commitment to continue to meet the academic standards and to strive for excellence in his discipline. Should this not be the case, the Board of Governors would need to decide whether the status of tenure should be revoked and the professor in question dismissed.

b. Criteria

The following criteria are important in the granting of tenure:

- i. The educational background and formal academic upgrading (if desirable and necessary) of the professor. He should be equipped and continue to equip himself to furnish scholarly lectures.
- ii. The lectures must not only be faithful to the Scriptures and be confessionally sound, but must also be scholarly.
- iii. The professor must be able to communicate his discipline in a satisfactory manner.
- iv. The professor must enjoy the respect of his colleagues and of the students.
- v. The professor must exhibit the ability to respond to student feedback and colleague input for improving his courses or method of teaching.
- vi. The professor must give evidence of his scholarship through publications, public lectures and participation in activities, especially within the Canadian Reformed community.

c. Procedure

- i. By January 1 of the year in which a Synod will be held, the faculty member involved will submit to the Academic Dean an up-to-date activity list (or curriculum vitae) as well as written self-evaluation, in which he also notes, for example, his contributions to the Theological College.
- ii. Keeping in mind the target date of six years from the initial appointment, the Academic Committee of the Board of Governors will carefully monitor classroom reports as submitted by the academic governors, as well as input from the academic dean (who will pass on appropriate evaluations from colleagues and also have access to student evaluations). The faculty member involved will be kept fully informed.
- iii. Before the Synod that is to deal with the granting of the tenure, the academic committee will propose the granting of tenure to the Board of Governors for adoption by the full Board.
- iv. This proposal will go to the next Synod for implementation, i.e., that is that Synod direct the Board of Governors to grant tenure to the professor involved.

14. The Board reports that the Publication Committee did not agree with recommendations 2 and 3 of Synod 1992 re proposed By-Law 10 (Publication Foundation). The Publication Committee feels that the Board of Governors should not be responsible for publications of the Committee. The Board of Governors feels it ought to be involved in a Publication Foundation which carries the official name of the College. The Board therefore agrees with Synod 1992, and suggests that if the involvement of governors in the Publication Foundation leads to great difficulties, then the other option is to incorporate a separate Publication Foundation.

15. The Publication Foundation submits a report of its activities. The following projects are on their way: a book containing speeches on the Liberation, a book on Dr. K. Schilder, a book on Reformed Church polity and a book on Redemptive Historical preaching.

16. In keeping with the Sabbatical Policy adopted by Synod 1992, the Board has in principle approved a request by Dr. C. Van Dam for research leave for part of 1996.

- C. Regarding matters pertaining to the property and finances, the Board reports
1. The Finance and Property Committee met regularly. These meetings were attended by the current Principal and the College's administration assistance, Miss Catharine Mechelse. The term of brother A.L. Vanderhout expired in November, 1992. Br. H.J. Sloots was appointed as his replacement. The Committee mentions that the insight, leadership and contribution of brother Vanderhout will be missed.
 2. The College building has been well maintained. The Committee is made aware of the fact that there will soon be a shortage of space for the College library.
 3. The salaries of all professors have been reviewed and increased annually, based on the prescribed formula. At the present time one retired professor is supported. The salaries of the staff have been reviewed and where appropriate, increased.
 4. The churches continue to support the College faithfully. Special appreciation is expressed for the healthy contributions from our sister churches in Australia.
 5. Audited statements of years ending May 31, 1993 and May 31, 1994 are included as appendices. The Board recommends Synod "to consider the audited financial statements and the report of the Auditors for the previous fiscal periods; to relieve the Treasurer of the Board of all responsibilities for these fiscal periods; and to appoint sr. A. Spithoff C.A. as Auditor till next General Synod.
 6. Tuition fees for students have been set and approved by the Board of Governors.
 7. Based on the College financial budgets, assessments per communicant member are set at \$61.00 for the period commencing January 1, 1994 and \$63.00 for the period commencing January 1, 1995. Sabbaticals are taken into consideration by the latest budget.

D. Letters from Churches

The following letters all address the proposed addition to the Theological College.

1. The church at Chilliwack proposes that due to the late submission of the Report of Governors, Synod not make a decision at this time and so give the churches more time for input. Chilliwack also recommends finding alternative storage for books not used very often.
2. The church at Watford requests that costs for the proposed addition be kept as low as possible, especially with a view to the financial burden a large increase in assessment would be to small churches.
3. The church at Neerlandia underlines that the Board of Governors is directly responsible to the churches with respect to property acquisition and conversion. Neerlandia indicates not being in favour of the proposed expansion of College facilities. Apart from the matter of the proposed addition, the letter from the church at Neerlandia also makes mention that reports by governors on the lectures should include an evaluation of teaching methods and these should be reported also to the teachers themselves. Neerlandia further indicates that due to financial constraints, the churches would be better served if only governors from the East do the visiting of the lectures.

4. The church at Elora approves the proposed expansion. However, Elora does question the need for a large expansion and urges Synod to consider the burden that the "preferred proposal" of the Governors would lay on the churches.
5. The church at Houston recognizes the needs of the College but at the same time points out that it would be a tremendous financial burden if the proposed expansion would be funded by an increase in assessment. Houston recommends other avenues of financing if they are available.
6. The church at Burlington-East does not support the request to expand the College library at this time. The churches have not been given enough time to evaluate the request. Burlington-East overtures Synod, "to set up an independent committee to study and evaluate the present and future needs of the library and the College as a whole and to report to the churches of their finding no later than six months prior to the next General Synod."
7. The church at Guelph expresses concern that the estimates of the library expansion do not take into consideration furniture, fixtures, etc. Guelph surmises that the real capital costs could be approximately 20% to 30% higher.

III. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. In accordance with section 3.04 (a) of By-Law Number 1 (as amended by By-Law Number 3), the General Synod shall appoint or re-appoint six active ministers to the Board of Governors.
- B. In accordance with By-Law Number 1, section 3.04 (b), the General Synod shall appoint or re-appoint five brothers who are not ministers.
- C. On the basis of the reports received, Synod considers that the affairs of the Theological College are being well managed by the Faculty and the Board of Governors, composed of the Academic Committee and the Finance and Property Committee.
- D. With respect to the Theological College expansion proposal, it is proper that the Board of Governors approached Synod for a mandate regarding future expansion. Based on the evidence submitted by the Board of Governors regarding the growth and future needs of the library and other College functions, it is clear that an expansion of the College facilities is warranted. Considering that the submission of the proposal came late to the churches, the cost considerations are of a major concern to the churches, the proposals have incomplete cost estimates and it is not evident that the expansion is required immediately, it is therefore advisable that the Board of Governors study and prepare a more detailed and definite proposal. This proposal should indicate how this project can be financed from sources and means other than the regular assessment so that it does not unnecessarily burden the churches. A proposal should be submitted to the churches and the next Synod at least six months before the next Synod.
- E. Synod considers that the Report on Tenure Policy submitted by the Board of Governors fulfils the instruction of Synod 1992. It would be advisable to adopt the proposed policy on tenure so that in the future all faculty members will be treated alike in regards to the matter of tenure.
- F. Synod considers that the Board of Governors is correct in concluding that if the Publication Committee carries the official name of the College then the Board of Governors bears a certain responsibility for the Committee. Therefore if the Publication Committee feels this leads to difficulties, then there is the option to incorporate a separate Publication Foundation.

- G. The concern of the church at Neerlandia that the Governors' reports on the teaching methods of professors are submitted also to the professors is covered by the new tenure policy. As for their concern about the cost of having Governors from the West attend lectures, it should be kept in mind that the cost is minimal, and that it is necessary to maintain this practice in order to do justice to the responsibility laid also on the churches from the West.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide

- A. To appoint as Governors of the Theological College the following active ministers and their substitutes:

From Eastern Canada:

D.G.J. Agema, W. den Hollander, P.G. Feenstra; alternates (in order): G. Nederveen, P. Aasman and C. Bosch.

From Western Canada:

R. Aasman, C. VanSpronsen, J. Visscher; alternates (in order): J. Moesker, P.K.A. DeBoer and R.A. Schouten.

- B. To appoint as Governors of the Theological College who are not ministers, according to the retirement schedule adopted by the Board of Governors: brothers M. Kampen and J. VanderWoude (nine years); H.J. Sloots (six years); K.J. Veldkamp and A. VanEgmond (three years).
- C. To express its sincere gratitude for the work done by the retiring Governors: Rev. B.J. Berends, br. H. Buist and br. C.G. Heeringa.
- D. To express gratitude that the work at the Theological College continues without interruption and that all instruction is given in harmony with the Word of God and in agreement with the Confessions of the Canadian Reformed Churches.
- E. To express thankfulness for the work done by Prof. L. Selles who passed away on March 4, 1993.
- F. To appoint Prof. Dr. N.H. Gootjes as Principal for the period of Sept. 1996 to Sept. 1999, and to designate Prof. Dr. J. DeJong as Principal for the period of 1999 to 2002. The transfer of principalship will take place the day after the convocation in 1996.
- G. To approve all decisions and actions of the Board and of its committees for the years 1992, 1993, 1994 and 1995 until the day of the Board's report.
- H. To adopt the suggestions of the Faculty regarding a Tenure Policy as the policy asked for by General Synod 1992.
- I. To direct the Board of Governors to study and prepare a more detailed and definite proposal for the expansion of College facilities, and seek the possibility of financing this project without increasing the assessment to the churches. A proposal should be submitted to the churches and the next Synod at least six months before the next Synod.
- J. To recommend to the Board of Governors to give the Publication Committee the option to incorporate separately.
- K. To acknowledge gratefully the work for our Theological College by the Women's Saving Action.
- L. To express gratitude to the Board of Governors, the Faculty and Senate and the Staff and volunteers for all their labours for the Theological College.
- M. To express gratitude to the churches in Canada, the United States and Australia for their faithful and regular support of the Theological College.

- N. To consider the audited financial statements and the report of the Auditors for the previous fiscal periods; to relieve the Treasurer of the Board of all responsibilities for these fiscal periods; and to appoint sister A. Spithoff C.A. as Auditor till next General Synod.

ADOPTED

All Governors present at Synod abstain from voting.

ARTICLE 98

Contact with Churches Abroad

Committee III presents:

Agenda items: VIII. A. 18, 20, C. 3, 24, 40, D. 10

The Committee takes its proposal back for further consideration.

ARTICLE 99

Adjournment

The chairman adjourns Synod for supper.

EVENING SESSION – MONDAY, MAY 22, 1995

ARTICLE 100

Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting. He asks all present to sing Psalm 17 : 1, 2, 3. Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 101

Contacts with Churches Abroad

Committee III presents:

Agenda items: VIII. A. 18, 20, C. 3, 24, 40, D. 10.

I. MATERIAL

- A. Report CRCA
- B. Letter from the church at London, re: Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship
- C. Letter from the church at Guelph, re: CRCA
- D. Letter from the church at Houston, re: CRCA
- E. Letter from the church at Fergus, re: CRCA
- F. Appeal from Rev. P. Kingma and br. T. Kingma re: Ecclesiastical Contact / ICRC

II. Re: FCS and PCK

A. OBSERVATIONS

1. The Mandate of the CRCA regarding the Free Church of Scotland (FCS) was
 - a. to offer the FCS, including the FCS congregations in Canada, a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship under the adopted rules;
 - b. to charge the CRCA to convey to the FCS the decision of Synod 1992, and to advise the churches and Synod 1995 of the response of the FCS.

2. The CRCA reports
 - a. The FCS was informed of the decision of 1992. At the Assembly of 1993 the FCS accepted with gladness the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Canadian Reformed Churches in accordance with the agreed upon Rules.
 - b. From its work the CRCA considers that the FCS continues to be faithful to the Word of God, to its confessional standards and to its church government.
3. The CRCA recommends to continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the FCS in accordance with the adopted rules.
4. The church at Houston requests Synod to mandate the Committee to investigate and so determine whether or not the same divergencies which exist between the OPC and the Canadian Reformed Churches also exist between the FCS and Canadian Reformed Churches and between the PCK and the Canadian Reformed Churches. The CRCA must inform the CCOPC, as well as the churches, concerning their finding before the next Synod.
5. The church at Fergus suggests to suspend Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the FCS so that clarification can be obtained as regard the allegations that have been made by the CEIR of the OPC regarding free masons.
6. The mandate to the CRCA re: the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK) was
 - a. to inform the PCK of our acceptance of their request for Ecclesiastical Fellowship using the adopted rules;
 - b. to formalize this relationship in a manner satisfactory to both church federations;
 - c. to inform the churches and to report to the next General Synod on the relationship with the PCK.
7. The CRCA reports regarding the PCK
 - a. The PCK was informed of the decision of General Synod 1992. The relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship was formalized on September 2, 1993.
 - b. The PCK suggests that one way to make this relationship more effective would be through an exchange of professors. The CRCA considers that Synod should give this proper consideration.
8. The CRCA recommends that Ecclesiastical Fellowship be continued with the PCK in accordance with the accepted Rules.

B. CONSIDERATIONS

1. Synod notes with thankfulness the report of the CRCA that both the FCS and the PCK accepted the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Canadian Reformed Churches.
2. On the basis of the information provided by the CRCA in its report, Synod gratefully concludes that the FCS and PCK are faithful to the Word of God, their confessions and Church Orders.
3. The CRCA has fulfilled its mandate regarding our Ecclesiastical Fellowship with these churches.
4. The churches of Houston and Fergus suggest that the CRCA investigate the FCS and PCK with regard to certain practices. They do not give proof warranting the need for an investigation.

5. With regard to the suggested exchange of professors between Hamilton and Pusan, Synod considers that it is a matter which the CRCA should further investigate, in consultation with the Board of Governors, as to its feasibility.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide

1. To thank the CRCA for its work done since 1992.
2. To continue a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Free Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian Church in Korea in accordance with the adopted Rules.
3. To mandate the CRCA to investigate the suggested exchange of professors between Hamilton and Pusan.

III. OTHER CONTACTS

A. OBSERVATIONS

1. Regarding the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS) the CRCA was mandated to investigate the RCUS with a view to entering into a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship, making use of the findings of the church at Carman.
2. Regarding the RCUS the CRCA reports
 - a. that the RCUS was informed of the decision of General Synod 1992;
 - b. that an exchange of observers took place;
 - c. that the CRCA studied in detail the Constitution of the RCUS.
3. The CRCA recommends to renew the mandate with regard to the RCUS.
4. Regarding the Reformed Church in Zaire (RCZ) the CRCA reports
 - a. that the RCZ asked for close relations with the Canadian Reformed Churches;
 - b. that information was exchanged. At this moment the CRCA is still awaiting additional information from other sources.
5. The CRCA recommends that it be mandated to continue the investigation re RCZ and report to the next General Synod.
6. Regarding the Reformed Presbyterian Church General Assembly (RPCGA) the CRCA reports that
 - a. the RPCGA asked that ecclesiastical contact be established between the RCPGA and the Canadian Reformed Churches;
 - b. the CRCA asked for more information. At this moment no more information has come in.
7. The CRCA recommends that it be mandated to continue the investigation re RPCGA and report to the next General Synod.
8. The church at Fergus requests that the CRCA apply less haste in their endeavour to establish a relationship with the RPCGA.

B. CONSIDERATIONS

1. Regarding the RCUS the CRCA has been faithful in fulfilling its mandate, but could not complete it. The CRCA should be mandated to continue the contact with the RCUS.
2. Synod appreciates the cautious approach of the CRCA towards the requests of the RCZ and the RPCGA. This caution is in line with the requests of the church at Fergus.

3. The mandate of the CRCA allows the CRCA to continue investigating the requests of these churches. General Synod does not need to make a separate decision in this regard.

C. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide

1. To continue the mandate regarding the Reformed Church in the United States: "to investigate the RCUS with a view to entering into a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship, making use of the findings of the church at Carman."
2. To report on this to the churches at least six months prior to the next General Synod, and to the next General Synod.

IV. ICRC

A. OBSERVATIONS

1. The CRCA's mandate regarding the ICRC
 - a. that the Canadian Reformed Churches be represented at the next meeting of the ICRC;
 - b. that the CRCA report to the next Synod, as well as to the churches, giving a report and evaluation of the ICRC, Zwolle, the Netherlands (D.V.) 1993.
2. The CRCA reports that
 - a. The delegates attended the ICRC in Zwolle. The CRCA gives positive evaluation of this meeting. The ICRC provides an excellent forum for sharing experience and knowledge.
 - b. The FRCA have submitted a proposal to amend Art. III, sub 1 of the ICRC Constitution. The FRCA proposes to change the statement "to express and promote the unity of faith that the members churches have in Christ" to "to express and promote unity in the reformed faith which the member churches confess."
 - c. The CRCA considers that the decision of Synod 1992 on the ICRC indicate that the Canadian Reformed Churches are satisfied with the present formulation and therefore the CRCA recommends that no further changes be entertained and supported.
 - d. The CRCA recommended the Free Reformed Churches of North America (FRCNA) and the RCUS for membership in the ICRC. There is a question whether this was necessary according to the Constitution of the ICRC.
3. Regarding the ICRC the CRCA recommends
 - a. that the Canadian Reformed Churches continue to participate in the ICRC and to report to Synod 1998 containing its findings and evaluation;
 - b. that the Canadian Reformed Churches be represented at the next meeting of the Conference scheduled to take place in Korea during the month of August in the year of our Lord 1997;
 - c. that Dr. J. Visscher and Rev. C. VanSpronsen be sent as voting delegates and that in view of his familiarity with the language and customs of Korea, Dr. N.H. Gootjes be appointed as advisor.
4. The church at Guelph objects to the CRCA's recommendation of the FRCNA and the RCUS to the ICRC.

5. The church at Fergus requests Synod not to adopt the CRCA's recommendation regarding delegation to the ICRC, but to send retired ministers and elders.
6. The church at Houston suggests to regularly rotate the delegations sent to meetings of the ICRC and meetings with other churches with whom we are in contact or fellowship.

B. CONSIDERATIONS

1. The CRCA is to be thanked for fulfilling its mandate with regard to the ICRC.
2. With regard to the proposal of the FRCA the CRCA is correct in its consideration that this matter should not be supported.
3. The church at Guelph is correct that the CRCA should not have supported the request of the FRCNA and the RCUS. The letters of support state more than our Synods have decided with regard to these churches. These letters could pre-empt the discussion with these churches.
4. The suggestion of the church at Houston is a valuable suggestion. To rotate delegation from within and outside of the CRCA will enhance the experience of others. The CRCA will do well to keep this in mind in future recommendations. With respect to the suggestion of Houston to do the same to meetings with other churches with whom we are in contact, Synod considers that such a practice would hamper the functioning and continuity of the synodical committees.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide

1. That the Canadian Reformed Churches continue to participate in the ICRC and report to Synod 1998 its findings and evaluation.
2. That the Canadian Reformed Churches be represented at the next meeting of the Conference scheduled to take place in Korea during the month of August in the year of our Lord 1997;
3. That Rev. C. VanSpronsen and Dr. N.H. Gootjes be sent as voting delegates.

V. GENERAL ACTIVITIES

A. OBSERVATIONS

1. The CRCA reports that it issued declarations to several ministers who travelled abroad. It also published several reports and articles in *Clarion*.
2. The church at Guelph objects to the fact that the CRCA used *Clarion* to inform the churches of various matters. It contends that this is incorrect since *Clarion* is not an official publication of the Canadian Reformed Churches. In Guelph's opinion the CRCA should have notified all the consistories by letter.
3. Guelph also questions the practice of issuing declarations for ministers who are travelling abroad, because in its mandate the CRCA does not receive authorization for this practice.

B. CONSIDERATIONS

1. The church at Guelph is correct that, when the CRCA is mandated to report to the churches, a notice in *Clarion* does not suffice. The CRCA should also send a letter to the churches.
2. The Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship 4 & 5 imply the practice of issuing declarations for ministers who are travelling abroad. The CRCA does not need a specific authorization for this practice.

VI. MANDATE

A. OBSERVATIONS

1. The CRCA recommends the following mandate:
 - a. to investigate all the requests received for entering into ecclesiastical fellowship;
 - b. to respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests made to attend Assemblies, Synods, or meeting of other churches;
 - c. to report on its findings with suitable recommendations, to the next General Synod.
2. The church at Guelph requests a more focussed mandate for the CRCA as far as responding to new requests for Ecclesiastical Fellowship is concerned. Guelph's suggests that priority should be given to relations with churches in the Americas.
3. The church at Houston proposes to adopt a policy of concentrating primarily on investigating and contacting North American churches.

B. CONSIDERATIONS

Concerning the requests from Guelph and Houston, Synod refers to the consideration III.C. of Art. 112, of the Acts of General Synod 1992.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide to give the CRCA the following mandate:

1. to investigate all the requests received for entering into Ecclesiastical Fellowship;
2. to respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests made to attend Assemblies, Synods, or meetings of other churches;
3. to report on its findings with suitable recommendations to the next General Synod.

VII. RULES FOR ECCLESIASTICAL FELLOWSHIP

A. OBSERVATION

The church at London makes several proposals with regard to the current Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship.

B. CONSIDERATION

The Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship have been adopted by General Synod 1992. In order to change these Rules, the church at London must prove that the current Rules are against Scripture, Confession or the Church Order. London does not do this. Therefore Synod cannot deal with this.

C. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide not to grant the request of London.

VIII. APPEAL REV. P. KINGMA & BR. T. KINGMA

A. OBSERVATIONS

1. Rev. and br. T. Kingma urge Synod to reverse a trend, which in their opinion, can be traced from Synod to Synod, and which was confirmed at Synod 1992
 - a. by terminating the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship the C/ARCs have established with the FRCSA, FRCA, RCN and by returning to the Rules for Sister church correspondence as adopted by Synod 1962;

- b. by terminating the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship the C/ARCs have established with the PCK and FCS;
 - c. by terminating our membership of the ICRC.
2. The grounds for this appeal are
- a. that Synod 1992 changed the Rules without proving that the old rules were unscriptural. They state that new rules were put in practice with the purpose of establishing the possibility of intercommunion and pulpit exchange with churches with which the unity of the faith is missing;
 - b. that the Canadian Reformed Churches do not have the unity of the faith with these churches seeing that they have the Westminster Confession;
 - c. that within the ICRC this unity of the faith is missing as well.

B. CONSIDERATIONS

- 1. The rules adopted by Synod 1992 are not different in principle, but a new formulation of the old rules. The appellants fail to prove that the new rules are against the Scriptures, the Confession or the Church Order.
- 2. As to relationships with churches that maintain the Westminster Standards, this matter will be dealt with in connection with several appeals yet before this assembly.

C. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide to deny the appeal of Rev. P. Kingma and br. T. Kingma.

IX. FINANCES

A. OBSERVATIONS

- 1. Synod 1992 instructed the CRCA to submit a financial statement and a budget to this Synod.
- 2. The CRCA submits a financial statement for the period 1993-1994 and a budget for 1995-1998.
- 3. In the period 1993-1994 the CRCA spent \$ 14,052.98. The proposed budget is \$ 12,000.00.

B. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide to adopt the following budget for the CRCA:

ICRC (fees)	2,500.00
Meeting of ICRC	3,000.00
Meeting RCUS	1,500.00
Miscellaneous	3,000.00
Total	\$ 10,000.00

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 102

Contact with the OPC

Committee I presents its proposal. After discussion the Committee takes the report back once more for further consideration.

ARTICLE 103

Adjournment

Elder T. VanPopta requests that Psalm 124 :1 - 3 be sung and leads in prayer of thanksgiving. The chairman adjourns the meeting.

MORNING SESSION – TUESDAY, MAY 23, 1995

ARTICLE 104

Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting. He requests the Psalm 18: 1, 2 be sung and reads from Scripture Ephesians 6: 1 - 9 and leads in prayer. Roll call is held. All members of Synod are present. He welcomes Grade 6 of the John Calvin School in Yarrow.

ARTICLE 105

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 93 - 103 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 106

Contact with the OPC

The following amendment is presented:

To add the following paragraph between the existing paragraphs C and D under part VI Recommendations:

D. To offer to the OPC a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship under the adopted rules and if this offer is accepted, to formalize this relationship in a manner satisfactory to both church federations.

by renaming the existing paragraphs D, E, F, G, H as paragraphs E, F, G, H & I

by deleting the existing paragraph D(1) and replacing it with the following:

1. to continue discussions with the OPC, using the statement of Synod Lincoln 1992 (Acts 1992, Art. 72, IV.A.1.e.i,ii) as a guideline to arrive at a mutual understanding with the OPC on the matters of fencing of the Lord's Table and confessional membership.

And by deleting the second paragraph under the existing D(4) and existing paragraph E.

The Executive rules that this amendment is not germane to the Committee's proposal and is therefore disallowed. After some discussion how to proceed, the Chair rules that the proposal of Committee I is the main motion currently under discussion.

The following motion is presented:

to amend V.B.3 as follows:

The complaint that the matters at stake (confessional membership, admission to the Lord's Table) are of a confessional nature actually deals with certain practices in the OPC and not its confessional documents. That the problem does not lie in the Westminster Standards as such is confirmed by the fact that the FCS, maintaining the same standards as the OPC, has different practices with regard to confessional membership and the fencing of the Lord's Table. It cannot be denied that these practices give reason for concern since they touch the very nature of the church and what the church confesses regarding its marks and therefore they need to be clarified.

This amendment is DEFEATED

Committee I Presents:

Agenda Items VIII. A. 6, 7, 15, 20, 21, C. 5, 6, 7, 10 - 15, 17, 21, 25, 27, 29, 30, 32, 37, 39, 41, 44, 45, 47, 48, D. 10

I. MATERIAL

- A. Report from the Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (CCOPC)
- B. Letter from the church at Coaldale re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 72
- C. Letter from the church at Orangeville re: same
- D. Letter from the church at Fergus re: appeal from church at Orangeville.
- E. Letter from Rev. P. Kingma and br. T. Kingma re: Ecclesiastical Contact with Presbyterian Churches
- F. Appeal from the church at Blue Bell re: General Synod Coaldale 1977, Art. 91 and General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 72
- G. Appeal from the church at Carman re: Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the OPC
- H. Overture from the church at Surrey re: Relationship with the OPC
- I. Appeal from the church at Grand Rapids re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 128
- J. Appeal from the church at Grand Rapids re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 111
- K. Appeal from the church at Grand Rapids re: General Synod Coaldale 1977, Art. 91
- L. Overture from the church at Grand Rapids re: Goal of Contact with the OPC
- M. Appeal from the church at Grand Rapids re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 72
- N. Appeal from the church at Watford re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 72
- O. Letter from the church at Port Kells re: Report CCOPC
- P. Overture from the church at Chilliwack re: Report CCOPC.
- Q. Letter from the church at Carman re: Report CCOPC
- R. Appeal from the church at London re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 72
- S. Letter from the church at Neerlandia re: Report CCOPC.
- T. Appeal from br. W. DeHaan re: Relationship with the OPC
- U. Appeal from the church at Attercliffe re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 72
- V. Letter from the church at Burlington-East re: Report CCOPC
- W. Appeal from the church at Lincoln re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 72
- X. Letter from the church at Houston re: Report CCOPC
- Y. Letter from the church at Winnipeg re: Report CCOPC
- Z. Letter from the church at Smithville re: Relationship with the OPC
- AA. Appeal from the church at Brampton re: Report CCOPC
- BB. Appeal from br. and sr. B. Jansen re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 72
- CC. Letter from church at Fergus, re: Report CCOPC

II. ADMISSIBILITY

Synod declares the agenda items admissible with the following proviso:

Agenda items A 15, 20, 21, C 18, 30, 32, 45, 47, 48 should be declared inadmissible because Guidelines for Synod state that "all appeals should ordinarily be at the convening church at least one month before Synod convenes," and these were submitted late with no reasons given to justify the lateness of their submission. However, they are declared admissible on the ground that they deal with an

issue of major concern in the churches, and to avoid the impression of not doing full justice to the matter.

III. INTRODUCTION

Synod 1992 gave the Committee for Contact with the OPC the following specific mandate:

- A. To maintain the contact with the OPC, according to the rules for “Ecclesiastical Contact” as determined by Synod Coaldale 1977, and to request comment on the rules of ecclesiastical fellowship to determine whether these are presently acceptable.
- B. To continue the discussion of divergences which are considered to be impediments to ecclesiastical fellowship, and to see whether these divergencies stem from ecclesiological and/or historical differences (as outlined in [the considerations] IV, A3 vi...), with the purpose of having these impediments removed.
- C. To respond to the question of CEIR to the problem of receiving congregations and ministers that have been or are members of the OPC, as outlined under Considerations IV.A.2.a, b, and c.
- D. To continue to discuss and evaluate the current third party relationships of the OPC.
- E. To inform the OPC that the matters which still require resolution for the establishment of full ecclesiastical fellowship are (see [Consideration] IV, A3v)
 - a. the matter of confessional membership
 - b. the matter of supervision of the Lord’s table
 - c. the matter of the relationship with the Christian Reformed Church.
- F. to serve the churches with regular reports of the work of the Committee and to serve General Synod 1995 with a report, to be sent to the churches at least six months prior to the beginning of Synod.

IV. OBSERVATIONS

- A. Re: Report of the Committee for Contact with the OPC
 1. Mandate Synod 1992
 - a. With respect to the first point of the mandate, meetings were held, and the rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship were presented to the CEIR, which made some suggestions for alternate wording. On the whole the rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship were received favourably.
 - b. The Committee found it nearly impossible to fulfil its mandate because of the CEIR’s reactions to the decision of Synod Lincoln 1992 to extend a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship to the PCK and the FCS. The CEIR questions whether the Canadian Reformed Churches are dealing fairly and evenhandedly with the OPC, and not applying a double standard in interchurch dealings. Further, it feels that the OPC is being held to more rigorous and more exacting requirements for a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship than other churches.
 - c. With respect to receiving OPC congregations into the federation of Canadian Reformed Churches, the OPC’s main concern in these matters regards good ecclesiastical order.
 - d. The OPC is heading towards an “hour of decision” with respect to the CRCNA. The matter of third party relationships was discussed but not evaluated.

- e. Point 5 of the mandate could not be fulfilled due to the reaction as noted under point (b).
 - f. Reports were published in *Clarion*, and the report of the Committee for Synod was submitted to the churches in Feb. 1995.
2. The CCOPC further reports
 - a. The Committee is of the opinion that discussions now take place in a different framework, due to a change in our concept of foreign relations (from “full correspondence” to “Ecclesiastical Fellowship”), and entering into Ecclesiastical Fellowship with Presbyterian churches.
 - b. The Committee outlines two possible directions with respect to how to proceed in our contact with the OPC. The first one is to continue the discussions regarding the divergences as a precondition for Ecclesiastical Fellowship. The second one is to offer the OPC a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship and to discuss these divergences within such a relationship.
 - c. The Committee also feels that there is little point in further discussion of the divergences as such, since both sides have a clear understanding of each other’s position.
 3. The CCOPC recommends
 - a. To gratefully acknowledge the commitment of the OPC to be faithful to the Scriptures and to defend the Reformed heritage.
 - b. To consider the comments of CEIR on the Rules of Ecclesiastical Fellowship.
 - c. To use the statement of Synod Lincoln 1992 (Acts 1992, Art. 72, IV.A.1e.i,ii) as a guideline to arrive at an agreement with the OPC on the matters of the fencing of the Lord’s Table and confessional membership.
 - d. To note with gratitude the OPC’s continued warnings against the unscriptural course taken by the Christian Reformed Church in North America, and to advise the OPC that the severing of this relationship is necessary before we can enter into a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with them.
 - e. To combine the work of the Committee for Contact with the OPC with that of the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad.
- B. Various Churches have reacted to the Report of the Committee for Contact with the OPC.
1. The church at Surrey in response to the report of the CCOPC proposes that General Synod offer the OPC full Ecclesiastical Fellowship according to the adopted rules for such a relationship, and that further contact with the OPC be maintained via the CRCA. The basic ground is that if the OPC is a true church it should be treated as a sister church. Reference is also made to the Committee report which emphasizes that the OPC is a true church.
 2. The church at Port Kells requests Synod not to proceed further towards Ecclesiastical Fellowship until we clarify our view of the church, the nature of Ecclesiastical Fellowship, the status of the “Evaluation of Divergences” as received by General Synod 1986 and the matters “that still require resolution” before we can establish Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the OPC. Port Kells is of the opinion that the divergences and those matters that “still require resolution” have not been explained adequately to convince the members of the Canadian Reformed Churches that they are not impediments to Ecclesiastical Fellowship. Further, the inconsistencies in the

decisions of Classis, Regional Synods, and Synods 1977-1992 have caused confusion, conflict, and division in our federation of churches, and also for the OPC.

3. The church at Chilliwack requests Synod to decide that all three divergences be resolved before entering into Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the OPC. To leave them unresolved would discredit Art. 61 C.O. Further, a mandate given to a committee should be completed.
4. The church at Carman makes the following comments on the report of the CCOPC:
 - a. Synod is requested not to adopt the recommendation to “gratefully acknowledge the commitment of the OPC to be faithful to the Scriptures and to defend the Reformed heritage.” The basic ground is that since the divergences have not been resolved this is inconsistent. Further, this might affect our churches adversely.
 - b. Regarding Recommendation B., Carman requests Synod to mandate the Committee to complete its mandate.
 - c. Regarding Recommendation C., Synod is requested not to adopt this. This is addressed in Carman’s appeal.
 - d. Regarding Recommendation D., Synod is asked to adopt this, but at the same time it must be made clear that also the other two divergences must be resolved.
 - e. Regarding Recommendation E., Synod is asked not to adopt the idea that the work of the CCOPC be combined with the CRCA because this would treat the OPC as a foreign church, whereas the aim should be merger resulting in one federation of churches. Synod is requested to maintain the original purpose of reaching full correspondence, that is, merger.
5. In response to the Report of the CCOPC the church at Neerlandia remarks
 - a. That Synod impress on the committees to submit their report six months before a Synod is to be held.
 - b. That it is thankful for the recommendation to combine the work with the CRCA, and the Committee’s recommendation that the OPC must break its contact with the CRCNA.
 - c. That there is some concern about the consequences of the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship especially with regard to the preaching, including the calling of ministers. Synod is asked to mandate the Committee to investigate these matters further before Ecclesiastical Fellowship is seriously considered.
6. The church at Burlington-East expresses its appreciation and agreement with the recommendations of the CCOPC.
7. The church at Houston proposes to continue the mandate of the Committee for another three years, and to have the three divergences resolved before entering into Ecclesiastical Fellowship. As ground it is stated that the reference in Art. 50 C.O. to “minor points” refers to liturgical matters and not to matters of confession and church polity.
8. The church at Winnipeg comments that Recommendation E. of the report of the CCOPC is not wise, for the CRCA has enough work, and it would break the continuity so important at this crucial time when ecclesiastical contact is so nigh-ready to be changed to Ecclesiastical Fellowship. Further, with respect to Recommendation C, it feels that the mandate should be maintained to resolve the three divergences.

9. The church at Smithville cautions General Synod from going into a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship when the remaining divergences are not solved satisfactorily to both churches. Further, fear is expressed of creating disunity in our churches by seeking unity with the OPC.
 10. The church at Brampton appeals the CCOPC's proposal to establish Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the OPC.
 11. The church at Fergus requests that Synod proceeds with the greatest caution especially since there is a real danger for disunity within the churches. It recommends that Synod adopt all the recommendations, except for E.
- C. Appeals from the churches and individual members regarding the relationship with the OPC
1. The church at Carman is convinced that there are serious confessional differences which must be resolved or Ecclesiastical Fellowship is impossible. Synod is requested
 - a. "[T]o judge that what we confess from Scripture in Lord's Day 30 Q.A. 82 of the Heidelberg Catechism and upheld by Article 61 of the Church Order is not maintained in the OPC. Namely, that: '... according to the command of Christ and His apostles, the Christian church is duty bound to exclude such persons...' from the use of the sacraments."
 - b. "[T]o judge that the church pluriformity practiced in the OPC is contrary to what we confess in Belgic Confession, Article 29 and makes it impossible to maintain scripture and confession."
 - c. On the basis of the above, Synod is requested "to call the OPC to conform to God's Word concerning these points, and, if the OPC fails to do so, take the sad but necessary step to terminate the temporary ecclesiastical contact.
 - d. Synod is also requested to re-investigate the PCK and FCS, and if they have the same practices to take appropriate action.
 2. The church at Grand Rapids requests Synod to rescind the 1977 declaration that the OPC is a true Church according to Art. 29 B.C., and end the temporary ecclesiastical contact. Further, it requests that an explanation and apology be sent, along with a reaffirmation of our desire to come to full correspondence. Grand Rapids considers that one cannot recognize a church as true, without entering into a sister church relationship. It is of the opinion that the differences are not merely administrative but of such a serious nature that these still have not been removed in the 18 years that have intervened since the recognition of the OPC as a true church.
 3. The church at Grand Rapids overtures Synod to change the goal of our contact with the OPC from Ecclesiastical Fellowship to full ecclesiastical unity, by which they mean federative unity. The ground for this overture is that Canada and the USA are often regarded as one entity ecclesiastically. At present, both federations have churches in both countries. By pursuing Ecclesiastical Fellowship you give the message to the churches in the U.S. that they should unite with the OPC, which would mean they would have to submit to the Westminster Standards and a hierarchical system of church government.
 4. The church at Watford requests Synod to decide to discuss the doctrinal divergences further before offering a sister church relationship. Further, the Committee should put more effort into investigating local practices within OPC congregations, and the OPC should be invited to do likewise within our churches. Watford bases this on the conviction that the divergences are not of a minor nature but rather of a confessional nature.

5. The church at London requests Synod to rescind the decision of 1977, ending the temporary ecclesiastical contact, and to continue discussions of all the divergences on a committee level. This is based on the fact that the OPC adheres “to a confession and form of government of which several points are contrary to the Word of God.” They consider the relationship with the PCK and FCS as unwise and premature for this reason as well.
 6. Rev. P. Kingma and br. T. Kingma plead strongly that the churches break off Ecclesiastical Fellowship with all churches of Presbyterian background (OPC, PCK, FCS) on the ground that THE unity of faith is only possible when churches have the same confessional standards and live by the same Church Order. They stress very strongly the history of the churches in the Netherlands, the confessions used by those churches, and especially the points learned through the Liberation, as the norm for recognizing the church gathering work of Jesus Christ.
 7. Br. W. DeHaan appeals to Synod to discontinue the Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the OPC, nevertheless trying to convince the OPC of the necessity of a union.
 8. Br. and sr. B. Jansen request Synod “to examine the erroneous decision made at Synod 1992 which declared the divergences to no longer be ‘impediments to ecclesiastical unity.’” They are disturbed by the ongoing minimalization of the divergences between the Westminster Confession and the Three Forms of Unity. They see these as major issues which find their roots in the marks of the true Church. This can be seen in the Presbyterian views regarding the Lord’s Supper, the covenant, Christ’s church gathering work, non-confessional membership, and church government.
- D. Appeals from churches and individual members against Art. 72 of General Synod Lincoln, 1992
1. The church at Orangeville requests Synod
 - a. To revoke Art. 72,V,B, while giving the CCOPC the mandate to investigate and report whether the hindrances to ecclesiastical fellowship with the OPC have been removed in accordance with the Scriptures. The basic ground is that Synod 1992 prematurely concluded that these divergences were not impediments to Ecclesiastical Fellowship. Orangeville suggests that one can only speak of a unity in the true faith when the confessional documents do not contradict each other on any point.
 - b. To decide that Synod 1992 prematurely offered a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship to the PCK and FCS. The ground given is that both these federations have the Westminster Standards and the Presbyterian FOG, which have errors or unscriptural elements which are hindrances to full fellowship.
 2. The church at Fergus supports the appeal of Orangeville and expresses the fear that “an unscriptural, forced upon the churches ‘unity’, will result into greater disunity or – may the Lord forbid – a possible split.”
 3. The church at Grand Rapids overtures Synod to acknowledge the deficiency in the consideration of Synod Lincoln which says, “this is not to say that an identical practice is required with respect to the supervision of the Lord’s table to come to ecclesiastical fellowship...and that a profession of the Reformed faith is required in the presence....” (Art. 72.IV.A.1.e.i.). The ground for this is that while you can interview as to the Reformed faith, it is virtually impossible for the elders to determine whether or not the guests live in a godly manner.

4. The church at Attercliffe appeals General Synod 1992 Art. 72.V.B., which states that the divergencies have been sufficiently discussed to confirm that these are not impediments to Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the OPC but may be discussed within the framework of church unity. It asks Synod to rescind this decision. The grounds given are that this decision is unsubstantiated. Further, Attercliffe believes that General Synod must either judge the divergences or rescind the 1977 decision regarding the OPC, for it sees the divergences as being of a confessional nature. The church at Attercliffe fears that proceeding to full Ecclesiastical Fellowship would seriously endanger the unity and faithfulness of the Canadian Reformed Churches, and relativize the promise we have made in the Subscription Form and thus jeopardize our confessional integrity as churches. They feel it is our calling to defend what we have received from the Lord in the past.
5. The church at Lincoln asks General Synod to revoke Synod 1992's decision as recorded in Art. 72 B,V, because "...Synod Lincoln 1992 still did not judge the divergencies from 1971 and 1986 and that the mandate of CCOPC of Synod '89 was not completed for reasons given and that Synod should have instructed the CCOPC to continue to evaluate the divergencies in light of Scriptures and Confessions." Lincoln also indicates that unless the divergences can be resolved in submission to God's Word and the Three Forms of Unity, the relationship with the OPC should be terminated.
6. The church at Blue Bell submits an appeal against the decisions of Synod Lincoln 1992, Articles 72, 111, 128, and Synod Coaldale 1977, Art. 91. The requests is made to rescind the decision re. the OPC since it was made without proper grounds, and it is questionable whether the OPC is a confessional church. The church at Blue Bell suggests that a committee be formed to call the OPC to obedience on the divergences.
7. The church at Coaldale requests General Synod to judge that
 - a. Synod Lincoln 1992 in its Recommendation C.2.5. (Acts Art. 72) did not take into account the form of ecclesiastical unity the Canadian Reformed Churches and the OPC are pursuing, namely fellowship between separate and independent federations as distinct from federated unity;
 - b. the three divergences which Synod Lincoln considers to be still outstanding matters, are no impediments to ecclesiastical fellowship between two independent federations and can be discussed in the framework of church unity as in Recomm. B."

As a consequence Coaldale asks General Synod to honour the 1977 decision to recognize the OPC as a true church according to Article 29 of the Belgic Confession, by entering into fellowship with the OPC according to the Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship, or other rules which are mutually acceptable to both federations.

- E. Appeals regarding the Free Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian Church of Korea.
 1. The church at Grand Rapids requests that the decision to declare the FCS a true church and establish Ecclesiastical Fellowship be rescinded, that an explanation and apology be sent, that we reaffirm our desire to continue contact and come to full Ecclesiastical Fellowship, and that the CRCA investigate these matters and report to the next G.S. This request is based on the fact that the FCS holds teachings (civil magistrate and doctrine of the church) which are in conflict with the Scripture and our confessions.

2. The church at Grand Rapids requests that the decision to establish Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the PCK be rescinded because the issue of confessional membership and the supervision of the Lord's Supper table should have been resolved before entering into Ecclesiastical Fellowship, that an explanation and apology be sent, that we reaffirm our desire to continue contact and come to full Ecclesiastical Fellowship, and that the CRCA investigate these matters and report to the next General Synod.
3. The church at Orangeville also requests Synod to judge that Ecclesiastical Fellowship was offered prematurely to the FCS and PCK.
4. The church at Blue Bell requests that the Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the FCS and the PCK be withdrawn having been made prematurely, before the divergences were resolved.

V. CONSIDERATIONS

A. Re: The fulfilment of the mandate of Synod 1992 and responses from the churches

1. Though the Committee found it nearly impossible to fulfil its mandate, it appears that the Committee was diligent to do so. It is understandable that the situation became difficult for them because of Synod 1992's decision with respect to the FCS and the PCK, and the OPC's reaction to it.
2. It is understandable that the OPC would be confused due to the formal set-up of the various ways we deal with our interchurch relations, namely, that we have separate committees for the OPC and other churches abroad. The reaction of the CEIR of the OPC is, however, regrettable. Their charge of applying a double standard (re: admission to Lord's Table, and confessional membership) is not substantiated. For example, information available to Synod regarding the Lord's Supper, indicates that there are different practices with regards to the supervision of guests at the Lord's Table in the FCS compared to the OPC (see Acts 1989, p. 161; Acts 1992, p. 126; see also Report CCOPC II.B.4). It must be admitted that with respect to the PCK Synod is not able to evaluate the situation with the information available to us.
3. It is noteworthy that despite the difficulties, and the unresolved divergences, the Committee recommends the grateful acknowledgement of the commitment of the OPC to be faithful to the Scriptures.
4. Despite having some questions about some of the terms in the rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship the CEIR responded favourably to these rules.
5. The meeting held in Grand Island – Sept. 27, 1994, appears to have been a very good meeting which gives room for continued discussion about the divergences. The fact that the OPC delegates did not react negatively to the report of the ICRC Committee on Theological Affirmation is also a good sign. It suggests that they agree with the statement that "we can say that members of churches that are recognized as true churches should be allowed to participate in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, upon valid attestation or certification."
6. Though there are developments which indicate that the OPC is coming to the "hour of decision" with respect to the CRC, these developments will need to be followed closely. The OPC should be sensitive to our predicament in this situation due to our history with the CRC.
7. The reasoning of the Committee which seems to lead its Recommendation E, namely, that the OPC Committee be combined with the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad, is based on an unsubstantiated claim

that the discussions now take place in a different framework, due to a change in our concept of foreign relations. In light of the request of the Committee to conclude matters and for the sake of continuity, it is best to maintain the Committee.

8. The concern expressed about the consequences of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the OPC with respect to opening of pulpits to each other's ministers and calling of ministers are adequately covered by the rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship (Acts 1992, p. 32, rule 5 and compare Consideration D, p. 33) and the Church Order.
 9. Synod notes that the church at Brampton appeals the Report of the CCOPC. Since it is not possible to appeal a Committee Report, Synod cannot deal with it. It should be noted, however, that the concerns raised by Brampton are covered by the answers given to other submissions.
- B. Re: Appeals from churches and individual members regarding the relationship with the OPC
1. The argument that recognizing a church as a true church implies having full Ecclesiastical Fellowship is confessionally warranted, as is stated for example not only by the churches at Coaldale and Surrey, but also by the church at Grand Rapids. The request to offer Ecclesiastical Fellowship to the OPC without any condition does present a problem to Canadian Reformed Churches due to their history with CRC, although it is also understandable that it is hard for the OPC to break off contact due to their history with the CRC. It should be noted that the OPC continues to warn the CRC, and will do so as long as it does not compromise its own confessional integrity.
 2. The request to rescind the decision of 1977 because it was made without proper grounds is a repetition of requests submitted to previous Synods. All General Synods since 1980 rejected requests to rescind the decision on the ground that the divergences are not of such a nature that the OPC is not a true church. Therefore this request need not be dealt with again as there are no new grounds (Art. 33 C.O.).
 3. The complaint that the matters at stake (confessional membership, admission to the Lord's Table, contact with the CRC) are of a confessional nature actually deals with certain *practices* in the OPC and not its confessional documents. The practices with respect to the admission of guests at the Lord's table, confessional membership, and contact with the CRC have not been proven to undermine the OPC's confessional integrity as a true Church. It cannot be denied that these practices give reason for concern, but they are not proven to be a matter of the Westminster Standards. Rather, these are more a matter of the OPC living up to its standards. That the problem does not lie in the Westminster Standards as such is confirmed by the fact that the FCS, maintaining the same standards as the OPC, has different practices with regard to confessional membership and the fencing of the Lord's table. Therefore, there is reason to continue to discuss these practices, but they cannot in the end be made a condition for Ecclesiastical Fellowship. Further, Synod 1992 did not mandate the CCOPC to see if these were indeed confessional matters but whether they stem from ecclesiological and/or historical differences.
 4. To rescind the decision of 1977, and then continue to speak to the OPC on a committee level would undermine our credibility as churches. Rescinding the decision of 1977 would in effect be the same as declaring the OPC false. When you speak with another church with the goal of Ecclesiastical Fellowship, then you can only do that when you treat each other as equals.

5. Though it is true that there will be some overlap of these federations in Ecclesiastical Fellowship as we live on the same continent, this is unavoidable under the present situation where we have our different histories, confessional documents, and forms of government. Although we should strive to become one organizationally, it is unreasonable to leave recognition and fellowship until that goal be attained.
 6. The suggestion to have a committee investigate local practices is not acceptable. We judge each other not on the basis of local practices, but on the basis of our confessions and official documents. This is not a practical request, and there is a danger of judging the “body” by its weakest members.
- C. Re: Appeals from churches and individual members against Art. 72 of General Synod Lincoln, 1992
1. Regarding Art. 72.V.B.
 - a. A number of churches contend that the decision of General Synod 1992 as recorded in Article 72.V.B was premature since it has not been proven that the divergences had been sufficiently discussed to show that there is a unity in the true faith.

The suggestion made for example by the church at Orangeville, that you can only speak of a unity in *the* true faith when the confessional documents do not contradict each other on any point, does not adequately keep in mind that churches have their own histories which has influenced the way they formulated their confessional documents. Further, they have not proven that the confessions are contradictory. On certain points they can be said to be complementary. It is also good to keep in mind that in the “Evaluation of Divergences” it is indicated that the differences in confessional statements are not such as to warrant the conclusion that the OPC is not a true church.
 - b. This same point is to be kept in mind in connection with the submissions from Grand Rapids, Blue Bell, and Rev. P. Kingma and br. T. Kingma, which suggest that one can only speak of unity in faith when churches adhere to the same confessions (i.e. the Three Forms of Unity). Historically this has not been the position of the Reformed Churches. It is well known that already since the days of the Secession, there was good contact with churches maintaining the Westminster Standards, and they were recognized as true churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. By insisting that unity requires adherence to only the Three Forms of Unity we step out of the historic line maintained by the Reformed Churches. Although there is a recognition that the Westminster Standards on certain points might benefit from emendation (see Acts Synod 1986, p. 146), these points do not detract from the fact that churches maintaining the Westminster Standards can be considered true churches (see Acts Synod 1986, p. 147). We should also remember that the aim at this point is not federative unity but Ecclesiastical Fellowship, which does not require that we share the exact same confessional documents. Further, we should realize that as a church which has developed through immigration, we will come across churches from different countries and their particular confessional documents that may differ somewhat, but still summarize the Reformed faith.
 - c. In all this it has to be asked: how do we use our confessions? We should be careful not to use the one set of standards as a norm to

judge the other one. Not the agreement with the Three Forms of Unity makes the Westminster Standards a Reformed confession, but whether they are in agreement with the Word of God. Our confessions refer us to the Scriptures as to how we can determine whether or not we can speak of true faith and who may attend the table of the Lord. (see Heidelberg catechism: Q.A. 21 – What is true faith? Q.A. 22 – What then must a Christian believe? Q.A. 81 – Who are to come to the table of the Lord?) In our own confessions we acknowledge that unity of faith is not limited to those who hold exactly the same confessional documents (Belgic Confession, Art. 27; Lord's Day 21 Q.A. 54.). By insisting on the need for complete harmony in confessional documents among churches of different historical background, there is no eye for the work of the Lord in history, and impassable barriers are raised before Ecclesiastical Fellowship can be reached.

2. It has been stated that Synod 1992's consideration "that a general verbal warning is insufficient but that there must be at least a confession of the Reformed faith in the presence of the supervising elders before someone can be admitted to the Lord's table" (Acts 1992, Art. 72.IV.A.1.e.i.) is not in harmony with Art. 61 of the C.O. This complaint suggests that Art. 61 is the only possible way to execute what we confess in Lord's Day 30 Q.A. 81, 82. However, this suggestion is not proven from Scripture.
3. With regard to the complaint that the divergences have not been judged, the General Synod 1992 acknowledged the fact that Synod 1986 received this report as "the detailed evaluation of the divergences which Synod 1977 neglected to give for its decision to recognize the OPC as a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ." Synod 1992 concluded that this report does substantiate the decision of 1977 and that therefore these divergences had been discussed sufficiently as far as being an impediment to Ecclesiastical Fellowship is concerned. It should be noted however, that this does not mean that the divergences should no longer be discussed within the framework of Ecclesiastical Fellowship. This conclusion is fully warranted when it is kept in mind that Synod 1986 received the Report of the "Evaluation..." as a fulfilment of the mandate given by Synod 1980: "For the benefit of our churches a detailed evaluation of these divergences showing them not to be an impediment in recognizing the OPC as a true church, should yet be provided" (Acts 1986, Art. 97 II.C.3, p. 69). It should be noted that no church reacted to the substance of the evaluation of divergences received by Synod 1971 and Synod 1986. None of the submissions challenge that report. The appellants are reacting to the status of the Report rather than the substance of the Report. The burden of proof that the divergences are not discussed sufficiently and therefore are still impediments for Ecclesiastical Fellowship lies with the appellants, which they do not provide.
4. The assumption made that Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the OPC would mean that we take over their confessions and will lead to losing what we have gained in our history, and accordingly, losing our identity, and not being faithful to the Subscription Form, is a wrong assumption. Each church maintains its own confessions and church order. By entering into Ecclesiastical Fellowship we are not adopting the Westminster Standards nor the Presbyterian Form of Government. Therefore it is a misunderstanding that the decision of 1992 means that the matters involved in the divergences now can be taught and maintained in our own federation. For that reason, Synods have maintained that the divergences continue to be matters of discussion with the OPC. Even though we should be thankful for

our heritage, and we should maintain what we have learned through history this should not necessarily be the norm for others. As Canadian Reformed Churches we are called to share with others what we have received, as they must share with us. It has not been proven that having Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the OPC will undo the gains of the Liberation. We may not limit the church gathering work of Jesus Christ *only* to what he has done with his church in the Netherlands.

5. When it is stated that B.C. 29 and FOG IV.4 contradict each other because the B.C. says that the true and false church are easily distinguished and the FOG says that this distinction is obscured, it is overlooked that the FOG speaks about the fact that the “visible *unity* of the Body of Christ...is greatly obscured.” The FOG IV also speaks about churches that have become Synagogues of Satan. Further, it should be kept in mind that the view of the church has been dealt with under the divergences, which Synod 1992 said had been sufficiently discussed.
 6. With respect to the suggestion that Synod not proceed any further since it could lead to further confusion and disunity in the churches, Synod 1992 already stated that this confusion can only be resolved through a proper resolution of the matters which still hinder full ecclesiastical fellowship (Acts Synod 1992, Art. 72.B.6).
- D. Re: Appeals to rescind decision regarding the FCS and PCK
1. The requests to rescind the decision to have Ecclesiastical Fellowship or to declare that Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the FCS and PCK was premature is based on the assumption that these two federations have the same position as the OPC which to date has prevented Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the OPC. This assumption has been addressed under Consideration A.1.b.
 2. With respect to the doctrinal point about the civil magistrate raised by the church at Grand Rapids, it should be kept in mind that this issue is not fully resolved in our own federation (see the words in brackets in Art. 36 of the Belgic Confession). The opinion that the views of the role of the civil magistrate expressed in the Scots Confession as well as in the Westminster Confession are contrary to Scripture and our Confession, is not proven by the conclusion that these views are not taught in the Three Forms of Unity. Further, with respect to the doctrine of the church, it is uncertain what edition was used. The two editions consulted do not agree with the quote “Then wherever these notes are seen and continue for any time, *be the number complete or not*, there beyond any doubt is the true Kirk of Christ.” Instead, it reads, “Wheresoever, then these former notes are seen, and of any time continue, (*be the number never so few, about two or three*) there, without all doubt, is the true Church of Christ; who according to his promise is in the midst of them: Matt. xviii.19, 20” This sheds a different light on the matter.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide

- A. To thank the Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church for the work done.
- B. To acknowledge with gratitude the commitment of the OPC to be faithful to the Scriptures and to defend the Reformed heritage.
- C. To note with gratitude the OPC’s continued warnings against the unscriptural course taken by the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

- D. To continue the Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with the following mandate:
1. to work towards formalizing a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship under the adopted rules by using the statement of Synod Lincoln 1992 (Acts 1992, Art. 72, IV.A.1.e.i,ii) as a guideline to arrive at an agreement with the OPC on the matters of the fencing of the Lord's Table and confessional membership;
 2. to communicate to the OPC the discomfort in our churches with respect to their continued relationship with the CRCNA;
 3. to communicate that there is a need to continue to discuss the differences in confession and church polity in accordance with the rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship (Rule 6);
 4. to serve the churches with regular reports of the work of the Committee, and to serve General Synod 1998 with a report, to be sent to the churches at least six months prior to the beginning of Synod.

Synod expresses the hope that in this way the protracted discussions between the Canadian Reformed Churches and the OPC can be concluded by the establishment of a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship within the next three years so that, the Lord willing, it can be finalized by Synod 1998.

- E. To deny the requests for Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the OPC at this time.
 F. To deny the requests to revoke or rescind Art. 72.V.B. of General Synod Lincoln 1992.
 G. To deny the requests to rescind the decision of 1977.
 H. To deny the requests to rescind, or to declare premature the decision of Synod Lincoln 1992 re: FCS & PCK (Art. 111, 128).

ADOPTED

The chairman mentions that in making this decision Synod has dealt with matters of great concern within the churches. He thanks the brothers that in spite of marked differences the discussion was conducted in a fair, honest and brotherly fashion. It is now the task of the churches to work with this decision.

ARTICLE 107

Farewell Elder G. VanWoudenberg

Elder G. VanWoudenberg requests to be excused for the remainder of Synod due to a funeral. This request is granted. He wishes Synod the blessing of the Lord in its further discussions.

ARTICLE 108

Finances of Synod

Committee IV presents:

- Agenda items VIII. E. 11, XII.
- I. MATERIAL
 - A. Statement of income and expenses of the Finance Committee of General Synod Lincoln 1992.
 - B. Audit report by the church at Rockway of the books of the Finance Committee of Synod 1992.
 - II. OBSERVATIONS
 - A. General Synod Lincoln appointed the church at Rockway to audit the books of the finances of General Synod 1992.

B. The financial statement discloses the following expenses:

Stationary/Postage/Telephone	987.01
Travel (delegates Reg. Synod East)	1935.09
Travel (delegates Reg. Synod West)	4450.28
Food	1345.05
Equip't & rentals	1511.92
Printing	11684.44
Miscellaneous	706.24
Total	22620.03

C. The church at Rockway has audited the books of the finances of General Synod 1992, and reports that they were found in good order.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide

- A. To express appreciation for the work done by the Finance Committee of Synod 1992 and by the auditing church.
- B. To discharge the Finance Committee for Synod 1992 on the basis of the auditors report of the church at Rockway.
- C. To appoint a Finance Committee General Synod 1995 which will pay the expenses incurred by General Synod 1995, using funds submitted by the churches in each Regional Synod. This Committee will forward any balance of funds of General Synod 1995 to the convening church of the next General Synod.
- D. To appoint as Finance Committee of Synod 1995: br. E. DeHaan, br. F. Flokstra and sr. R. VanOene.
- E. To appoint the church at Yarrow to audit the books of the finances of Synod 1995, and to report to the next General Synod.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 109

Appeals Burlington-East and Fergus re: Synod 1992, Art. 131

Committee IV presents:

Agenda item: VIII. A. 2, 3

I. MATERIAL

- A. Letter from the church at Fergus re: publication of confidential acts
- B. Letter from the church at Burlington-East re: same

II. OBSERVATIONS

- A. The church at Fergus requests Synod discontinue the practice of publishing confidential acts of Synod separately because they feel issuing two types of Acts creates many questions and is not edifying.
- B. The church at Burlington-East appeals the decision of General Synod 1992, Art. 131 "to remove from the Acts the Observations and Considerations because of their confidential character." Burlington-East request Synod to judge
 1. the removal of Observations and Considerations is unwarranted and does not serve the well-being of the churches;
 2. the removal of this section leads to secrecy while the churches are only served when the decisions recorded in the Acts are substantiated by Observations and Consideration and open for scrutiny;

3. the deleted section should as yet be published for the good of the churches;
4. all Observations and Considerations of General Synods be published in the Acts of Synod.

III. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Synod 1992 did not make a general ruling about the printing of confidential acts but very specifically made a decision about the publication of Article 68.
- B. The statements “the removal of this section leads to secrecy” and “the churches are only served when the decisions recorded in the Acts are substantiated by Observations and Consideration and open for scrutiny” are untenable. The publication of separate confidential acts protects the reputation of the parties involved. Moreover, the Acts can be scrutinized because two copies of the Confidential Acts were sent to every church.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide not to accede to the requests of the churches at Burlington-East and Fergus.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 110

Guidelines for General Synod

Committee IV presents:

Agenda item VIII. E. 12

I. MATERIAL

Overture from the church at Langley re: Guidelines for General Synod.

II. OBSERVATIONS

- A. The church at Langley requests Synod to change the Guidelines for General Synod with regard to material, committees and committee reports.

1. With regard to “material” Langley proposes to change Guideline I.D. so that it reads “All material for Synod should be received by the convening church no later than six weeks prior to the convocation date of General Synod. Material received after this date shall ordinarily not be added to the agenda unless Synod is satisfied that the reasons given for later arrival are reasonable.”

Langley bases their suggestion on two points

- a. the churches and its members are notified well in advance when a Synod is to be convened;
 - b. the delegates should receive ample opportunity to study the material in advance and to prepare themselves properly.
2. With regard to “Committees” Langley suggests Synod add the following guideline: “When considering a report by any of its committees containing far-reaching or major recommendations, Synod shall insure that no decisions is made without a Committee member being present and receiving the opportunity to clarify and defend the work of the Committee.”

The grounds for this proposal are

- a. it is a matter of common courtesy;
- b. the Committee can defend its own work and address new points;
- c. to avoid imbalance (some committees may have members at Synod while others may not).

3. With regard to Committee Reports the church at Langley suggests “All committees appointed by Synod shall see to it that they send as many copies of their report to the local churches as each has office-bearers.” Langley suggests this will streamline the present practice and will make it possible for the churches to deal with the material sooner and at less expense to them.

III. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. The church at Langley is correct that more time is required to distribute the material to the delegates for their perusal and evaluation. However in their proposal Langley has dropped the reference to the number of copies required.
- B. In order to evaluate a report adequately it should convey matters in such a way that all pertinent points can be weighed carefully. If Synod considers it necessary to receive more input on far-reaching or major recommendations it has the freedom to seek such advice (Guidelines III A 9).
- C. To enhance the discussion and evaluation of reports it is desirable that churches receive as many copies of committee reports as there are office-bearers.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide

- A. To change Guideline 1.D. as follows: “All material for Synod should be received by the convening church (in twenty-two copies) no later than six weeks prior to the convocation date of General Synod. Material received after this date shall ordinarily not be added to the agenda unless Synod is satisfied that the reasons given for later arrival are reasonable.”
- B. Not to accept Langley’s second proposal regarding the presence of Committee members at Synod.
- C. To adopt Langley’s proposal regarding Committee Reports.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 111

Guidelines for General Synod

Several motions re Guidelines for Synod are made:

- I. That the references to the Church Order in the Guidelines be updated according to the present numbering of the Articles.

ADOPTED

- II. That the Guidelines for Synod as adopted by Synod Cloverdale 1983 and as amended by subsequent Synods be published as a separate Appendix in the Acts of Synod 1995.

ADOPTED

- III. To add to rule 1.A.:

The convening church shall publish this date along with the rule:

“All material for Synod should be received by the convening church (in twenty-two copies) no later than six weeks prior to the convocation date of General Synod. Material received after this date shall ordinarily not be added to the agenda unless Synod is satisfied that the reasons given for later arrival are reasonable.”

ADOPTED

- IV. That Synod adds to rule 1.C.: “together with a copy of the current Guidelines for General Synod.”

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 112

Re Decision on ERQ

The following motion is made:

To add to Art. 73 of this Synod under

Material: A. Overture from the ERQ.

Recommendation A: To acknowledge with thankfulness the overture of the ERQ.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 113

Adjournment

Synod is adjourned for lunch

AFTERNOON SESSION – TUESDAY, MAY 23, 1995

ARTICLE 114

Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting. Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 115

Appeals against Regional Synod West 1993, Art. 11

Committee III presents:

Agenda items VIII. A. 4, 10, 14, 22, C. 9, 23

Committee presents a majority report and a minority report.

Majority Report:

I. MATERIAL

- A. Appeal from the church at Cloverdale re Regional Synod West, 1993, Art. 11
- B. Appeal from the church at Taber AB re: same
- C. Appeal by br. H. Van den Hoven, re: same
- D. Appeal from the church at Barrhead, re: same
- E. Appeal from br. J. Hoogerdijk, re: same
- F. Appeal from church at Coaldale AB, re: same

II. ADMISSIBILITY

The appeals of the church at Barrhead and of br. Van den Hoven deal with a decision of a Regional Synod held more than a year ago and were submitted beyond the dead line set by the Guidelines for Synod (Synod 1983, Art. 45). The church of Cloverdale and br. J. Hoogerdijk appeal the decisions of Regional Synod West 1993, Art. 11 and 12 respectively but do not include the text of the decision nor any of the documents pertaining to this decision. These appeals could be declared inadmissible on these grounds. However, they are declared admissible on the ground that they deal with an issue of major concern in the churches and to avoid the impression of not doing full justice to the matter.

III. OBSERVATIONS

- A. The church at Barrhead asks Synod to judge
 - 1. That Regional Synod made the wrong recommendation in giving concurring advice to Classis AB/MB in light of the considerations which accompanied that recommendation. The considerations do not serve as grounds for the decision which was made.
 - 2. That the original decision of Classis AB/MB not to accept the American Reformed Church at Denver into the federation, was a right decision, in that this decision conveys similar sentiments to the subsequent Considerations of the aforementioned Regional Synod.
- B. The church at Cloverdale requests General Synod to judge that the decision of Regional Synod West 1993 conflicts with our adopted Church Order and ignores the confession of Article 28 Belgic Confession of Faith.
- C. The church at Coaldale requests Synod to judge that the decision of Regional Synod West, December 1993 to give concurring advice to Classis AB/MB October 1993 was irresponsible and lacked proper grounds in light of the considerations to which Regional Synod at the same time decided to draw the attention of the churches. Grounds:
 - 1. Regional Synod invalidated its concurring advice by warning that it was uncertain yet whether the admission of the church at Denver would have unacceptable consequences for the churches, as also whether its minister might be guilty of violating his vows in the POD. This advice was in conflict with Scripture (Rom. 14:23, 1 Tim. 3:10; 5:22) and C.O. (Art.5. A.1.a).
 - 2. Regional Synod did not prove that the request for admission to the federation was merited. Regional Synod failed to disprove the allegation that the admission of Denver promoted church pluriformity and failed to prove that it was pastorally unwise to refer the Christ American Reformed Church at Denver to the OPC.
- D. The church at Taber requests Synod
 - 1. To declare Article 11 (specifically Consideration 7 and Recommendation) of the acts of Regional Synod West 1993, to be in conflict with what we confess regarding the holy catholic Christian Church in Articles 27, 28, 29 of the Belgic Confession.
 - 2. To declare that Article 11 of the Acts of Regional Synod West 1993 is self-contradictory and thus impossible to implement with integrity.
- E. Br. J. Hoogerdijk requests Synod
 - 1. to judge that Regional Synod West 1993 was wrong in granting concurring advice to Classis AB/MB October 1993 regarding the request of the Christ American Reformed Church at Denver to join the federation of Canadian and American Reformed Churches;
 - 2. to reiterate to the churches the confessional norms of Art. 27-29 of the Belgic Confession – that believers must join the true church, and therefore, since the Church of Christ also includes the OPC, believers, if they find themselves in a place where there is an OPC congregation, are obliged to join it, and that this obligation extends to the individual as well as to the corporate body;
 - 3. to remind the churches that believers may not leave or refuse to join the true church of God on the basis of historical distinctives or any non-confessional distinctives;

4. to warn the churches that we cannot elevate historical distinctives so they take precedence over scriptural and confessional requirements – otherwise we are in grave danger of becoming a sect – Christ has not restricted His Church gathering work to those churches of the Continental tradition;
 5. to resolve the problems with the OPC by offering it the same relationship our churches have with the FCS and the PCK.
- F. Br. H. Van den Hoven requests Synod to find that Regional Synod West December 8-9 erred in its decision to grant concurring advice, because it did not rightly consider the mandate of God to maintain the unity of His church as we confess it in Reformed Confessions and further that they did not abide by the Church Order as agreed to by the churches.

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. The appellants see the decision of Regional Synod 1993, to give concurring advice in the matter of admitting the Christ American Reformed Church at Denver in conflict with the Art. 27 - 29 of the Belgic Confession. They feel that since the Canadian Reformed Churches recognize the OPC as a true church, the Christ American Reformed Church at Denver should have joined the OPC. Regional Synod West 1993 was, in their opinion, incorrect to uphold the decision of Classis AB/MB Oct. 1993.

The appellants fail to recognize that the relationship with the OPC is in an interim situation. General Synod 1992 therefore considered: "The temporary contact relationship implies that ecclesiastical unity has not yet been achieved. Therefore, in the interim, it is understandable that when requests for admission reach the Canadian Reformed Churches, these cannot be rejected simply by stating that the OPC has been declared to be a true church. Such situations may arise until substantial agreement is reached on the outstanding issues and the temporary contact relationship has led to 'ecclesiastical fellowship'" (Acts, Art. 72, IV.A.2.c.ii)

In addition, it must be kept in mind that the relationship between the OPC and the Canadian Reformed Churches has proceeded on two tracks during the last 15 years. On the one hand there is the acknowledgement of the OPC as true church (General Synod 1977), on the other hand there is the consideration that there is no pulpit exchange, intercommunion and joint Lord's Supper celebration (General Synod 1980) as well as the ongoing discussion on the divergencies. Therefore the charge that the decision of Regional Synod is against God's Word and the Reformed Confessions is in effect an appeal of Synod Coaldale 1977.

- B. The appellants object to the decision of Classis AB/MB October 1993, upheld by Regional Synod 1993, on the basis that no new ground was brought forward which warrants to propose the matter again (Art. 33 C.O.).

The appellants are mistaken in applying Art. 33 C.O. to the decision of Classis AB/MB Oct. 1993 as upheld by Regional Synod West 1993. The matter of Denver's requests had been reopened at the Classis March 1993 with as ground the decision of General Synod 1992. General Synod's decision constitutes the new ground according to Art. 33 C.O. There is no proof that Barrhead, Coaldale and Taber, or the brs. J. Hoogerdijk and H. Van den Hoven appealed this decision. It can be concluded therefore that appellants accepted the March 1993 decision as settled and binding. Art. 33 C.O. is not relevant at Classis AB/MB Oct. 1993.

- C. The appellants object to the considerations of Regional Synod West 1993. They feel that these considerations do not support the recommendation to uphold the decision of Classis AB/MB Oct. 1993.

The considerations of Regional Synod West 1993 are not very clear and do raise indeed several questions without clearly answering them. In light of the fact that the admission of the Christ American Reformed Church at Denver into the federation touches the heart of our relationship with the OPC it would have been better had Regional Synod 1993 given more substantiation for its decision. It goes too far however, to state that these considerations invalidate the decision or make the decision self-contradictory and impossible to be implemented with integrity. Regional Synod West 1993 interacted with the considerations of Classis AB/MB Oct.1993 to admit Denver and the reasons of deputies not to concur with this decision. It is regrettable that none of the appellants include in their appeals the decision of Classis AB/MB Oct.1993 – to admit Denver into the federation–, a decision which was upheld by Regional Synod West 1993.

Comparing the considerations of Regional Synod West 1993 and the decision of Classis as well as the advice of the Deputies, it can be noted that Regional Synod weighed both sides and in its considerations in several points (considerations 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9) concurred with the Classis decision. Appellants fail to see the considerations of Regional Synod West 1993 in the light of the other documents.

To give examples:

1. In consideration 4 Regional Synod suggested that the Christ American Reformed Church at Denver should consider whether its joining of the Canadian Reformed Churches would compromise its position. Denver, however, did so, as is evident from Classis Consideration I:

The CARCD is prepared to work within the framework of the CARC approach to the OPC. They see grave weaknesses in the OPC of Denver, but do not speak of the OPC there as a false church. Therefore, they are determined to seek further contact with the local OPC churches. They wish to take part in the CARC discussions with the OPC. Although CARCD seems to be in conflict with the Confession when it refuses to join a church not classified as false, this church argues that joining the OPC would inevitably involve it in the wrong and sinful practices alleged to exist in the OPC of Denver. Furthermore, the CARCD argues that the whole relationship between the OPC and CARC's is in evolution and that until the issues being discussed in this interim state are resolved, it cannot in good faith join the OPC.

2. Regional Synod also suggested that the Canadian Reformed Churches should consider whether they would compromise their official stand vis-a-vis the OPC. The Canadian Reformed Churches, however, did do so already in its consideration IV.A.2.c.ii–v of Acts Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 72.
3. Regional Synod also weighed the matter of Rev. Pollock's vows. It considered that this is yet an open question. Appellants should have looked at this consideration in the context of the Classis consideration B on which Regional Synod based its consideration:

Rev. Pollock did take vows within the OPC. He has publicly stated that he was mistaken in doing so. Since the time of taking those vows, his views have changed through discussion and study. It remains an open question whether his vows in the OPC obliged him to follow a process of appeal within the OPC rather than remaining with his congregation which now pursued affiliation with the CARC's. However, Rev.Pollock did seek the help and advice of the POD on this very point.

4. The allegation that Regional Synod did not prove that the request for admission to the federation was merited is not correct. Considerations 5

and 8 of Regional Synod show that Regional Synod considered that the question was merited due to the local situation and the position of the congregation within the POD.

5. The expression “promoting pluriformity” comes from the local situation in Denver which was such that the CARCD could not in good conscience join the local OPC congregation. Regional Synod recognized this as well in consideration 8. Regional Synod expressed itself too strongly when it considered that “[t]he Christ American Reformed Church at Denver is also firmly convinced that the OPC is an unfaithful church.” The majority report to Classis AB/MB Oct 1993 reports that some members considered the local OPC an unfaithful church, but for the consistory it was an open question whether or not the OPC is an unfaithful church. (Report V.G., see also consideration C.1 above, cq. evidence of Classis AB/MB consideration I). Regional Synod recognized that this is a sad reality which hopefully is temporary. To recognize is not the same as accepting it, as Coaldale and Taber state, witness the use of the words “temporary” and “hopeful.”

E. With regard to br. J. Hoogerdijk’s requests

1. Request 2 is in effect an appeal against 1977.
2. Requests 3 and 4 cannot be dealt with by Synod.
3. Request 5 has been dealt with in Art. 106. of the Acts of this Synod.

V. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide to deny the appeals.

ADOPTED

The following minority report:

MATERIAL, ADMISSIBILITY & OBSERVATION: same as majority Report

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. The appellants see the decision of Regional Synod West 1993 in conflict with Art. 27 - 29 BC. They feel that since the CanRC recognize the OPC as a true church, the Christ American Reformed Church at Denver should have joined the OPC. Regional Synod West was, in their opinion, incorrect to uphold the decision of Classis AB/MB.

Considerations 3, 8 and 9 of Regional Synod West 1993 show that the request of the Christ American Reformed Church at Denver was based primarily on that group’s belief that the OPC is an unfaithful church and that confessional concerns, local disunity and sinful practices at the local level were what kept them away from the OPC. Although there is some evidence to suggest that some of these considerations may have been overstated by Regional Synod West 1993, there is no doubt that a major reason the Christ American Reformed Church at Denver did not join the OPC in Denver was because of alleged sinful practices and unfaithfulness of the local OPC (lack of proper church discipline – see majority report Aasman/Schouten pp. 5,6; other sinful practices, i.e. admission to the Lord’s Supper and confessional membership – see majority report p. 9; local disunity – see majority report pp. 5,6).

The Canadian and American Reformed Churches have maintained steadfastly that the OPC is a true church, notwithstanding their method of fencing the Lord’s Supper and notwithstanding their practices re confessional membership. Therefore the Canadian and American Reformed Churches cannot in good conscience accept these as legitimate reasons for refusing to join a true church. Nor is it permissible to refuse joining a true church because of local disunity. For example, the Holy Spirit, working through the Apostle Paul encouraged the Corinthians to become united. It was not an option to split up

the body of Christ, the true church in Corinth, because of local disunity or because of the sinful practices of the local church.

The Christ American Reformed Church at Denver may think that the OPC is an unfaithful church, but the Canadian and American Reformed Churches have said differently. Therefore we compromise the integrity of the Church of Christ by accepting groups on this basis. We also promote pluriformity of churches by doing so.

The Investigation Committee (Aasman, Schouten, Wielenga) was given the mandate to investigate the reasons why the Christ American Reformed Church at Denver was convinced that it could not be united with the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the OPC, and to do so also by addressing the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the OPC. The reports do not give sufficient reason why the Christ American Reformed Church at Denver could not be joined to the true church in Denver.

- B. The appellants object to the decision of Classis AB/MB, upheld by Regional Synod West 1993, on the basis that no new ground was brought forward which warranted rescinding a decision made by a previous Classis according to Article 33 of the C.O.

The Deputies ad Art. 48 C.O., when they declined to give concurring advice, were wrong in applying Art. 33 C.O. at this stage. The matter of Denver's request had been reopened properly and was properly on the table of Classis after General Synod Lincoln 1992. Nor was Art. 31 C.O. relevant at this time because once the matter was re-opened, Classis was free to come to whatever decision was correct at that time depending on the results of the investigating committee's work. Therefore, General Synod 1995 does not agree with the churches and brothers who have raised this as an objection. Furthermore, General Synod does not have to make a ruling on whether the first Classis decision was correct.

- C. The appellants feel that the considerations given by Regional Synod West 1993 do not support the recommendation to uphold the decision of Classis AB/MB. The church at Coaldale states the interaction between the considerations and the recommendation result in an irresponsible decision. The church at Taber states that the decision is self-contradictory.

The considerations given by Regional Synod West 1993 for its decision to give concurring advice reveal that there were numerous issues arising out of the Investigation Committee's reports which Classis must consider prior to admitting the Christ American Reformed Church at Denver. However, it also concurred with Classis' decision of October 1993 that the Christ American Reformed Church at Denver be admitted.

Given the seriousness of the issues identified by Regional Synod West 1993 and given the fact that most of these issues go to the very heart of our relationship with the OPC, it should have delayed giving its concurring advice until these issues were resolved. Having raised these warnings, Regional Synod West acted irresponsibly by granting its concurring advice. General Synod 1995 agrees with the churches and brothers who have presented this argument.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

- A. To judge that the concurring advice of Regional Synod West 1993 promotes pluriformity of churches in violation of Art. 27, 28 and 29 of the Belgic Confession.
- B. To judge that Regional Synod West 1993 did not fail to apply properly Art. 31 & 33 of the Church Order.

- C. To judge that Regional Synod West 1993 acted irresponsibly by raising serious concerns and warnings and then proceeding to give concurring advice without delay.
 - D. To grant the appeal of the church at Coaldale.
 - E. To grant the appeal of the church at Taber.
 - F. To deny the first part of the appeal of the church at Cloverdale and to grant the second part.
 - G. To grant the first part of the appeal of the church at Barrhead and to deny the second part.
 - H. To grant the first request of br. J. Hoogergijk. Synod cannot deal with requests 2 - 4. Request 5 has been dealt with in Art. 106 of the Acts of this Synod.
 - I. To deny the part br. H. Van den Hoven's appeal referring to Art. 33 of the Church Order and to grant that part of the appeal dealing with Art. 27 & 28 of the Belgic Confession.
- is considered DEFEATED

ARTICLE 116

Rules for Appointments to Synodical Committees

The Executive presents:

Agenda item VIII. C. 8

I. MATERIAL

Overture from the church at Carman re: appointment to synodical committees

II. OBSERVATION

The church at Carman requests Synod to consider that appointments to the Deputies for Ecclesiastical Unity, the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad and the Committee for Contact with the OPC be restricted to the initial appointment plus two re-appointments. In this proposal any one committee member would be eligible for a maximum total of nine consecutive years representation on the Committee.

III. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. At the present time there is no rule for appointments.
- B. The suggestion by the church at Carman ensures continuity and at the same time allows for new regular change over of members.
- C. The suggestion of Carman would be beneficial for other standing committees appointed by General Synod.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide to implement, as far as possible, the suggestion of the church at Carman.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 117

Acts of Synod

The following motion is made:

- I. Synod decide to delete from the Acts all Articles dealing with discussion in closed or closed-restricted sessions, and to send two copies of these Articles to each consistory.
- II. Synod decide to publish in the Acts only the reports to Synod not the appendices to the reports.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 118

Appointments

The appointments are dealt with in closed session.

The following appointments are made:

I. Board of Governors:

Ministers:

Eastern Canada: D.G.J. Agema (2001); W. den Hollander (2001); P.G. Feenstra (2001). Alternates: (in order) G. Nederveen, P. Aasman, C. Bosch.

Western Canada: R. Aasman (2004), C. VanSpronsen (1998), J. Visscher (2001). Alternates: (in order) J. Moesker, P.K.A. DeBoer, R.A. Schouten.

non-ministers: M. Kampen (2004), J. VanderWoude (2004), H.J. Sloots (2001), K.J. Veldkamp (1998), A. VanEgmond (1998).

II. Committee of Relations with Churches Abroad:

Rev. J. Visscher (1998)(Convener), Rev. E. Kampen (2001),
Rev. C. VanSpronsen (2001), Rev. J. Moesker (2004), br. H.A. Berends (2001),
br. S.H. DeBoer (2001), br. A. Nap (1998), br. J. VanderStoep (1998),

III. Deputies for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity:

East: Dr. J. DeJong (2004) (Convener), Rev. W. den Hollander (2001),
br. H.T. VanderVelde (1998),

West: Rev. R. Aasman (2001), Rev. J.D. Wielenga (1998),
br. P. VanWoudenberg (2004)

IV. Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise*:

Rev. G. Nederveen (1998) (convener), Rev. B.J. Berends (2001),
sr. C. VanHalen-Faber (2004), br. L. Kingma (2001).

V. Committee for Contact with the OPC:

Rev. J. DeGelder (convener), Rev. P.G. Feenstra, Dr. N.H. Gootjes,
br. G.J. Nordeman, br. G. VanWoudenberg.

VI. Committee for Contact with the ERQ

Rev. G.H. Visscher (convener), Rev. J.L. VanPopta, br. John Boot,
br. W. Oostdyk.

VII. Committee on Bible Translations

Rev. P. Aasman (2001) (convener), br. W. Smouter (1998), Prof. J. Geertsema,
Dr. C. Van Dam.

VIII. General Fund: the church at Carman

IX. Archives: the church at Burlington-East

X. Inspection of Archives: the church at Burlington-West

XI. Audit Finances of Synod 1995: the church at Yarrow

XII. Address Church

Canada: the church at Burlington-East

US: the church at Grand Rapids

XIII. Committee for Printing the Acts: the clerks of Synod 1995

XIV. Convening church for next Synod: Fergus (May 1998)

It is moved and adopted to publish these appointments in the Acts.

ARTICLE 119

Adjournment

The chairman adjourns Synod for Supper.

EVENING SESSION – TUESDAY, MAY 23, 1995

ARTICLE 120

Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting. He requests that Psalm 19: 1, 3, 4 be sung. Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 121

Appeal br. H. Van den Hoven re: General Synod 1992, Art. 72.

Committee I presents:

Agenda item VIII. C. 18

I. MATERIAL

Appeal br. H. Van den Hoven re: Synod 1992, Art. 72,IV,A,2,c,ii

II. ADMISSIBILITY

The appeal of br. H. Van den Hoven deals with a decision of General Synod 1992 and was submitted beyond the deadline set by the Guidelines for Synod (Synod 1983, Art. 45). This appeal should be declared inadmissible on this ground. However, it is declared admissible on the ground that it deals with an issue of major concern in the churches and to avoid the impression of not doing full justice to the matter.

III. OBSERVATION

Br. H. Van den Hoven requests Synod to judge that “Synod Lincoln erred when making the statement set forth in its Acts Art. 72, IV,A,2,c,ii. (page 51), ‘...these cannot be rejected simply by stating that the OPC has been declared a true church.’” He believes this statement went against the Church Order and God’s Word and the Reformed Confessions.

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

A. The appellant does not prove that Synod Lincoln 1992 violated the Church Order in Art. 72.IV.A.2.c.ii.

B. Though the appellant is correct to stress the confessional norm, he is wrong to downplay the historic reality which lies behind the statement “these cannot be rejected simply by stating that the OPC has been declared a true church.” Synod recognized the confessional norm, as well as the consequences of the decision made by Synod 1977 to declare the OPC a true church but not yet establish Ecclesiastical Fellowship Therefore the charge that it went against God’s Word and the Reformed Confessions should not have been directed to Synod 1992 but Synod Coaldale 1977.

V. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide to deny the appeal of br. H. Van den Hoven.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 122

Censure According to Article 34 C.O.

The chairman concludes with thankfulness that this censure is not necessary. He expresses thankfulness for the brotherly way in which Synod could do its work.

ARTICLE 123

Publication of the Acts

The first and second clerks are appointed to take care of this.

ARTICLE 124

Finances of General Synod

Synod has already taken care of this in Art. 5 and 108.

ARTICLE 125

Preparation for Next General Synod

The church at Fergus, ON is appointed to convene the next General Synod, the Lord willing, in May 1998.

ARTICLE 126

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 104 - 126 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 127

Approval of Press Release

Synod decides that the present executive is appointed to scrutinize and approve the Press Release.

ARTICLE 128

Thank-You Abbotsford

The chairman expresses Synods thankfulness to the church at Abbotsford for hosting General Synod 1995. Synod also thanks the ladies who prepared the meals and took care of the refreshments. Synod shows its appreciation in a gift to the church at Abbotsford BC, and gifts to the ladies in charge in the kitchen, sr. Jane Driegen and sr. Marian Nienhuis.

ARTICLE 129

Closing Words of Chairman

The chairman speaks appropriate words in closing. (See Appendix I, p. 100)

The vice chairman thanks the chairman for his capable leadership during Synod 1995.

ARTICLE 130

Closing

Rev. R. Aasman requests all present to sing Hymn 63 : 1 and 2. He leads in prayer of thanksgiving. The chairman closes the fourteenth General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

By order of Synod

Rev. J. DeGelder	Chairman
Rev. R. Aasman	Vice-chairman
Rev. D.G.J. Agema	First Clerk
Rev. J. Visscher	Second Clerk

APPENDIX I

SPEECHES

A. Opening Words

Rev. M. VanderWel welcomes the delegates with the following words:

Esteemed Brethren in the Lord,

On behalf of the convening church, the church at Abbotsford, I am pleased to extend a hearty welcome to all of you who have been delegated to General Synod 1995. Included in this welcome are, of course, those brothers who in an official capacity are visiting or will be visiting this Synod. Your presence will be well appreciated. We may thankfully note that all delegates and visitors, whether they came from far or near, have safely arrived in the city of Abbotsford. As convening church we consider it an honour to be hostess to this Synod, and we will try to accommodate you during this Synod as much as we can in the hope that, in spite of the strenuous work which has to be done, you may still feel at ease in "The Hub of the Fraser Valley."

I spoke of "strenuous work," because I have been told that lots of material has come in. Among this material there are a good number of Protests and Appeals against decisions of previous Synods; there are the regular Reports from various Committees, and there are also the issues regarding, what I now may generally call, our Ecumenical Outreach. If I just go by all the requests which have been directed to this Synod, I must conclude that much work, wisdom and discretion will be required of you as members of Synod. Well, it is with respect to the latter that I like to refer, for a moment, to the portion of Scripture from which we have read this morning.

In Micah 6 we also hear about a complaint, but then a complaint, a controversy, which the LORD has with his unfaithful and disobedient people. After the LORD, with the help of several examples taken from Israel's history, has pointed out how He on his part has been faithful to his covenant people, the prophet then lets the people ask by what means they might be able to please the LORD and to make up for their transgressions. Could it be done by bringing outrageous sacrifices to the LORD? The answer is: of course not! But Micah has put these foolish presumptions into the mouth of the people in order to emphasize what is truly required of them in their relationship with the LORD. So we hear the prophet say in verse 8: "He has showed you, o man, what is good;" (that is: what is pleasing in his sight). "And what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" Brothers, now that an important and impressive task is awaiting you as members of Synod, I should like to give you these words of the prophet Micah along. There may be moments in your work in which you will ask yourselves: How much is actually required of us? Well, in some instances people may request from you more than you justifiably can grant them. It is however our sincere prayer that in all your deliberations, judgments and decisions you may be conscious of that which the LORD requires of you. Micah has mentioned important things: to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God!

Allow me to apply these requirements for a moment to the things which I have mentioned earlier as belonging to your task. In cases of an appeal Synod has to do justice. Now, doing justice is not: How can I satisfy both parties? But doing justice is: To act in accordance with God's good commandments, and to hold on to that which has been agreed upon in our Reformed Church Order. There are also matters pertaining to, what I briefly called, our ecumenical outreach. As you know, contacts have been made with other churches and with groups of believers

outside of our federation. Consequently, Synod will be confronted with questions like: What should be our approach?, and: How are we to go further about it? I would not be surprised if someone would say: Look, in this regard we need this second requirement: to love kindness. I agree, that is, as long as the word "kindness" is not understood as a certain goody-goodness in which we as churches should be prepared to make all kinds of concessions in order to meet those outside of our federation halfway, or just for the purpose of being nice to them. Unity of faith is not a matter of negotiating, but rather a matter of recognizing each other as true sheep of the Good Shepherd, and of growing together under the guidance of God's Word and Spirit. At this point we do well to bear in mind that the Church is not ours, but the Lord's! However, the Hebrew word which the prophet Micah uses for kindness indicates a show of love and friendliness which is born from the fellowship which we are allowed to have with each other as sister churches and a thankful acknowledgment of all that the Lord has done for his Church.

As Canadian (and American) Reformed Churches we have much to be thankful for. In the past week there was the commemoration of the Liberation of Holland, fifty years ago. This year it will be also fifty years ago that the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands could have their first General Synod in the city of Enschede after they had freed themselves from a synodical hierarchy and from binding decisions which went beyond Scripture and Confession. From these churches we have originated, and as Dutch immigrants we were allowed to take a rich blessing along. Since our own first General Synod, which was convened in 1954 at Carman, Manitoba and then called: the National Synod of Homewood, a lot of things have come into being within the life of our Canadian and American Reformed Churches. This Synod will now be the fourteenth General Synod. I do not make these observations however, in order to boast in the achievements of men. His blessings were undeserved and out of mere grace. That gives us all reason, in accordance with Micah's words, to walk humbly with our God. That's why, we are to build further on the foundation which has been laid. Some of that humbleness should then also be found in the contacts which we may have with all those who have the sincere desire to build on this same foundation. That means, that in our way of approaching them we must not let ourselves be restrained by feelings of chauvinism or traditionalism. Rather we must be willing to share our riches with them in all humility. Also in this respect we do well to remember that the Church is not ours, but the Lord's. However, if we hold on to the foundation which the Lord himself has laid, then there is also the promise that the Lord will bless our endeavours. According to the words of the apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans (chapter 9:33; chapter 10:11), whoever builds his faith on this foundation, will not be ashamed. This promise also has value for our pursuit of the unity of faith with others.

In closing, brothers, I express the wish that in the coming weeks you may work together in good harmony as brothers of the same House. It is our prayer that you may receive the clarity of mind and the wisdom from above in order to deal with the matters which will come before you in such a way, that the well-being of the churches and of their members is served by it. If that is given to you then your work will be for 'the good of Jerusalem'.

With these words I declare this assembly opened.

Rev. M. VanderWel asks all present to sing Ps. 25: 2, 6.

B. Address by the Fraternal Delegate of the RCN, Rev. A. DeJager

Brother Chairman, Esteemed Brothers

First of all I would like to thank you, also on behalf of Rev. VanVeen, for the welcome we received. We, in turn have appreciated the visit of your churches, in

the person of the Rev. J. Visscher at our Synod in Ommen in 1993. We are thankful to the Lord of the Church that He makes it possible to have a good understanding with each other within our sister-church relations. This will undoubtedly stay as long as we stay on the road of His Word, and remain faithful to the Reformed Confession.

To be able to have such good relationships is a gift of God's grace. Recently we remembered the event of 50 years ago when the Liberation from synodical hierarchy in doctrinal binding beyond Scripture took place. The Lord set us free. This past week some 16,000 Canadians joined us in commemorating the liberation of our land and people from the Nazi regime. Again, the Lord set us free. Though both events on either side of the ocean caused sacrifices and pain, each in its own way, yet we rejoice in this freedom which the Lord gave us. We pay respect to all those who were instrumental in these blessings.

Personally, it is a pleasure to be in your midst again. I experienced first hand the inner workings of your ecclesiastical meetings, from the consistory level to Regional Synods. That I am now present at your General Synod and represent a whole church federation makes it even more joyful for me. It also adds to my responsibility.

In speaking on behalf of the churches in the Netherlands, let me start with the ecclesiastical relationships. You must have noticed the increase of our contacts over the last half decade. Several factors are at work. Firstly, the mandate of our deputies on relations is broader than yours. Secondly, in several instances we are called upon to help and support churches. Nowadays the concentration points are especially in countries like India, Brazil and African countries like Zaire, Benin and Ethiopia, where people are seeking help. Thirdly, we have a new phenomenon which is called the IRTC. Instead of sending people out to other countries, it is the intention to invite ministers and elders to the Netherlands so that they can be trained in Reformed theology for a number of weeks. Our traditional missionary work is slowly moving from sending missionaries to sending churchworkers and professors to develop stronger ties. We search for local churches to carry this out. During this assistance period, we often meet different churches (often Presbyterian) and try to find a successful responsible way to offer the right help in a united way. In this role the contact with the RCUS has flourished and contacts with the OPC are growing. We will discuss both of these a little later. Allow me to tell you that your deputies have clearly presented to us your concerns, and we take this matter to heart and wish to continue dialogue. Finally, the ICRC is a continuing stimulus for orientation in the field of relations.

With regard to the matter of relationships, we appreciate your attitude, contribution and participation wherever possible. After all, our relations are moving slowly from dealing with each other on a one to one basis to doing this together. In this light, your visit to the FRCA in Byford in 1994, meant a great deal to them and to us. We expect cooperation in reaching desirable work ethics in contact with the FCS. It is our deepest wish that our universities in Hamilton, Edinburgh, Belfast and Kampen will work closer together internationally.

We are also very pleased with the appointment of your deputies for the promotion of ecclesiastical unity and for their work and effort. Your ecclesiastical effort and openness on this North American continent have gained our respect and our prayers. I am referring to your contacts with the Orthodox and Independent Christian Reformed Churches. May the Lord bless you so that you may be fruitful as reformed churches in times of crises in and around the Christian Reformed Churches.

We also appreciate your thorough approach in the relationships with the RCUS and the OPC. Concerning our sister, the RCUS, we are appreciative of the fact that you are in discussion with them. We recognize that there are matters to be

considered but we believe they need our love and encouragement above all. Therefore we wish you well in your discussions with them. Mind you, the RCUS was our first sister from a non-liberated mould, who pointed a loving but warning finger at us, concerning the women voting issue in Ommen. Her position within the ICRC is encouraging and the reserved attitude by NAPARC to take her in, is eye opening. We think it is of great importance to explain to her our reformed church government.

The direction of your relationship with the OPC is for us the most interesting matter at this moment. There is an increasing pressure from within our churches and from our deputies in general to formally establish contact with the OPC. In the above mentioned African countries we continually meet each other and there are good opportunities to coordinate the help. From the years of discussion in your churches we understand that also for you the relations with the OPC is an important matter. We also noticed that you do not take the easy way out. That is the reason why our section of deputies have been low key for the time being. Much depends on your decisions in this regard, as it will also concern us.

Brother chairman, my speaking here would not be complete if I did not tell you something about the developments in the churches at home. Instead of touching on all the details, it seems better to me, to give you a more overall view. I will make use of the themes of discussion, as one finds them in the ecclesiastical press. Within the framework of a reflection on church, tradition and culture an extensive discussion is taking place. This discussion is quite fundamental and leads here and there to some more or less radical changes.

The underlying thought is that people find that rationality always has been very important in the way we, "liberated" people think, work and believe. Nowadays they feel it is necessary to emphasize a strong personal belief together with a good christian association. Within the "Liberated" tradition, doctrine is strongly accentuated. People feel that the balance needs to be restored again. The central position of the doctrine should not be at the expense of the attention for personal and communal matters. It appears that the preaching of a sound doctrine does not, as a matter of course, lead to a sound life in faith, or to sound relations, or to a proper Christian attitude and conduct in society. It seems that sound preaching in itself does not lead to proper Christian action. Focussing on the creed does not necessarily result in shaping life around the creed. Because of the culture in which we live, or because of certain accents in theology, blind spots may appear. We have been taught to "handle" the doctrine in a rational manner, but have we learned to devote ourselves to God in trust? We have been taught to speak about the Bible and about prayer, but have we learned to use prayer as an answer to that Word and as a strength for our lives? We have been taught what the Bible says about sin, but have we learned to confess our sin to God and our neighbour? We have been taught to interpret Scripture, but did we learn to meditate on Scripture? People plead for a more personal approach to believing and for a better balance between the different dimensions of faith. In addition to this, people consider that our thinking might have gotten a one-sided effect after the forties. The question is whether typical "liberated" accents remain sufficiently integrated into the whole of life itself? A heavy emphasis on themes like, church, and the so-called "doorgaande reformatie" should not lead to one-sidedness and imbalance. The increasing influence of the secularization requires all hands on deck, especially also for our young people.

By means of these discussions people intend to arm against an apostate and godless culture in order to stay fully reformed. In this respect we experience a very challenging time as we again think through our positions as churches. Open questions will not be shunned. It is clear that the Reformed churches in the

Netherlands do not suffer from introvert conservatism. By the same token there is no urge for renewal just like that! In continually abiding by scripture and the reformed confession, we as churches are seeking the way which the Lord points out to us in the world of today, the direction to take to be the salt of the earth and a light to the world.

In conclusion we pass on our greetings in the Name of the Lord, on behalf of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. We wish you the blessing of our God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all your synodical endeavours.

May the Lord grant that by your decisions His church gathering work may prosper and that the peace of Christ may be found amongst one another and in your churches.

Brother Chairman, I thank you for allowing me your time and attention.

Response by Rev. J. DeGelder:

Dear Rev. DeJager and Rev. VanVeen,

It is a privilege for me to welcome you here officially in the Fraser Valley, and to greet you on behalf of General Synod Abbotsford 1995. We are thankful that you have arrived safely earlier this week already, on Monday, and that you were able to participate in the work that is going on in some of our advisory committees.

Besides that it is also a matter of great joy for me personally to meet old friends again. It is not the first time that we meet each other within the framework of contacts with churches abroad.

For you, Rev. VanVeen, it is your first visit to Canada, but we all know how familiar Rev. DeJager is with our churches and with our church life. We do hope that you both feel at home among us this week.

For us as Canadian Reformed Churches the bond with our Dutch sister churches has always been a very special one, and... it still is! That is understandable of course, when you look at the history of our churches. But you might expect that this would change somewhat; that it gradually would decrease, or become weaker.

But this is not the case. The connections with the "old country" are still there, and for many of us they still mean a lot.

The celebration of 50 years liberation of Holland from the Nazi persecution, at the end of last week was not an ecclesiastical event, but it showed again the strong bonds between Canada and the Netherlands.

This colours the thankfulness in which many Dutch people in Canada, or Canadians with a Dutch background – also in our churches – have celebrated this liberation. This thankfulness is not limited only to our older brothers and sisters, it includes many young people among us.

At the same time, pointing at the special bonds between the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, we realize quite well, that today the Canadian Reformed Churches are just one of the many contacts you have with various churches in this world. We follow your activities in this field with much interest, although not without concern sometimes. We are not always able to follow you literally on all your journeys, because of our limited resources.

Especially interesting are the developments as pictured by you, Rev. DeJager, concerning the increasing attention for what is going on in churches in third world countries. It helps us also more and more to realize that God's church is indeed gathered from every tribe and nation.

That means that in both our countries – in Canada as well as in Holland – we will be more and more confronted with the urgent question: how can we help and support each other in such a way, that this help indeed serves the strengthening of

reformed church life. Here the contacts available via the ICRC can play an important role too.

You probably know, brothers, how our churches are struggling, for many years now, with the questions regarding possible relations with presbyterian churches, and especially with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. This matter is not only on the agenda of General Synod, but also on the minds of many brothers and sisters in our churches. We really appreciate that you realize this, and that you will take into account this vulnerable situation, in your own dealings with this church federation.

Brothers, that we are still strongly connected as sister-churches with the same roots, is the result of the ways of the LORD in your, as well as in our history. At the same time, we should use this connection, to help each other not to close our eyes for the very fact that the same LORD, with his same Word and through the power of the same Spirit, goes various ways in history, with various parts of his people. We do well not to forget the reality of what we believe and confess in Art. 27 B.C., that the Holy Church of Jesus Christ is spread and dispersed throughout the entire world, and yet joined and united by the power of faith.

Our strong bond with our Dutch brothers and sisters is also seen, when we closely try to follow the recent developments in the churches in the Netherlands. Especially the older brothers and sisters among us are still able to read the Dutch church magazines. It is impossible, however, to keep up with everything that is written. This always brings with it that danger that we are going to judge on the basis of limited information.

It is for that reason, Rev. DeJager, that we have listened with much interest to what you have told us about the developments in the church life of our Dutch sister churches. It is good for us to hear about these things, because we both are called to be faithful churches of the Lord Jesus Christ in a modern society, facing all the temptations and challenges of today's world. In many respects it is a rapidly changing world, and the penetrating power of the secularization is attacking permanently.

How important that you, in the Netherlands, and we, here in Canada, both in our own cultural and ecclesiastical circumstances abide by God's Holy Word as summarized in our Reformed Confessions.

No matter what might change in church and world – one thing will never change: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." This means that for the Church of Jesus Christ, wherever it has been established in this world, there is only one way of life. That is the way of faith and obedience, following Jesus Christ, the glorified King.

We pray, brothers, that our LORD may bless and protect the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, and that in His wonderful love, He may keep them close to Him and to his Holy Word.

Rev. DeJager and Rev. VanVeen, we ask you to convey our heartfelt greetings to our Dutch sister churches, which are so dear to our hearts. We thank you for being here with us; for participating in our discussions, and we wish you the blessing of our heavenly Father on your way home.

Thank you.

C. Address of Fraternal Delegate of the OPC, Rev. J.J. Peterson

Brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ,

It is a privilege to be with you again as the fraternal delegate of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the OPC, to a synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches. This is my third time with you – first in 1983 at Cloverdale, then at Winnipeg in 1989 and the third time in Abbotsford in 1995. Yes, Texas Jack is back.

The OPC celebrates our 60th anniversary next year. In 1936 ecclesiastical trials were held for several ministers who were defrocked – removed from office. And their crime? Their sin? They preached the gospel of our Lord and insisted that the church faithfully proclaim that gospel and that Christ, faithful to the confessions of the church. On June 11, 1936 the first general assembly of the OPC was held in the New Century Club in downtown Philadelphia, and the OPC was born.

You see, we began as general assembly – a groups of 200 souls – ministers, elders and general office bearers. Yes a few congregations. Fully committed to the Word of God and the Westminster standards. Irregular? perhaps.

For many years we were looked on and treated as outcasts. We had left a so-called mainline church. We were and are very small. We were narrow – Only the Bible. Only the Reformed faith. You know, sola scriptura, sola gratia, sola fide, sola Christus.

We had few friends. And, by the way, and please try to understand, one of the very close friends in the '30s and '40s was the Christian Reformed Church in North America. They sent a telegram of encouragement to our First General Assembly. They encouraged us. We took some of their finest, Stonehouse in New Testament, Van Til in apologetics, R.B. Kuiper in systematics and practica. They sent fraternal delegates to our assemblies. We as church didn't even know about 1944 – only later. Please understand why we are willing to work patiently with that church.

How are we working with the CRCNA? I have distributed to you part of the report to our General Assembly of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations dealing with the CRCNA. This will bring you up to date in that regard and, I hope, will show you that we are dealing forthrightly with that church, seeking to be faithful to our Lord and to them.

What's going on in the OPC? We are rejoicing that churches, groups of believers, individuals are coming to us for information, help, assistance, fellowship. And we rejoice. In home missions several congregations in our country have come to us seeking closer ties, and some have united with the OPC. In the area of foreign missions groups from all over the world are asking for our help. We have a full-time missionary/teacher at the Reformed Theological College, the school for training pastors of the Reformed Church of East Africa in Kenya. We have teacher training pastors and church workers in Ethiopia. We have requests for teachers in Nigeria, in Bulgaria. We have a missionary family now working in China across the border from North Korea. In Eritrea and China we are returning to fields we had to leave in 1987 (Eritrea) and in 1942 (China, then Mongolia or Manchuria). New fields include Uganda. And requests for help from Moscow and Kazakhstan, the Philippines, India, Mexico, Myanmar (formerly Burma), Peru, Trinidad and, yes, even Outer Mongolia, in Ulan Batou the capital city.

One tragedy, tragedy from our human perspective, was the murder of Rein Boerma, elder of your sister church in 's-Hertogenbosch, in Paramaribo, Suriname. He and his wife, Frans, had moved to Suriname from Holland to help with the Dutch-speaking work led by our missionary Karl Hubbenthal, who received some of his training at Kampen. Elder Boerma was murdered during an apparent burglary in their home.

Ecumenically speaking, we rejoice in being a member of the ICRC. The fellowship with churches who confess the Reformed faith is enriching and encouraging. We are recommending two churches for membership in the ICRC. We are anticipating ICRC Seoul 1997.

A two-man delegation visited, in August of 1994, the Reformed churches in New Zealand and Australia. Most of the congregations of the Reformed Churches in New Zealand were visited, meetings were held with representatives and/or

interchurch relations committees of the RCNZ, the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, the Presbyterian Church of Australia and the Presbyterian Church of Easter Australia.

The OPC now has an official relationship of “Ecclesiastical Fellowship” with 11 churches. They are the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Christian Reformed Church of North America, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland, the Free Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Kosin), the Presbyterian Church in America, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, the Reformed Church in Japan, the Reformed Churches of New Zealand, the Reformed Church in the United States and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. We view the relationship of “Ecclesiastical Fellowship” as an expression of the unity of the church demanded by the Lord and as a step toward organic union, or federation. Our “Biblical Principles of the Unity of the Church” state three things about unity in the section “Toward Perfecting Biblical Unity.” They are “1. The unity of the church is in Christ and it is both a given reality and also a requirement. The unity of the faith is both a gift and a mandate. 2. The church is compelled to give expression to this reality and requirement, this gift and mandate, by actively seeking the promised goal, namely, that of being one body which serves the Lord in perfect peace, purity, and unity. 3. The ultimate goal of the unity of the church is nothing less than one world-wide presbyterian/reformed church.”

With reference to the conversations between your churches and ours we are happy that you are still willing to talk with us. It has been over 25 years of conversations. My first contacts were with deputies Bill Wildeboer and dominees Scholten, Selles, and Van Dooren. We rejoice in the decision of General Synod 1992 – only three divergencies left. The conversations have been an enriching experience for our church. There is a much greater understanding of and appreciation for the redemptive/historical approach to Scripture. Schilder’s trilogy has always been on our book-shelves. Now, S.G. deGraaf’s “Promise and Deliverance” is widely used and taught.

We have some concerns and they are on your table and you will be dealing with them.

We were encouraged that you have entered into ecclesiastical fellowship with the Free Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Kosin). That gives us hope that maybe we’ll be next?? After 25 plus years you know us and we know you. Let’s make a decision.

Just before I close, let me try to paint a picture of the world in which the OPC lives and labours. About half, somewhere around 100 of our congregations are the product of home missionary work. Home missionary work begins when a family moves into an area where there is no Reformed witness. A family or two. A home missionary is sent. Now three families. With whom do you work? Anyone. Everyone. One is converted out of paganism. Another family comes from the Baptist or Bible church because they are not fed in their church and they long for the preaching of the Word. And you work with them. New converts. An unhappy Baptist who has found a church home where he may be fed. And that repeats itself.

You see, do you say to that Baptist family when they say to you, “we have found a church home. You feed us. We meet our Lord when you preach, we want to be part of this fellowship – we want to join this church.” How do we respond? Do we say, we will work with you and teach you and in one, two, three, I’ve even heard five, years, we will welcome you into the church and to the sacraments. Do we? Brothers, no we don’t. We, with Philip and the eunuch and Paul with the jailer, – “then, immediately he and his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God – he and his whole family.” Risky? You bet. Babes in

Christ – first generation believers. The smell of the world, the smell of the Baptists cling to the clothing but they have taken the step of faith and united with a Reformed body of Christ, and they don't really know what they are getting into, and you don't know what the Lord has put in your way, but you move on in full trust of the Lord of the covenant – and you preach and you teach and you fellowship – and the Lord “gathers, defends and preserves for Himself, by His Word and Spirit, in the unity of the true faith, a church chosen to everlasting life.”

That's not far fetched. That's not unreal. That's the congregation in Bowie, Maryland and in Roswell, New Mexico and in Bath, Main – and in San Antonio, Texas. Twenty of the 100 who will gather for worship next Lord's day are Baptists. Four of the adults are members. But all of those families are teaching their children the Scriptures and even the catechism. And they are faithfully sitting under the preaching of the Word. And that Word is doing its work – our catechism says, “the Spirit ... makes ... the preaching of the word and effectual means of ... converting ... and building ... up in holiness and comfort ...” (Shorter Catechism 89). And, we feel, we cannot, we must not, exclude them from the body of Christ and the sacraments.

Let me paint another picture. Next Lord's day you walk into the pulpit, and there are 20% more people in the congregation than usual. And they're back the next Sunday, and the next. And they are from the Baptist church down the street. And they are with you because they weren't being fed at their own church – and they rejoice in your preaching and your church. What do you do??? Do you wish that they would go away? Or, do you rejoice that the Lord has put you in touch with a gigantic opportunity to minister to those who have sought you out because in your church they come face to face with our Lord through his Word?

Brothers and sisters, we in the OPC love you. We have learned from you. Our understanding of the Word has grown through learning from you about the covenant and redemptive/historical understanding of the Scriptures. We want to walk with you and live with you in full ecclesiastical fellowship which will be step toward the full unity of the church which comes with organic union.

Brothers, and sisters, in the Lord, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church greets you. I thank you for your gracious hospitality and the warmth of the fellowship I enjoy when I am with you. We love you in the Lord.

“Danke well!”

Response by elder G.J. Nordeman:

Rev. Peterson, I have been asked to address you on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches. I believe that such an address should not take the form of an extension of our formal discussions as taking place between our respective committees for contact. My words to you are more to express our appreciation for your being with us as a fraternal delegate and to acknowledge your greetings.

The fact that you are attending your third General Synod of our churches, ranks you with the most “experienced” of the delegates present here. It is in particular a pleasure for me to address you because we have known each other for approximately 10 years. I have attended your General Assemblies and we have met on a regular basis as our committees got together over the years. It is clear that our contact has been mutually beneficial, also from a cultural perspective. You have enriched your vocabulary and are now greeting us each morning with a cheerful “Goede Morgen, brothers” while I had an opportunity to see the invisible church.

All joking aside, it must be said that throughout our relationship as churches, we have learned much about each other and from each other. Again tonight you drew our attention to 1936 and what happened in your churches. The ecclesiastical trials which were held and where ministers were removed from office because they

insisted that the church faithfully proclaim the gospel. As you know the history of our churches in the Netherlands is remarkably similar when only a few years later, 1944, they had to struggle against the unlawful binding to unscriptural interpretations by Synods and other assemblies. It is ironic that the same Christian Reformed Church which so much helped the Orthodox Presbyterian Church during its difficult times, had no room for our people on the North American continent, and in spite of repeated pleas and warnings continue to go on the road of liberalism.

We understand very well why you are willing to work patiently with that church, and we also gratefully acknowledge the continued brotherly but firm warnings you have directed to the CRCNA.

From the report discussed this morning you may also have concluded that we acknowledge the commitment of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to be faithful to the Scriptures and to defend the Reformed heritage. At the same time you will have understood the enormous task this General Synod has in arriving at a decision regarding our relationship with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. It is the agenda item which has drawn by far the most reactions from the churches and individuals, covering a wide range of opinions and directions.

Past Synods have continued to express the desire of the Canadian Reformed Churches to come to full ecclesiastical unity with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in the true faith. Our relationship which we may enter into must be meaningful to all involved, not only at broader ecclesiastical assembly levels or at the ICRC, but equally well at the level of the respective memberships.

We also ask for patience and understanding from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as we deal with this matter. The concerns that we and the churches have as to what certain decisions might do to the unity within our own federation, are not taken lightly. And we believe that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church will understand this in view of its own recent experiences in the matter of "Joining and Receiving" with the Presbyterian Church in America.

It seems only such a short time ago that we could congratulate the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with its 50th anniversary, when we addressed the Rev. G.D. Jerrel at General Synod Burlington 1986. And now you remind us that, the Lord willing, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church will commemorate its 60th anniversary next year. It is our prayer that the Lord will continue to bless you and guide you as Reformed churches on this continent and in the missionary activities and ecumenical contacts you have undertaken around the world.

We thank you for being here with us. Your cheerful disposition and ready smile has had a positive influence on us. We thank you for your frank comments and advice and we trust that the few days in our midst have been pleasant and mutually upbuilding.

May all our efforts be directed to the honour and glory of our God and to the furtherance of His Kingdom.

Thank You

D. Address by Fraternal Delegate from the Free Church of Scotland, Rev. K. Stewart, to General Synod Abbotsford 1996

Chairman and Brethren,

It gives me great pleasure to bring you greetings from the Free Church of Scotland. My sense of honour and privilege is heightened by the fact that I am the first Free Church delegate to address your Synod since our sister church relation was established in 1993. For this reason, I think it is useful for me briefly to introduce the Free Church of Scotland to you.

Our separate existence as the “Free” Church of Scotland dates from 1843. In that year, after a decade of struggle, our forefathers were constrained to sever their connection with the state in order to protect the church from increasing and unbiblical state interference. This event became known as the “Disruption.” Although the intention was not to divide the church, this was the unfortunate outcome. This happened because many ministers and people, in effect, chose to compromise the spiritual liberty of the church by retaining their connection with the state. The Disruption church claimed – and we still claim – to be the Church of Scotland, Free.

Despite intense suffering and persecution, the Free Church flourished remarkably: Within a few years, the church had built hundreds of churches and manses, the impressive “New College” in Edinburgh, teacher training colleges and, within ten years of its existence, nearly six hundred schools. It is worth noting that the entire missionary effort allied itself with the Disruption church. However, within thirty years, the church had become leavened with the principles of Biblical Criticism developed in Germany. The ultimate result of this was the decimation of the church in 1900 when the overwhelming majority of ministers and members united with another body, leaving the Free Church of Scotland reduced to a fraction of its original strength.

The Free Church today, then, has been shaped by the result of battles with the state and with liberalism. Today, our church is remarkably to your own in composition: We have around six thousand members and perhaps four times as many baptized members. We have more ministers (around 150) and congregations (around 160) although your congregations tend to be much larger than ours. We have a well established Reformed College with five full-time professors and approximately thirty students, some of which are private students. The church is involved in mission work in Africa, Central India and Peru, which provide for educational and medical as well as theological needs. We also produce a youth magazine (possibly two by the end of this year) and, organize around twenty-five camps for your people each year, attended by nearly seven hundred young people – many of them with no ecclesiastical background. The church is also involved in various social programmes to help the needy, such as the terminally ill or elderly.

Now, when I bring the greetings of our church, I do so sincerely: Our appreciation of the Dutch spiritual heritage is deep rooted and of long standing – and all that is best in it, we see in yourselves, the Canadian Reformed Churches. Let me mention three things in particular.

First your Standards. The Belgic Confession, The Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort are all viewed by us as excellent Reformed Symbols. They all pre-date our own Westminster Confession by nearly one hundred years and I think it is useful to point out that those hundred years were a period of intense theological activity on the Continent of Europe, and all the Westminster delegates were intimately familiar with Continental Reformed Dogmatics.

Second, your history. Like ourselves you were born in trial and forged in a fiery furnace. You have had your encounter with the state which resulted in the Secession of 1834 – just reverse the last two digits to remember our “Disruption” – and you also have fought with liberalism. More recently, your churches suffered the trauma of the Liberation of 1944. Needless to say, we admire a church that is prepared to suffer for the truth.

Third, your theological emphases. Your ethos is similar to our own. You stress the centrality of the covenant, the need for personal holiness and the importance of family religion. You are also committed to unity – along with ourselves, you were founder members of the ICRC. You are a shining example in the way in which you retain your young people and, doubtless, this contributes to your growth rate of around one new church per year since 1950.

In spite of our our relation, there are, of course, differences – particularly in the areas of worship, confessional membership and the fencing of the Lord's Table – which require much prayerful discussion. Let these, however, be “in-house” or “family” discussions, marked by sensitivity to our different national histories and ecclesiastical traditions. In this way, and with much prayer, we can hope to resolves these differences, at least to some degree.

Let me conclude by expressing our desire for God's blessing to rest upon you, so that you may continue to grow, and our deep desire that our relation be strengthened to the praise of God and the furtherance of his Kingdom. Finally, my sincere gratitude to you for your hospitality, comfort and fellowship over the last four days.

Response by elder H.A. Berends:

Rev. Stewart, the chairman of General Synod has given me the privilege to address you for a moment as one of our esteemed guests.

For us this is an historic moment. It is the first time in the life of our federation that we may welcome a representative of the Free Church of Scotland at one of our General Synods. It is also the first time that we welcome someone from our sister church in Scotland. It is therefore a great privilege to welcome you here.

Rev. Stewart it is good to have you among us. We were of course a little surprised that the Free Church of Scotland did not sent a real MacLeod, however, a genuine Scottish Stewart will do as well.

Brother Stewart you may have noticed during the last couple days that at times we do things differently that I am sure they do in Scotland. Dr. Visscher, chairman of our Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad reported the fact that voting in your General Assembly is simply done by stomping feet on the wooden floor. Somehow your moderator is able to discern from that whether a matter is adopted or rejected. Now we learn that your moderator is usually one of the oldest and more experienced ministers. They probably have a fine and sensitive ear. Well, Reverend Stewart, I can tell you that at times members in this assembly stomp their feet also, however, our chairman thus far steadfastly refuses to draw any conclusions.

Rev. Stewart you will also have noticed that we have much in common, we confess the same faith, we hold fast to the same word, we may belong to the same Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. In Him we may together recognize the Ruler of the Church.

Rev. Stewart as minster of the Free Church of Scotland in Toronto you have met several of our members and attended our Classis Ontario North. We hope that also these meetings can be used to further our knowledge of each other. And that the bonds between our respective local churches may grow and mature.

Rev. Stewart we have learned to appreciate you already. Your presence and participation at our General Synod expresses the unity of faith we share, the unity of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We learn that soon you will attend the General Assembly at Edinburgh, Scotland. Please pass on our greetings and best wishes. May the Lord bless you and the work that is being done there. May we all make decisions that are pleasing in God's sight and for the benefit of His church, so that also these labours will be used to perfect His Kingdom. May we all be faithful tools in our Father's hands to the glory of our great and gracious God.

Thank You

E. Closing Words of the Chairman.

Brothers,

Driving towards this church building every morning during the last two weeks, I have thought many times of Psalm 121: “I lift up my eyes to the hills, from whence does my help come?”

What a beautiful country. Wherever you drive in the Valley, you see the hills and the mountains. They show the greatness and the power of the Creator, the LORD who made heaven and earth. You feel, with the author of Psalm 121: "my help comes from Him, and from Him alone." And you realize how dependent we are on his grace and mercy – also as General Synod.

General Synod Abbotsford 1995 has almost come to an end now, and looking back we confess that this was indeed the most significant reality: that the LORD has enabled us to do our work completely dependent on Him.

Brothers, with gratitude we may look back on a General Synod in which we were able to work together in an open and brotherly fashion. In the committees, as well as in the plenary sessions we could notice a good and fruitful cooperation. I am sure that this has also proven to be beneficial for the work we were called to do.

When we were delegated we did not know of course how much time it would take. We were guessing; three weeks, maybe four weeks even. An when we came here, and we saw the second binder with recently received material, it looked even worse.

And now we may close after a little more than two weeks, and all the matters have been dealt with. Almost all the recommendations became decisions.

This brotherly and encouraging atmosphere has made it quite easy for me to act as your chairman, brothers. Actually, I am still a bit perplexed that you elected me as your chairman, but I have to say: you did not make it hard for me to lead us together to this moment. I have appreciated that very much.

You have also made my task a lot easier by electing as other members of the executive, brothers who were able to contribute much wisdom and expertise. I want to express my great appreciation and thankfulness for their input. Without your help, advice and comments Rev. Aasman, Rev. Agema and Rev. Visscher it would have been impossible for me to chair this Synod. We would have been stuck several times.

There are others who also deserve our gratitude and appreciation. I think of the queens of the kitchen, sr. Marian Nienhuis and sr. Jane Driegen. I know that many more ladies were involved and we honour them all when we mention these two names. Sisters, we all loved your nutritious and healthy meals, and if it was just for the food, we might stay in Abbotsford for I don't know how long.

These words concerning the manner in which we were looked after during these weeks, may reflect also our appreciation for the warm hospitality we enjoyed here in Abbotsford, as well as in the homes of many church members in the Valley.

The preparation committee of the Abbotsford Church had done a lot of work before Synod was constituted, but they did not quit their job right after the constitution. No, they have continued to show their most appreciated willingness to give all the necessary support and assistance.

And then, every day after 9 o'clock – there was sr. Dijkstra with her crew, armed with garbage bags and vacuum cleaners. Indeed, no matter how messy it was when we left, every morning we found the place cleaned up.

Summarizing: it was good to be here. At the same time: it is good to leave again. After all: general synods have only a temporary existence. Within a few minutes there will be no General Synod Abbotsford any more. And that is how it is supposed to be.

What will be left are the decisions.

I am, of course, tempted to reflect on at least some of these decisions. I will not do so. The work, entrusted to us by the churches is finished, and the churches will find

the decisions in the Acts, and then, according to Art. 31 C.O., the responsibility is with the churches.

In his openings speech the Rev. VanderWel stressed that Synod was called to do justice. It was also mentioned several times during the discussions we have had. I am convinced that this is what we all have tried to do: justice in the eyes of the LORD. Therefore we entrust the results of all our labour to the judgment of our heavenly Father – of the LORD who made heaven and earth.

Brothers, we did our work, so to speak, in the shadow of Mount Baker. But above all in the shadow of the wings of the Almighty One, who, according to his promise, faithfully gathers, defends and preserves his church from the beginning of the world to its end.

These weeks we have read Paul's letter to the Ephesians, with its emphasis on this church gathering work of Jesus Christ. Let me read you, before we depart, the final passage of this letter.

The chairman reads Ephesians 6: 10 - 24, and continues:

Tomorrow we all return, the LORD willing, to our families, as well as to our daily task. Our task at home, in church and society.

May our God and Father be with you brothers, and with his churches.

APPENDIX II

GUIDELINES FOR SYNOD¹

I. Convening and Constitution of Synod

- A. The convening Church shall set the date on which Synod shall meet (cf. Art. 49 C.O.). The convening Church shall publish this date along with the rule:

All material for Synod should be received by the convening Church (in twenty-two copies) no later than six weeks prior to the convocation date of General Synod. Material received after this date shall ordinarily not be added to the agenda unless Synod is satisfied that the reasons given for later arrival are reasonable.²
- B. The convening Church shall send the first Provisional Agenda to all the Churches at least six months prior to convocation.
- C. All material submitted to the convening Church together with a copy of the current Guidelines for General Synod shall be sent to all delegates and the first alternates.³ All material submitted to Synod, including Reports, Appeals, Overtures which quote any foreign language source must provide in the text of the submission a full English translation and in a footnote the citation in the original language.⁴
- D. All material for Synod should be received by the convening Church (in twenty-two) copies no later than six weeks prior to the convocation date of General Synod. Material received after this date shall ordinarily not be added to the agenda unless Synod is satisfied that the reasons given for later arrival are reasonable.⁵
- E. The minister of the convening Church or its counsellor shall act as chairman until Synod has been constituted.
 1. He shall call the meeting to order in an ecclesiastical manner, (cf. Art. 34.C.O.).
 2. He shall have the credentials examined as to whether General Synod can be constituted.
- F. Officers of Synod shall be chosen by ballot in this order: chairman, vice-chairman, first clerk, and second clerk. Election to office is to be by majority of valid votes cast.

II. Duties of the Officers

A. The Chairman

1. The chairman shall see to it that business is transacted in the proper order and is expedited as much as possible, and that members observe the rules of order and decorum. (cf. Art. 34, 35 C.O.).
2. He shall call the meeting to order at the appointed time, call the roll and shall see to it that each session is properly opened and closed.
3. He shall welcome fraternal delegates or other guests and respond to greetings received or appoint other members for this purpose.
4. He shall place before Synod every motion that is made and seconded, in accord with the accepted order; and he shall clearly state every question before a vote is taken, so that every member may know on what he is voting.
5. If the chairman feels the need to speak on a pending question, he shall relinquish the chair to the vice-chairman for that period of time. While holding the chair, he may speak to state matters of fact or to inform Synod regarding points of order.

6. He shall have, and duly exercise, the prerogative of declaring a motion or person out of order. If his ruling is challenged, it shall be submitted to Synod for decision by majority vote.
7. The chairman shall retain he right to vote on any question.
8. In case of a point of order, the chairman must make a ruling at once. This ruling may be reversed by a majority of Synod, if any member is dissatisfied with the ruling of the chair and appeals to the floor.
9. The chairman shall close the Synod with appropriate remarks and with prayer. (Art. 34 C.O.).

B. The Vice-Chairman

1. The vice-chairman shall, in the absence of the chairman, assume all his duties and privileges.
2. The vice-chairman shall render all possible assistance to the chairman as circumstances require.
3. He shall prepare the Press Release.

C. The First Clerk

1. Every morning, after the roll call, he shall read the Acts of the previous day.
2. He shall keep a proper record of the business of Synod. This record shall ordinarily contain:
 - a. The opening and closing of sessions and roll call.
 - b. All motions whether carried or defeated.
 - c. All final reports or committees and all decisions of Synod.
 - d. Any document or part of debate or address that Synod by majority vote has decided to insert in the Acts.
3. He shall not include in the Acts any motion that was withdrawn.

D. The Second Clerk

1. The second clerk shall serve in the absence of the first clerk.
2. He shall render assistance to the first clerk as circumstances require.
3. He shall handle outgoing mail on behalf of Synod.

III. Synodical Committees

A. Advisory Committees of Synod

1. The officers of Synod shall propose advisory committees, with a convener, to serve for the duration of Synod.
2. The officers of Synod shall propose an arrangement of matters on the agenda to the appropriate committees.
3. All reports shall be distributed in ample time before they are presented for discussion.
4. The committee reporter shall present the reports.
5. If there is a minority report as well as a majority report, both reports shall be given into discussion, but the majority report shall be voted upon first.
6. During the discussion, the task of defending the report shall rest primarily with the reporter of the committee. Other committee members shall receive the privilege of the floor to elaborate on or clarify any point.

7. In order to facilitate the discussion on a pending issue, the chair shall ordinarily call for discussion in two parts (rounds) – in the first part opportunity is given to members to express remarks related to the issue in question. In the second or following parts, members may react to the discussion or the issue in question.
8. The discussion may be extended by discretion of the chairman or by decision of Synod.
9. If anyone has been requested to advise Synod on any matter, he shall address Synod on this point only when asked to do so by the chair.

B. Synodical Committees

1. All committees appointed by Synod shall see to it that they send as many copies of their report to the local churches as each has office-bearers.⁹

IV. Rules of Order

A. Closed Sessions of Synod

1. A closed session shall ordinarily mean a session where members of Synod and office-bearers may be present. This shall be used in delicate or unusual situations.
2. A closed-restricted session shall, as a rule, mean a session where members of Synod only may be present. This shall only take place when Synod judges that such a course is dictated by due regard for personal honour or the welfare of the Churches in extremely delicate situations.

B. Main Motions

A main motion is one which presents a certain subject for consideration or action.

1. A main motion is acceptable under the following conditions:
 - a. The mover has been recognized by the chair.
 - b. The motion has been seconded.
 - c. The motion is also presented in writing.
2. A main motion is not acceptable if another main motion is before Synod or if it conflicts with any decision already made by Synod.
3. A notice of motion may be given during the discussion.

C. A Motion to Amend

This is a proposal to alter a main motion in language or in meaning before final action is taken on the motion.

1. A motion to amend may propose any of the following: to strike out, to insert, or to substitute certain words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs.
2. A motion to amend is not a proper amendment if it nullifies the main motion or is not germane to it.
3. A motion to amend an amendment is permissible and is called a secondary motion.

D. Call for a Division of the Question

At the request of one or more members of Synod, a motion consisting of more than one part must be divided and voted upon separately, unless Synod decides that this is not necessary.

E. Objection to Consideration of the Question

If any member is not satisfied with the ruling of the chair, the matter is referred to Synod for a decision.

F. Right of Protest

It is the right of any member to protest against any decision of Synod. Protest should be registered immediately, or during the session in which the matter concerned was acted upon. Protest must be registered individually and not in groups. Members may, if they feel the need ask to have their negative vote recorded. Such requests must be made immediately after the vote is taken.

G. Motion to Bring Matters Once Decided Again Before Synod

Any member of Synod, for weighty reasons, may move to have a matter reconsidered, which was previously decided. This purpose of this motion is to propose a new discussion and a new vote.

H. Discussion

1. To obtain the floor, a speaker must be recognized by the chair.
2. If any member has spoken twice on a pending issue, others who have not yet spoken twice shall, as a rule, be given priority by the chair,
3. When the chairman believes that a motion under consideration has been debated sufficiently, he may propose cessation of debate. If a majority of Synod sustains his proposal, discussion shall cease and the vote shall be taken.
4. Any member of Synod, when he deems a matter to have been debated sufficiently, may move to close the discussion. Should a majority be in favour, the vote shall be taken, but only after those who have already requested the floor have been recognized.

I. Voting

1. The chair shall call the roll (in any order) when a vote is taken.
2. Voting about persons shall be by ballot.
3. Voting about delicate matters and other matters of a critical nature shall also be by ballot.

J. Revision

These Synodical Guidelines may be suspended, amended, revised or abrogated by a majority vote of Synod.

¹General Synod 1983, Acts, Art. 45.

²General Synod 1995, Acts, Art. 111.

³General Synod 1986, Acts, Art. 76; General Synod 1995, Acts, Art. 111.

⁴General Synod 1989, Acts, Art. 131.

⁵General Synod 1986, Acts, Art. 162; General Synod 1995, Acts, Art. 110.

⁶General Synod 1995, Acts, Art. 110.

APPENDIX III

COMMITTEE FOR BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

Committee on Bible Translations *Report to Synod Abbotsford 1995*

1.0 Introduction

The mandate which this committee received from General Synod Lincoln 1992 reads as follows:

Synod decide:

- B. To continue the Committee with the following mandate:
1. To do a comparative study of the NASB, NIV and NKJV, making use of past studies, in order to determine which one translation can be positively recommended for use by the churches, whereby the criteria are: faithfulness to the original text and linguistic character of the translation.
 2. To investigate the direction of the Bible Societies/Publishers behind different translations and whether there is the possibility to suggest improvements in the translation to the Bible Societies/Publishers which can be incorporated into future editions; as well, to investigate the future availability of the translations.
 3. To give due consideration to the decision of Synod Bedfordale 1992, regarding Bible translations.
 4. To report to the churches and Next General Synod six months prior to the next General Synod (*Acts*, article 35, p.22).

In the two and half years that the committee had to fulfill its mandate, it met twelve times. That number in itself is not indicative of the effort put in, however, for between meetings individual members of the committee spent countless hours reading, researching and preparing reports, as is evident from the appendices which form part of this report. Each of these appendices was submitted to the committee by its individual members; it should be noted that the positions taken therein are more than just the opinions of individuals since through the process of mutual scrutiny, discussion and adoption, only that which met with common agreement was allowed to stand. Careful readers will notice

some overlap in the various reports; to conserve time and effort however, that overlap has been allowed to stand. The appendices display something of the depth to which we have wrestled with the issues that Bible translation presents. This report, intentionally kept as brief as possible, will attempt to convey the results.

To put the matter in perspective from the outset, it is good for the churches to realize that in a certain respect our situation is a happy one. The Synod of our Australian sister churches spoke words that we unanimously agree with when they declared already in their 1990 synod "that the NASB, NKJV and NIV are deemed better translations than the RSV" (article 138, p. 95). It was heartwarming for us to discover also through the process of studying these three translations in light of the synod decisions made before with respect to the RSV, that indeed "the NASB, NIV, and NKJV are all better than the RSV according to the criteria that were used over the years to judge the RSV" (see Appendix 5, § 3.1 and § 3.2).

The fact that our mandate was to "determine which *one* translation can be positively recommended for use by the churches..." added a degree of pressure to our research and our discussions. With a view to the riches before us and the plethora of angles and factors involved, the task of recommending *one* translation often seemed quite impossible.

It is no shame for us to admit that for all of us on the committee, the process in coming to what we may now present to you was a learning one. We may state here that we went into the task with a degree of pessimism about the possibility of fulfilling our mandate. We were determined to do justice to all the various aspects and to go in whatever direction that investigation would lead us. We did not know what the final result would be.

2.0 Faithfulness to the Original Text and Linguistic Character of the Translation

Synod 1992 gave us the mandate to do a comparative study in which the criteria are (a) "faithfulness to the original text" and (b) "linguistic character of the translation." In points 1 and 2 below, we will examine especially the aspect of "faithfulness to the original text," and in point 3, the matter of the "linguistic character of the translation" will be examined. Throughout the remainder of the report, these two

aspects are generally considered together as they are of course integrated and often influence each other.

2.1 Authority of Scripture

In determining faithfulness to the original text, the question has to be raised how the translators first of all view that text. Is there respect for the infallibility and the divine authorship of Holy Scripture? It should be noted that with respect to this significant point, there is much to be thankful for with respect to the stated intentions and positions of those involved in the translating process of all three versions before us.

In the Foreword to the *New American Standard Bible*, the Lockman Foundation states that the NASB "has been produced with the conviction that the words of Scripture as originally penned in the Hebrew and Greek were inspired by God." One of their chief purposes also was "to adhere as closely as possible to the original languages of the Holy Scripture."

Likewise, as the preface to the *New International Version* indicates, also those involved in this translation "were united in their commitment to the authority and infallibility of the Bible as God's Word in written form." Before commencing their work, translators had to affirm that they agreed that "the Bible alone, in its entirety, is the Word of God written and is therefore inerrant in the autographs," and that they held to a high view of Scripture as set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Belgic Confession, and the Statement of Faith of the National Association of Evangelicals.¹

The Preface to the *New King James Bible* also claims that "the translators, the committees, and the editors" have adhered "faithfully to the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts"; like those involved with the King James Bible "their reverence for the divine Author and His Word assured a translation of the Scriptures in which only a principle of utmost accuracy could be accepted." It is said that all participants

¹ As noted by Robert G. Bratcher, "The New International Version," *The Word of God: A Guide to English Versions of the Bible*. Edited by L.R. Bailey (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 153, and by C.J. Youngblood in "The New International Version Translation Project: Its Conception and Implementation" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* (Vol. 21, no.3, September 1978), 245.

signed "a document of subscription to the plenary and verbal inspiration of the original autographs of the Bible."²

The reader is referred here to the pertinent remarks by Dr. J. van Bruggen to the effect that faithful translation work can only be done by those who "have spiritual insights which only the Holy Spirit can give" (see appendix 1, § 6). The failure to accept the authority of the Scripture unconditionally will at times be influential on the resultant translation.

When one bears in mind that the *Revised Standard Version* appears to come from a different perspective,³ it is apparent that also in this respect the churches will soon be in a better position regardless of which of these three translations they now choose.

2.2 Original Text

With respect to the Old Testament text, the textual basis behind the three translations before us is virtually the same. There may be some difference in degree as to how much the Dead Sea Scrolls and the ancient versions are used, but that would have to be judged on a text by text basis. The committee has no real concerns here. It should be said though that once again our situation is a pleasant one since none of these three translations resort to conjectural emendations as easily and unnecessarily as the RSV does. But more will be said about this point below.

There is more controversy regarding the textual basis of the New Testament however. A pertinent question here is: which text must be seen as original? Readers may be aware that in scholarly circles today there is debate as to whether preference should be given to (a) the *Textus Receptus* or the *Majority Text*⁴ of the New Testament, or (b) the eclectic text often referred to with the names Nestle-Aland. While the

² Jack P. Lewis, *The English Bible from KJV to NIV: A History and Evaluation*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 330.

³ Compare here *Acts of Synod Coaldale 1977*, Appendix IV, 76-77 which speak about the origin of the RSV in the National Council of Churches of Christ. See also our appendix 5, especially § 2.1.2.2.

⁴ It should be noted that, although often confused, the *Majority Text* is not the same as the *Textus Receptus*. The latter is the Greek text used as it was then available for the King James Version whereas the *Majority Text* refers to the text that would be arrived at by determining the consensus of the majority of the Greek manuscripts.

NASB and the NIV choose to follow the eclectic text, the New King James Version is based on the Textus Receptus; in fact, one of the guidelines translators had to keep in mind was that it had to "correct all departures from the Textus Receptus."⁵ For more details about this matter and the continuing debate, we refer you to our appendix 4, "Which Text Type of the New Testament is Best?"⁶ For aspects of this matter relevant to the New King James Version, we refer readers to section 2.4.3 of this report. In the opinion of your committee however, the churches would do well not to get entangled in this point. For one thing, there is no unanimity here among scholars dedicated to the Reformed view of Scripture, and the debate is still continuing.⁷ Moreover, the differences are relatively minor, as the Australian committee reported to their synod in 1990, "scholars from all camps agree that 95-97% of the text is established without doubt or debate."⁸ Regardless of which position is adopted, we still do have the true text of the New Testament before us. As even the preface to the New King James Version points out, "Bible readers may be assured that the most

⁵ As quoted by A.L. Farstad, *The New King James Version in the Great Tradition*, Second Edition. (Nashville: Nelson, 1989), 34. On the same page, Farstad quotes from the same document telling us "Because of the continued usage of the traditional text (*Textus Receptus*) and the increasing number of scholars who prefer the usually similar majority text supported by the vast majority of manuscripts, it is important that a version of the Bible based on this text be available in current literary English."

⁶ Also noteworthy is the article by Ralph Earle called "The Rationale for an Eclectic New Testament Text" in *The NIV: the Making of a Contemporary Translation*. Edited by K.L. Barker. (Col: International Bible Society, 1991), 53-57.

⁷ For a good review of the present state of the discussion, see Daniel B. Wallace, "The Majority-Text Theory: History, Methods and Critique," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol. 37, no. 2 (June 1994). Wallace also includes an analysis of the position of Dr. J. van Bruggen as presented in *The Ancient Text of the New Testament* (Premier, 1979), and that of W.F. Wisselink who wrote a doctoral dissertation under J. van Bruggen entitled *Assimilation as a Criterion for the Establishment of the Text: A Comparative Study on the Basis of Passages from Matthew, Mark and Luke* (Kampen: J.H.Kok, 1989). It is interesting that Wallace, although a student of Arthur L. Farstad and Zane C. Hodges (two defenders of the NKJV and the Textus Receptus/Majority Text view), suggests that the Majority Text position is possible though not probable (213).

⁸ "Report on Bible Translation," *Acts of the 1990 Synod and Reports to the 1990 Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia*, 130.

important differences in the English New Testament of today are due, not to manuscript divergence, but to the way in which translators view the task of translation....” Thus, in the considered opinion of your committee, the churches would do well to consider this matter in that perspective and therefore neither to accept or reject any translation simply on the basis of this point.

2.3 Linguistic Character of Translation

A considerable amount of our time was spent on the matter referred to in our mandate as the “linguistic character of translation.” The questions here are several: how accurate is a translation? How much freedom in translation is permissible? When does literalness sacrifice clarity? While all translation involves a certain amount of interpretation, how much interpretation is too much? How much emphasis should be placed on the receptor language? The various reports presented on the committee table and subsequently appended to this report (see especially appendices 1, 2, 3, and 5) attest to the amount of study devoted to this issue.

To summarize some of our studies, it should be pointed out that for a long time it has been popular to divide translations into two camps, namely, *formal equivalent* and *dynamic equivalent*. *Formal equivalent* refers to a method of translating in which priority is given to the forms, structure, and phrasing of the original language. *Dynamic equivalent* gives a higher degree of emphasis to the receptor language, with more emphasis on the equivalent meanings and less concern for the form and structure of the original. The difference here is not really a difference in kind, but rather one in degree with various translations seeking to place themselves differently (see figure 1 below). While helpful, this distinction between formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence can also be somewhat misleading. Our studies have shown that often translations which are considered to lean more to a formal view contain rather dynamic translations, and vice-versa. Rather than consistently maintaining one position, they are in actual fact unable to do so. The tendency to reject a certain translation because it is perceived as being in either camp is then also the result of misunderstanding. See also on this point appendix 3, § 3.1.

Figure 1

formal equivalent

dynamic equivalent

Somewhat more helpful is the distinction made by Callow and Beekman between four types of translations, namely, highly literal, modified literal, idiomatic, and unduly free (see figure 2 below). A *highly literal translation* is then similar to that found in interlinear translations, which follow very precisely the word-order and sentence structure. While one might consider such a thing to be a translation tool, no one would consider it an acceptable translation.

Figure 2

unacceptable types			
	acceptable types		
highly literal	modified literal	idiomatic	unduly free

At the other extreme, an *unduly free translation* would be a paraphrase approach in which there is undue freedom with respect to the historical context when referring to people, places, things, or customs. Here the translation “will misrepresent the original message and include extraneous, unnecessary information which the author did not intend in his writings.”⁹ Beekman and Callow point out that while both these methods are at opposite extremes, they “share the same unacceptable characteristic of failing to communicate what the original communicated.”¹⁰

Moving on to more acceptable types of translation, Beekman and Callow mention that the *modified literal translation* is an improvement over the highly literal as the translator realizes that some adjustment is needed. However, here the same grammatical forms are used, words are translated consistently regardless of various contexts, and the meaning is still not entirely clear. They point out that for a group of believers “who have access to reference works, and whose motivation to read and study is high, a modified literal translation is

⁹ *Translating the Word of God*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 23.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

usable."¹¹ For anyone else however much is still lost in the message and an *idiomatic* translation is what is really needed.

Concerning this last type, Beekman and Callow write:

In an *idiomatic* translation, the translator seeks to convey to the RL readers the meaning of the original by using the natural grammatical and lexical forms of the RL. His focus is on the meaning, and he is aware that the grammatical constructions and lexical choices and combinations used in the original are no more suitable for the communication of that message in the RL than are, say the orthographic symbols of the original. The RL must be conveyed using the linguistic form of the RL.¹²

Does this mean that in translations of this type the form does not play a role? Concerning this, Beekman and Callow write:

The constant emphasis on *meaning* as over against *linguistic form* may have given the idea that the translator who translates *idiomatically* ignores the form of the original entirely. But this is not so. In the translation process, the linguistic form of the original is of primary and basic importance. Only from a careful study of the grammar and the lexicon of the original can a translator arrive at the meaning which he is to communicate in the RL version. This involves the process of exegesis which calls into use commentaries, lexicons, and other exegetical tools. Once the precise meaning of the original has been determined from the linguistic forms of the text, then the translator is ready to look at the grammar and lexicon of the RL to choose a form which will convey the same meaning. The form is likely to be different, but basic to the form chosen in the RL is the meaning of the original which, in turn, is derived from the form of the original. The linguistic form of the original thus lies at the heart of all translation work.¹³

It is interesting in this regard to listen to one of our own voices of the previous generation. In our third appendix, we have given

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹² *Ibid.* "OL" here refers "original language," the language of the original writer, and "RL" to the "receptor language," the language of the one who receives the message.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 348.

attention to the assessment of the late Professor B. Holwerda in the matter of Bible translations. For our purposes here, it may be beneficial to point out that Holwerda too states that he is not against a "somewhat free" translation, for he says: "A literal translation is often literal, but not a translation. And the purpose is to have a good translation."¹⁴ Commenting on the new Dutch translation, Holwerda stresses the need for a translation to be idiomatic.

But at certain places this translation, though it wants to be a modern translation, has not freed itself from the Hebrew idiom. Thus one meets expressions which we do not use....I frequently find it somewhat stilted and antiquated, and a bit purposely dignified and solemn. And I think that without resorting to colloquial or slang expressions one simply could have and even should have used the common language of today somewhat more. It would not only have made the translation easier to read and more clear, but, on final analysis, would even have made it more accurate. THIS IS TRUE BECAUSE A CAREFUL PARAPHRASE IS SOMETIMES MORE ACCURATE THAN A LITERAL TRANSLATION.¹⁵

Earlier too, Holwerda had referred to the need for a translation to be *clear*, taking into account the language which we now speak and write. J.H. Skilton, a former Westminster Seminary professor, says it as well:

The preference of the present writer is for a translation which sticks close to its basic text and tries to conserve as much as possible of the details and background of the original, but which does not lose sight of the thought movement and remembers its responsibilities to

¹⁴ *Populaire Wetenschappelijke Bijdragen* (Goes: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, 1962), 77. The committee of our sister churches in Australia which reported to their 1990 synod also made reference to this work of Holwerda (cf *Acts and Reports 1990 of the Free Reformed Church of Australia*, 140). The translation used here and in what follows is theirs.

¹⁵ Holwerda, *Ibid.*, 90 as translated in *Acts 1990*, 141 (emphasis is Holwerda's). After quoting these words, the Australian committee makes the comment that "this is in line with the dynamic equivalent method"; it would perhaps be more correct to say that this is in line with the idiomatic approach to translating.

the receptor language to produce a work that is intelligible, idiomatic, and felicitous.¹⁶

These are concerns and views which your present committee shares. As we as churches become increasingly anglicized with a second and third generation well schooled in the English language, there is a great need for us to have a translation which speaks the language of the man in the pew. It is possible to have the highest of regard for the original languages in which God caused His word to be written but at the same time strive to have a translation in our hands which is truly *English* as we speak it and write it also in other contexts.¹⁷

The appendices and the rest of the report will continue to deal with these issues (see especially appendix 3, § 3.1); for now this will have to suffice as an introduction to some of the complexities regarding the theory of translating.

The next question really is: where do the three translations before us attempt to stand in this regard? What principles do they attempt to work with and what goal are they headed towards?

2.3.1 The NASB in theory

The NASB, being a revision of the American Standard Version, is an attempt

to render the grammar and terminology of the ASV in contemporary English. When it was felt that the word-for-word literalness of the ASV was unacceptable to the modern reader, a change was made in the direction of a more current English idiom. In the instances where this has been done, the more literal rendering has been indicated in the margin (*Preface*).

From brochures which we have received directly from the publisher of the NASB, the Lockman Foundation, we can glean much about their goals and intentions with this version of the Bible. The one pamphlet, entitled "New American Standard Bible: Translation Facts," tells us that

¹⁶ "The Study of Modern English Versions of the New Testament," *The New Testament Student at Work*. Volume 2 of *The New Testament Student*. (Presb & Ref., 1975), 222.

¹⁷ For more on this concern, see section 2 of appendix 2, "The NIV - Balancing Fluency and Accuracy."

The New American is a *literal* translation which gives the biblical meaning in the framework of a word for word rendering. It is known as a more precise translation because of its faithfulness to the original manuscripts, even to such details as sentence structure, word order, and conjunctions. The attention to formal detail emphasizes and accents the expression of the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek manuscripts.

Another pamphlet, entitled "Translators of the New American Standard Bible," tells us

The translators did not attempt to interpret Scripture through translation. Instead, the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE translation team adhered to the principles of literal translation. This is the most exacting and demanding method of translation, requiring a word for word translation that is both accurate and readable. This method follows the word and sentence patterns of the original authors in order to enable the readers to study Scripture in its most literal format and to glimpse the individual personalities of the original authors. For example, one can directly compare and contrast the simple eloquence of John with the deep complexity of Paul. Instead of telling the reader what to think, the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE gives the reader the best translation with which to conduct a personal journey through God's Word.

2.3.2 The NIV in theory

The Preface to the translation is once again the first place to look for its stated goals and methods. There we learn the following.

The first concern for the translators has been the accuracy of the translation and its fidelity to the thought of the biblical writers. They have weighed the significance of the lexical and grammatical details of the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts. At the same time, they have striven for more than a word-for-word translation. Because thought patterns and syntax differ from language to language, faithful communication of the meaning of the writers of the Bible demands frequent modifications in sentence structure and constant regard for the contextual meanings of words.

After mentioning that a number of stylistic consultants were involved in the process, we are told more about the goals.

Concern for clear and natural English — that the New International Version should be idiomatic but not idiosyncratic, contemporary but not dated — motivated the translators and consultants. At the same time, they tried to reflect the differing styles of the biblical writers.

From its promotional literature, this is further clarified. After speaking about different methods ranging from the concordant to the paraphrastic, we are told about the NIV's approach.

As for the NIV, its method is an eclectic one with the emphasis for the most part on a flexible use of concordance and equivalence, but with a minimum of literalism, paraphrase, or outright dynamic equivalence. In other words, the NIV stands on middle ground - by no means the easiest position to occupy. It may fairly be said that the translators were convinced that, through long patience in seeking the right words, it is possible to attain a high degree of faithfulness in putting into clear and idiomatic English what the Hebrew and Greek texts say. Whatever literary distinction the NIV has is the result of the persistence with which this course was pursued.¹⁸

2.3.3 The NKJV in theory

From the preface to the the New King James Version, it is apparent that those involved in this major revision hold the work of the translators of the King James Version in highest esteem. Because they acknowledged the authority of the Word, they were very careful to be accurate and maintain the strictest attention to the letter of the text. Thus it is said in the preface to the NKJV that

special care has also been taken in the present edition to preserve the work of *precision* which is the legacy of the 1611 translators.

¹⁸ *The Story of the New International Version*, (N.J.: International Bible Society, 1978), 12 - 13.

Where new translation has been necessary in the New King James Version, the most complete representation of the original has been rendered by considering the history of usage and etymology of words in their contexts. This principle of complete equivalence seeks to preserve *all* of the information in the text, while presenting it in good literary form.

Whereas the phrase “*dynamic equivalence*” is characteristic of some translations, the operative word with respect to the NKJV is the word “complete.” The theory behind it is what the New King James translators call “complete equivalence.”¹⁹ In a book which describes the accuracy, beauty and completeness of the NKJV, one finds chapters called “Complete Old Testament Textual Data,” “Complete New Testament Textual Data,” and “Complete Equivalence in Translation.” In the last chapter, after putting down the *literal* method of translating because of its supposedly *formal* correspondence with the original language, and putting down the *dynamic* method because of its supposedly subjective elements, we are presented with the *complete equivalence method*. We are told that “complete equivalence is basically the *literal method* updated to include scientific insights from *linguistic analysis*.”²⁰ Summarizing this method, James Price writes:

Modern research in structural linguistics has revealed the importance of syntactic structures. A great deal of the information contained in a phrase, clause, or paragraph is encoded in its syntax. Translations that do not produce structural equivalence as well as semantic equivalence have failed to reproduce important information.²¹

¹⁹ Cf the booklet by the O.T. executive editor, James D. Price, *Complete Equivalence in Bible Translation*, Nashville: Nelson, 46 pages.

²⁰ Arthur L. Farstad, *The New King James Version in the Great Tradition*, (Nashville: Nelson, 1993), 124

²¹ As quoted in *Ibid* (124-5) from an unpublished monograph on Bible translating by J. Price. More often in this book (e.g., 100, note 3) there are references to unpublished works by Price on the theory of translating behind the NKJV. Other than his brochure called *Complete Equivalence in Bible Translation* quoted above, there is to our knowledge no scholarly material on the method of translating supposedly used in this version. That which has been made available is not sufficient to convince us that that this method is so superior to others (for more on this see our appendix 1, § 11).

2.4 The Practice

After having investigated the stated intentions and goals of the various translations, there remains of course the need to examine the degree to which they have been attained and whether the result is satisfactory. The question really comes down to faithfulness and readability. Is the degree of accuracy so high that we have no doubt that with which we are presented is the Word of God Himself? Is it phrased in such a way that it is highly readable for the purposes of church, home, and school?

In order to gauge answers to those questions, we have done a number of text studies. Time limitations allowed us to choose only some chapters of Holy Writ in a random manner, usually in connection with other studies that individual committee members were occupied with. On that basis, our conclusions are as follow.

2.4.1 The NASB in practice

With respect to the matter of faithfulness to the original languages, we have a lot of admiration for this translation. Often a reader can judge what is happening in the original language by referring to the NASB. The noting system (in the *Reference Editions*) is also very extensive, giving many meanings that are even more literal as well as many further text references.²² While it would of course be possible to bring up references to texts where one would disagree with the translation, it cannot be doubted that the NASB is an accurate, reliable translation.

It should be noted however that the NASB has not consistently followed this literal approach. In Appendix 3 § 2.1, we have noted some examples of texts where the NASB is surprisingly free and less accurate. It is however with respect to its clarity and readability that the NASB is too often found wanting. The translation is simply too stiff, not lucid enough, and fails to use words the way they are used today. Proper sentence structure is often lacking. Young people would encounter numerous unnecessary problems in reading this translation; even adults

²² It should be pointed out however that not all editions of the NASB make this available. One needs to look specifically for a "Reference Edition" of the NASB.

often will not grasp its meaning. The fact that it does not arrange the text in a paragraphed manner but treats every verse as a separate unit starting again at the beginning of the page every time even further detracts from its readability.²³ Thus, we have great difficulty in positively recommending this translation as *the one translation* to be used by the churches. That does not mean that it should not be used. On occasion, the NASB has distinguished itself in providing idiomatic translations. The reader who cannot read the original languages, as well as the reader who can, will find this translation very helpful in studying God's Word. But for reading in other contexts, it simply lacks sufficient fluency and clarity.

We should note that this judgement also agrees with that of previous committees. The majority report of the deputies who reported to synod 1980 also came to the conclusion that "the NASB is often too literal to be lucid and clear, and does not render itself suitable for liturgical use."²⁴ More about this is mentioned in Appendix 3, § 3.3.1.

This judgement also agrees with that of our Australian sister churches. The Committee reporting to Synod 1990 said:

Putting it quite simply: the NASB's wooden style, lack of clarity and poor readability are its major drawbacks....

Is the NASB a valuable translation of the Scriptures? The answer must be 'Yes'. But its value lies not in its potential as a family, Church or school Bible. It is a reliable translation which provides valuable information to anyone studying the Scriptures. Its aim of staying close to the Greek and Hebrew provides the attentive student (whether theologian or 'layman') with a wealth of information about original languages, and a useful check on other more idiomatic translations such as the RSV or the NIV. This is where its strength lies.²⁵

For more on the Australian analysis of the NASB, please see Appendix 3, § 3.3.2.1.

²³ It should be noted though that "paragraphed" editions have been printed by Holman Bible Publishers. But this is not generally the policy of the Lockman Foundation and one has to specifically search for such an edition.

²⁴ *Acts of General Synod Smithville 1980*, 232.

²⁵ *Acts of the 1990 Synod and Reports to the 1990 Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia*, 150-1.

2.4.2 The NIV in practice

There is absolutely no doubt about the fact that of the three translations put before us, the New International Version presents us with the best and the most modern English. For its readability and its clarity, this translation deserves much praise. Here is language those in pew will have little difficulty understanding; nor does it take much to warm the hearts of children to its word usage.

It is the question of accuracy that has kept us busy however. Is this translation accurate enough or its translation methodology such that there simply is too much freedom taken with the text? As a result of a great deal of study of the translation and also the theory of translation however (as reflected in appendices 1, 2, and 3, and in § 2.3 above), there are several points which should be noted.

i. The NIV has wrestled to a greater degree with the need for clarity in translation, as Professor Holwerda has urged (see § 2.3 above). It has attempted to strike a balance between a high degree of faithfulness to the text and clarity for the receptor in the best possible English.

ii. The NIV is a fresh translation of the Bible. Unlike the NASB and the NKJV, which are revisions of existing translations, the NIV has been willing to look at the text anew and follow it rather than tradition, if necessary. We noticed this throughout our studies and have taken note of it in the conclusions to our study on Hosea, (cf. appendix 14, § 4 ii. c.).

iii. That does not mean it is a perfect translation. There are no perfect translations. We have found occasions when the NIV is more free than we believe to be acceptable and on these points the translators really should be called to account on the basis of their own commitment to the authority of Scripture.

iv. It should be noted however that both as committee and as individuals it was frequently our experience that very often when our initial reaction to an NIV translation was negative, further study and investigation convinced us that the NIV translators had taken into account all the factors involved and had actually rendered the best possible translation of the three versions. If it is true that the NIV has a reputation for being too free, this is no doubt partly due to the fact that the resources and abilities to check out the readings are not always present. Among others, the examples discussed under § 3.2 in Appendix 3 serve to illustrate this point.

v. In light of the above, it is not correct to say the NIV is a "dynamic equivalent translation." Whereas an undisciplined use of the

dynamic equivalence method can lead to outright paraphrases such as *The Good News for Modern Man (Today's English Version)*, the *Living Bible*, etc.,²⁶ the New International Version makes only cautious use of this method and has no intention of being a dynamic equivalent translation (see § 2.3.2 above). Our text studies also confirm that in practice it does not predominantly follow this approach (see appendices 10 - 17). The NIV undoubtedly has dynamic equivalent aspects within it, as do the other translations (cf. appendix 3, § 2.1 and 2.3); but again, that does not make it a dynamic equivalent translation. Rather than belong in Beekman and Callow's category of unacceptable types (unduly free), the NIV really has to be placed in the category of the acceptable types (modified literal or idiomatic). See § 2.3 above (figure 2).

vi. It should also be noted that in Christian circles in general the NIV has met with a great deal of receptivity. This is a version that has shown its staying power as opposed to so many others that have risen only to disappear from sight shortly thereafter. Moreover, it is apparent as well from the reviews that we have received that the NIV also has a high degree of respect in scholarly circles. Biblical scholars clearly acknowledge that this is a translation that must be reckoned with.

In conclusion, perhaps the best we can do is consider the words of one of our reports to the effect that the NIV

is simply the finest translation when all the criteria and the relative importance of the different factors are taken into consideration. Furthermore, this translation takes all of Scripture into account and is true to the Word of God.

The clarity and readability of the NIV may spark a renewed interest in personal Bible reading and study among young and old and stimulate anew the exploring of the treasures of God's Word. It is somehow difficult to imagine the English of the NASB and NKJV sparking that kind of response.²⁷

²⁶ It is important to remember, for example, that when Dr. J. van Bruggen in *The Future of the Bible* (Nelson, 1978) critiques dynamic equivalent translations he has especially these latter versions in mind rather than the NIV.

²⁷ Appendix 3, § 4. vi.

2.4.3 The NKJV in practice

To a great extent, what was said about the NASB can be said about the New King James Version. On the one hand, here is a version of the Bible which attempts to be literal and faithful to the Scriptures. But again, in terms of its clarity and readability it falls short. The English language is given a form which our membership is simply not used to speaking or writing. In our limited studies, we even encountered sentences which were simply considered 'bad' English. The sentence structure as well is often much too complex, bound too much to the structure of the original language and even to the English of the King James Version, giving us a form of English which is not spoken today.²⁸ As in most NASB editions, verses begin anew every time rather than being arranged in a paragraph format. In short, there are simply too many factors here which reduce clarity and readability. The comment of J.P. Lewis is to the point:

One must ask while noting the undeniable improvements of the NKJV over the KJV, 'Why stop here with a new old English? Why not come to current English?' One cannot put gingerbread on a Gothic structure and still have the original. Why create something which is unlike the way English-speaking people ever expressed themselves?²⁹

The nature of the English presented in the NKJV must indeed be seen as a major obstacle. This translation does not go out of its way to be understood by the average person today; rather it has attempted to maintain expressions which are barely understood today and almost antiquated. If this generation would choose to adopt the NKJV, it is pretty well certain that the next generation will need to make yet another change as it finds that words which were barely understood before have now become entirely obscure. For what purpose, we might ask, must we make this sacrifice of clarity? Is an old English style more sacred than that which we speak today? Paul and John and the other authors did not speak antiquated Greek, but the Greek of their day, did they not? Sven Soderlund put it well when he commented that the English of the NKJV

²⁸ According to Farstad, *Op.cit.*, 34, guideline number 9 was "attempt to keep King James word order. However when comprehension or readability is affected transpose or revise sentence structure."

²⁹ *The English Bible: from KJV to NIV*, 339.

is "a curious mixture of Elizabethan style with glosses of twentieth century vocabulary and grammar."³⁰ Rev. G. Van Dooren as well, already pointed in 1983 to several instances of what he called awkward style, difficult, and old-fashioned English which added to his conclusion that we do not need this translation of the Bible.³¹ It should be remembered that also the 1989 Report to Synod 1990 of our Australian sister churches was very critical of the NKJV on this point, referring to criticism that it had "about the method of translation, the mixed word usage, and the stilted sentence structure which together make us conclude that it can hardly be called a modern translation."³² For more on this point, and a lengthy quotation of archaisms, see our appendix 3, § 2.3. For a summary of reviews on the NKJV, see appendix 3, § 3.4.3. It is apparent from the reviews summarized there that the NKJV has not met with much appreciation in scholarly circles. A community such as ours which demands and is used to a high degree of scholarship, should have a Bible which ranks accordingly.

Several other factors prevent your committee from recommending the NKJV. One factor is that the NKJV was not produced for such needs as exist in our churches. Our study in appendix 10 points out that the NKJV is expressly intended to satisfy the needs of those who cling to the KJV. This explains many of those peculiarities of the NKJV which make it unsuitable for our churches. While it is apparent that the NKJV attempts to make good use of modern scholarship, it is clear that many judgements were made for the simple reason that the KJV had it that way. None of the four revision of the KJV since 1769 have adhered so closely to the original KJV.³³ The NKJV was seriously limited by policy to change the archaic language of the KJV.

What the NKJV has in common with the KJV (and therefore, what exclusively distinguishes it from the four revisions after 1769) is that it adheres to the *Textus Receptus* of the New Testament (see on this point § 2.2 above). It should be noted that if in every other respect, the NKJV is

³⁰ Review of the NKJV in *Crux* 16 (June 1980), 32 - 32.

³¹ "Bible Translation Number One Hundred: An Evaluation of the New King James Version," *Clarion*, Volume 32, no. 15-18.

³² *Acts and Reports of the 1990 Synod*, 156. Compare also our Appendix 3 § 3.3.2.2., and our Appendix 10.

³³ In our studies on Hosea, we also noted a "slavish following of the so-called King James tradition"; see Appendix 14 § 4 ii b. It should be noted that in the literature however, they do warn against "excessive veneration of the KJV," and against considering it either "inspired" or "infallible." It leads one to wonder then why more was not changed in the NKJV.

considered a good translation, this point will not be decisive. But one will only be able to overlook the negative factors if he shares the high esteem that the Textus Receptus has been given in this translation. Yet, the Textus Receptus does not warrant such esteem. There is something doctrinally askew in the discussion about much of this. The period of history in which the King James arose is set aside as a period when special providence and grace were given with respect to the textual basis for the translation work as well as the gifts needed in rendering the translation. Daniel B. Wallace says: "The overarching concern of traditional-text advocates has been to maintain the concept of providential preservation."³⁴ "Their entire doctrinal position," writes Wallace, "is founded on what they think God must have done."³⁵ He refers to J.W. Burgon who argued that there is "no reason for supposing that the Divine Agent, who in the first instance thus gave to mankind the Scriptures of Truth, straightway abdicated His office; took no further care of His work; abandoned those precious writings to their fate."³⁶ It seems that alongside the divine inspiration of the original writings of the Bible, there seems to have been a period so divinely enlightened that the text and the gifts the church had at that time are unequalled in any period since. Needless to say, there is something very speculative and arbitrary about this. Who is to say that the work of one group of people is so sufficiently from God that it must remain untouched by succeeding generations, while the work of another is not? Even if one grants that there has been a *providentia specialissima* with respect to the Word of God, who is to say that this special providence stopped in the seventeenth century?

However, this does not reflect the whole problem in relation to the Textus Receptus. The Textus Receptus is not the Majority Text. The Textus Receptus resembles the Majority Text, yet it departs from it significantly. The text of *Revelation* for instance, has many different readings in the Textus Receptus compared to that of the Majority Text. Another example is the famous *Commā Johanneum* (1 John 5:7-8) which is part of the Textus Receptus, but not of the Majority Text.³⁷ Today there is almost unanimity that these words do not belong. They are not found in any of the early

³⁴ *Op. cit.*, 197. It should be noted that Wallace does point out that Dr. J. van Bruggen and his student, W. F. Wisselink, do not adhere to this doctrine of preservation but hold to a more 'nuanced MT position' 200, 201n97.

³⁵ *Op. cit.* 202.

³⁶ *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels Vindicated and Established* (London: George Bell, 1896), 11.

³⁷ *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*. Edited by Zane C. Hodges and Arthur L. Farstad (Nashville: Nelson, 1982).

manuscripts. They are not found in the original Latin versions made by Jerome. They are only found in four late manuscripts which are considered Greek translations of a later version of the Vulgate (at least in one case, probably made to satisfy the promise of Erasmus that he would add them if he was shown a Greek manuscript which contained them).³⁸ (On 1 John 5:7-8, see also Appendix 3 § 3.4.3, and Appendix 5 § 2.1.1.1.i)

While we would not necessarily criticize the NKJV for its desire to fill the need of those who still adhere to the KJV, we have reservations concerning its choice of NT text: the Textus Receptus. We may discuss the merits of the Majority Text versus the Eclectic Text, but none in our churches will raise the Textus Receptus to this level.

All in all, while we recognize that there are good qualities about the NKJV, and realize that our Australian sister churches would like us to go in this direction (see in § 7.0 below), we find that we cannot share their enthusiasm sufficiently to do so. The Canadian Churches have always kept away from the NKJV and have never mandated any synod committee to study it before; whatever strengths the NKJV has are more than adequately shared by the translation that has had our attention before, the NASB; we see no compelling reason why we should recommend a change in that course now.

3.0 Matters of Style

The translation of the Bible, just as the publishing of any book, necessitates some editorial decision regarding style. Some of these are relevant to our report. While our appendix 7, "Notes on Style," speaks about them at length, it may be beneficial if we summarize some of its points here. We do so especially with a view to our final recommendations.

- A. *Capitalization.* As there is nothing in the original languages which necessitates capitals for God and since the concern for capitalization in references to God (pronouns, adjectives) is a relatively new phenomenon, it is inappropriate to object when a translation minimizes the use of these. In many respects, this is to be preferred since it reduces a number of other problems that arise when there are inconsistencies or when there the need for interpretative

³⁸ See here B. M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, (Oxford, 1973), 101f. Also Ralph Earle, *Op.cit.*, 56-7.

decisions arise (e.g. the designation of Messianic prophecies). Cf. appendix 7, § 1.1 - 1.3.

- B. *"Thee" and "Thou" for God.* While many in our membership will lament the elimination of such terms for God, there is again nothing in the original language that necessitates them. We should not insist on maintaining them nor oppose their inevitable demise. Both the NIV and the NKJV have opted for the use of "you" and "your" for God, and it is can be expected that the NASB will do the same in its next edition. As the former committee put it before Synod 1992 regarding the NRSV: "it must be noted that in none of the original languages of Scripture is any linguistic distinction made between addressing a human being and addressing God. Since Biblical usage is our norm, one cannot have principle objections against the deletion of these archaic forms."³⁹ Cf. appendix 7, § 1.4.
- C. *Italics.* Both the NASB and the NKJV have decided to make use of italics in order to designate words which are supposedly not found in the Hebrew or Greek but needed for the English. This too is a relatively recent practice, and presents more problems than it solves. For one thing, since italics are used in English for emphasis, their usage will confuse the average reader. Moreover, if the word is needed to make the sentence intelligible in translation, is it not then implicit in the original language? And if so, do the italics then not introduce doubt into the mind of the reader concerning words which might be beyond doubt? In our estimation then, a policy which eliminates the italics for this purpose and simply attempts to cover every aspect in the text is preferable. Thus, the approach of the NIV is to be preferred over that of the NASB and the NKJV. Cf. appendix 7, § 2.1. On the use of italics by the NKJV for italics to designate OT quotations in the NT, see appendix 7, § 2.2.
- D. *Red Letter Editions.* This practice too is an artificial intrusion into the Biblical text. It introduces an erroneous distinction between the words of Jesus and the Gospel writers. Are they not all the Word of God? The publishers of all three versions have produced red letter editions, but black letter editions are available. We would urge the

³⁹ *Acts Synod Lincoln 1992, 252.*

membership to take the extra effort to obtain these instead. Cf. appendix 7, § 3.0.

- E. *Paragraphs and Verses.* The NASB and the NKJV have both had the policy to treat every verse as a separate paragraph and note new paragraphs with bold numbers. This does not make for smooth reading. In later editions both translations became available in paragraphed format but once again one might need to make specific requests. Here as well the approach of the NIV is to be preferred. Cf. appendix 7, § 4.0.

4.0 Past Studies

The mandate of our committee included the directive to “do a comparative study of the NASB, NIV and NKJV, *making use of past studies...*” We have understood the phrase “past studies” here to refer to the work of previous synodically appointed Bible translation committees. In appendix 5, we have done an extensive investigation to see how the NASB, NIV and NKJV measured up with respect to the criticisms that were raised against the RSV. The conclusion of this work reiterates what we have said in § 1.0, namely, that these three translations are better than the RSV. On almost all the points raised in this test, these three translations did very well. Moreover, in appendix 14, we have compared previous studies on the RSV text of Hosea with that of these three translations. Overagainst the RSV which made emendations to the Masoretic Text no fewer than 30 times (23 of them definitely unwarranted), the NASB, NIV and NKJV continued to be faithful to the text. Moreover, while the NASB and the NKJV stuck to the tradition of the KJV in some instances, the NIV did better in these instances and at other points came up with fine distinctive translations because of their willingness to look at the text afresh. In light of these facts too, the churches should have little hesitation in abandoning that which is ‘old’ in favor of that which is ‘new,’ since that which is ‘new’ is clearly better.

5.0 Common Objections to the NIV

It is no doubt true that any major new version of the Bible is going to meet with a certain amount of initial criticism. Even the translators of the King James Bible had to face this problem as they

were accused of relegating correct renderings to the margin by those who stubbornly clung to the Geneva Bible, the Great Bible or the Bishops' Bible.⁴⁰ It is no different with the NIV today. J. P. Lewis mentions that "the NIV translators are now in the throes of that process."⁴¹

In order to try to serve the churches well, we have intentionally devoted some time and effort also to the voices that have been raised against the NIV. It became important for this committee to determine for itself: were these concerns legitimate? Are there objections which do stand up when they are carefully scrutinized? Also because one of these voices contributed to a shift in the Australian position (see § 7.0 below), we thought it best that we listen to the concerns he raised.

In appendix 8 then, we have examined the book *The NIV Reconsidered: A Fresh Look at a Popular Translation*. The final conclusion of this book is that the NIV is not likely to become "the new standard which the church so clearly needs" and that "the New King James Version is superior to the New International Version."⁴² In other words, the NIV is to be rejected in favour of the NKJV. It should be pointed out however that the authors of this book can hardly be considered objective judges in the matter since both of them have been involved in the work of the NKJV. Earl D. Radmacher has served on the North American Overview Committee and Zane C. Hodges acted as a translator and a consultant.⁴³ We tested this book by examining one chapter in detail. The result of that process however was that it convinced us that the book really lacked credibility. Their strong bias for the NKJV has caused them to make many unfair accusations, to level many exaggerated charges, and to turn a blind eye at the same time to similar difficulties in the KJV or the NKJV. The level of scholarship presented in this book is certainly not impressive. We wonder whether this approach to the matter can even be considered Christian. It should serve as a warning to the churches to be wary of similar charges launched unfairly by those with ulterior motives.

⁴⁰ S.L. Greenslade, "English Versions of the Bible, 1525-1611," *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, volume 3. Edited by S.L. Greenslade. (Cambridge, 1963), 167-8. Cf. F.F. Bruce, *History of the Bible in English* (3rd ed., Oxford, 1978), 106-7.

⁴¹ *Op. cit.*, 328.

⁴² By Earl D. Radmacher and Zane C. Hodges (Dallas: Redención Viva, 1990), 131-2

⁴³ Arthur L. Farstad, *The New King James in the Great Tradition*, (Nashville: Nelson, 1989) 146,155.

In appendix 9, we have examined in detail another book which is critical of the NIV and has been quite influential in Australia (see § 7.2 below): Robert Martin's *Accuracy of Translation and the New International Version*. Although less acrimonious, this book too is found wanting. Our appendix shows that his views are often simplistic, his demands extreme, and his concerns unrealistic. Our conclusion is that "Martin is not very helpful in assessing the NIV because his understanding of the process of translation is oversimplified and his criterion for a good translation is unbalanced." Cf. § 4.0. Once again we have a voice which is initially alarming but upon further investigation loses much of its substance.

It should also be mentioned that many of the other concerns that are often raised against the NIV need to be seen out of the perspective that the NIV has attempted to reach a better quality of English than many other translations. One might object, for instance, to shortening some of the longer Greek sentences. Similarly, the omission of words like "but," "and," "for," etc. is particularly troubling to the reader who knows the original languages and recognizes behind them their original equivalent. The NIV translators would defend all this however, from the perspective of the nature of the English language. It is a rule in the English language that lengthy sentences be avoided — one sentence should contain basically one thought.⁴⁴ Likewise, in English it is considered improper to begin sentences with words like "but" and "for", etc; whereas they might add something to the Greek or Hebrew, if they do not add anything to the understanding of the English reader the rule is that they should be omitted. A key to lucid English is the omission of all unnecessary words. As committee, we have mixed feelings on this point. While the goal of high quality English is certainly laudable and it is good to realize that this is the NIV motive, we are not convinced that all of this is really necessary. This may very well be a matter for further study and review (cf. recommendation 3 in § 8.0).

6.0 The Bible Societies

Included in our mandate is also point two:

⁴⁴ For translators' views on this point, see also footnote 10 of Appendix 9.

To investigate the direction of the Bible Societies/Publishers behind different translations and whether there is the possibility to suggest improvements in the translation to the Bible Societies/Publishers which can be incorporated into future editions; as well, to investigate the future availability of the translations.

With respect to this mandate, we can report as follows.

6.1 New American Standard Bible

This version of the Bible has been sponsored by the Lockman Foundation, was first published in 1970, and by 1991 was said to have distributed more than sixteen million copies. While we expect that its popularity has decreased since then (partly on account of the appearance of the NIV), the Lockman Foundation continues to provide it, and apparently has plans for a minor revision. While of the three it may be the least popular in the bookstores, there is nothing to indicate that it will not continue to be available for some time. The Lockman Foundation has indicated that they are open to comments we might wish to make; by letter, they said "we welcome any suggestions and questions especially since we are in the process of a light revision of the NASB."

6.2 New International Version

Of the three versions before us, the NIV is no doubt the translation that is the most readily available and strongest in the marketplace. The International Bible Society, dating back to 1809 (when it was called the New York Bible Society), has sponsored and financed this translation since 1968. Its printing is taken care of exclusively by Zondervan of Grand Rapids, Michigan. In February of 1993, Kenneth L. Barker, the Executive Director of the NIV Translation Center informed us in a letter that there are already 80 million copies in print and called it "the best-selling Bible today."

The Society is also committed to revising the NIV from time to time; Dr Barker assured us "we would welcome comments and suggestions for improved translations that your committee might make in the future...."

6.3 New King James Version

This version developed out of a revision project set in motion in 1975 by Thomas Nelson Publishers. They claim that it is the first major revision of the KJV in 200 years.⁴⁵ No figures are available to us as to how successful it has been thus far. There is no executive committee with which we could correspond. We were informed by the publisher that the NKJV is a completed project. In our estimation, this is another reason why this translation should not be recommended to the churches.

7.0 Australia

Synod Lincoln 1992 also gave us the mandate "to give due consideration to the decision of Synod Bedfordale WA 1992, regarding Bible translations." In what follows, we will attempt to give an overview of all the relevant decisions of our Australian churches regarding Bible translation. This will allow us to give the requested consideration to Synod Bedfordale and also to comment on decisions made since then. At this point, it would be good also to consider the overview given in Appendix 3, § 3.3.2.2.

7.1 Synod 1990

In 1987 a synod of the Free Reformed Churches appointed a committee with the mandate "to investigate once more the NIV and NASB and to investigate the New KJV to see if any of these translations would be better than the RSV."

In a lengthy report, this committee reported to Synod Armadale 1990 of the Free Reformed Churches. With respect to the *NASB*, it reported that while the *NASB* was useful for study purposes, it was not suitable for worship and other general purposes. After evaluating the *NKJV* with respect to reliability and readability, the committee concluded that they could not recommend the New King James Version. Upon comparing the *NIV* with the *RSV* and giving

⁴⁵ J. P. Lewis, *Op.cit.*, 329.

consideration to its method of translating, the deputies recommended to synod 1990

3. to declare at this time already that the NIV is deemed better than the RSV for use within the church;
4. to recommend to the churches that the NIV be used for study, instruction, and family purposes;
5. to withhold final endorsement of the NIV in the church services till a subsequent Synod;
6. to ask the new deputies to send all relevant suggestions and improvements to the Committee on Bible translation of the NIV.⁴⁶

In response to this report, synod 1990 declared "at this time already that the NASB, NKJV and NIV are deemed better translations at this time"; while this synod decided "as regards the underlying text, to accept the premise that there is room for a careful eclectic method," it also decided "to express caution over the DE approach to translation." Taking issue with the opinion of its committee that the NIV combines the formal equivalent and the dynamic equivalent approaches (consideration 4e⁴⁷), synod proceeded to appoint a new committee to further study the NASB and NKJV and to further evaluate the NIV.

7.2 Synod 1992

The committee appointed by Synod 1990 reported to Synod Bedfordale 1992. This committee basically agreed with the previous committee's view on the *NASB* and therefore recommended that synod "omit the *NASB* from further consideration for use in the church services."⁴⁸ On some points however, this committee disagreed with the previous committee's assessment of the *NKJV*. It concluded here that

1. The *NKJV* is faithful to the form of the original.
2. This faithfulness to the form has result in some considerable losses in clarity in its language, though these losses are not as severe as in the *NASB*. Their extent merits further investigation.

⁴⁶ *Acts and Reports 1990*, 170.

⁴⁷ That this consideration also plays a large role later in the report to synod 1992 is obvious from page 115 and following of the *Acts and Reports 1992*.

⁴⁸ *Acts and Reports 1992*, 122

3. The NKJV's underlying text is of significant value. The translation's fidelity gains to a major degree because it is a matter of safety to follow that long-established form of the text. Therefore it is worthy of serious consideration by the Churches.
4. The extent to which the NKJV has made use of the textual scholarship of the last centuries needs further examination, especially as related to the OT.

Since our Synod 1992 gave us the mandate to give due consideration to Synod Bedfordale 1992, let us pause at this point to comment on some aspects of this committee's report. With respect to point 2 above, our experience is different. In our estimation the NASB is *more* readable than the NKJV. Point 3 is rather curious in light of synod 1990's conclusion with respect to the text that "there is room for a careful eclectic method" and in light of their own admission that "they are not competent to indicate the errors" in the passages "which deviate from the original Greek text."⁴⁹ In conclusion 3 of the above, the committee has apparently followed the line of reasoning which we have warned against in § 2.4.3, considering it a matter of safety to follow the long-established form of the text. Would it not also be possible that say that the basic text here is simply that which was available to the translators of the KJV?⁵⁰ This conclusion can only hold true if one either (i) proves that the Textus Receptus is the correct text or (ii) accepts the teaching that God has preserved only this particular text as the most authoritative by a special act of providence.⁵¹

We must pay attention yet to what this committee recommended to Synod Bedfordale 1992 with respect to the NIV. Mainly on the basis of the committee's uncritical acceptance of Robert Martin's analysis of the NIV (cf our Appendix 9 where it is shown that most of Martin's criticisms are unjustified), the committee recommended to Synod "to withhold final endorsement of a new translation until (a.)

⁴⁹ *Acts and Reports 1992*, 111.

⁵⁰ S.L. Greenslade, for instance, before praising the translators of the KJV for their work, says: "their text was still poor, the New Testament not yet based on the chief uncials; their knowledge of Hebrew, for example of tenses and many idioms, was still defective and they had no papyri to help them with the Greek *koine*..." *Op.cit.*, 167.

⁵¹ It is beneficial to remember here that, as pointed out by D.B Wallace in footnote 34 above, J. van Bruggen and W. Wisselink, to whom this Australian report makes quite some reference, would not defend their Majority text views on this basis.

more study has been made of the NKJV, and (b.) a common approach with the CanRC has been effectively pursued." The committee then recommended that new deputies be appointed to accomplish this mandate.

Synod Bedfordale 1992, on that basis decided "to recommend to the churches that the NKJV be used for study, instruction and family purposes," and "to leave room for the use of the NKJV in the churches if consistories so wish," but to "withhold final endorsement of the NKJV until the churches became more familiar with it and "more study has been made of the NKJV in comparison with the NIV." Synod also appointed deputies with the primary mandate

- a. to continue studies of the NKJV, in comparison with the NIV, to determine whether the NKJV can be endorsed as a final recommendation to the churches. The areas of study should include:
 - whether Old Testament textual sources are properly used;
 - the extent and seriousness of the loss of reliability resulting from the chosen method of translation....
- d. to communicate this decision, together with the reports of deputies serving Synod 1990 and Synod 1992, to deputies from the Canadian Reformed Churches prior to their Synod in November 1992, urging the brotherhood in Canada to reach a similar decision.⁵²

We are appreciative of the cautious approach of the synod here in that it (a) withheld final recommendation of the NKJV until further study was made, and (b) wanted to maintain contact with Canada in order to come to similar decisions.

7.3 Synod 1994

As subsequent events are relevant to our purpose, it will be beneficial if we will also yet examine what has happened in Australia since 1992. Synod 1992 appointed the same brothers to a new committee. This committee also communicated with us in the fall of 1993, but unfortunately we had little to share at that point. We are grateful for the fact that they sent us a copy of their report to Synod 1994. In this report they made extensive study of chapters of Ruth,

⁵² *Acts and Reports of Synod 1992*, p.84.

Zephaniah, and Zechariah, attempting especially to compare the NKJV and the NIV. It appears that through that work, they became more sympathetic towards the NIV and more critical of the NKJV. In their considerations, for instance, they comment

- e. All things being equal, the loss through simplification or paraphrastic interpretation is more serious than the loss through lack of clarity. Generally, in the case of lack of clarity the original words in the text can still be traced back.
- f. On the basis of the material studied it appears that the losses in the NKJV due to lack of clarity are more frequent than the losses in the NIV due to simplification or paraphrastic interpretation. This implies that the NIV is not necessarily less reliable than the NKJV. In fact in many instances the NIV is more reliable than the NKJV.
- g. Both an interpretive translation and an unclear translation are misleading. People are led to believe that the Word of God says something which it in fact does not say.
- h. Because of the importance of having a clear translation in contemporary English - the NKJV is weak in this regard — the NIV remains a translation worthy of serious consideration for use in the churches, homes and schools....
- k. ...It would be unwise of the FRSA to make a definite choice of translation before it is clear what direction the CanRC will be taking. With the expertise available to them they may certainly help us come to a final conclusion.⁵³

Once again, we are thankful for many aspects of this report. The careful reader will understand that we do not agree with all aspects. It is not fair to refer to the NIV specifically as “paraphrastic” as it is far from that nor as “interpretive” since all translations need to be interpretive. Regarding ‘g,’ we should point out that there is a middle road between an “interpretive” and an “unclear” translation — namely one that attempts to be faithful to the text as it engages in interpretation and attempts to give the results of the process as clearly as possible. It is our view that, while the NIV is certainly not perfect in that regard, it has been more successful than the Australian reports appear to suggest. As argued above (§ 2.3.2), though initial impressions are sometimes negative, careful study reveals that more often than not, the NIV tries to take all factors into account.

⁵³ *Report to Synod 1994, 19-20.*

What did Synod 1994 do with the recommendation of this committee? While we have not yet received the official Acts, we have received a faxed copy of their decision. Because it may not yet be available, we include most of the text below.

3. to endorse the NKJV as a faithful and reliable translation for use in the churches, as well as for study, instruction and family purposes.
4. To allow the NIV to be used in the church services, and for study, instruction and family purposes.
5. To allow a period of transition for the churches to move away from the RSV in two years.
6. To appoint new deputies with the following instruction:
 - a. to inform the CanRC of this decision and remain in touch with the Canadian deputies about developments there;
 - b. to inform the churches of developments in the CanRC;
 - c. to monitor developments with respect to the NKJV and the NIV;
 - d. to solicit from the churches comments on possible improvements on these translations for a possible reprint and to send these comments to the respective publishers;

FOUNDATIONS:

1. Our previous synods, have found the NKJV to be a faithful and reliable translation and have allowed the use of it in the churches. Synod 1992 withheld final endorsement of the NKJV in order to evaluate its reception in the churches. That the NKJV is well received is evident from the fact that some of the congregations in the federation already use the NKJV.
2. Since the weaknesses of NIV are the strengths of the NKJV (and vice versa) the NIV should be considered for the use in the churches, and as with the NKJV a period of evaluation should be given before final endorsement.
3. It is highly desirable that all the churches in the bond use the same translation of the Bible. However, since the question of which Bible translation to use is not one of principle but rather one of preference, room should be left in the churches for a degree of variation.

Allow us to make a number of comments on this decision. While we are thankful that the synod allowed the use of the NIV, it is regrettable that this synod did not heed more carefully recommendation 'k' of its committee but proceeded already at this point to "endorse" the NKJV.

What is particularly striking is the strong language used here; the NKJV has not simply been recommended, but it has been endorsed. To the best of our knowledge, previous ecclesiastical assemblies have shied away from such strong terminology. What does that say, e.g. about the NKJV's policy on 1 John 5:7-8? What does that say to the person in the pew when a minister perhaps disagrees with that endorsed translation of a given verse of Scripture? Still today, e.g. it is a matter of debate whether any ecclesiastical assembly ever "authorized" the "Authorized Version," the KJV.⁵⁴

In our estimation then, the report presented to the Australian Synod of 1990 stands out as a careful and thorough presentation, and the report presented to Synod 1994 was more favourable to the NIV than the 1994 synod decision suggests.

8.0 Recommendations

What course should the Canadian churches then follow? While it would be a fine thing if we could agree with the sister churches who speak our language, it is our conviction that the Canadian churches should stick to the course they were on. It is the NASB that has been studied by us over the years and has come to be known among us as a reliable translation. There is very little that the NKJV offers us that the NASB does not offer, and there are some aspects of the NKJV which continue to concern us. While in our estimation *both* the NASB and the NKJV are too literal for use in the worship services and many other contexts, Australia and Canada have agreed that the NASB is a translation that is helpful for study purposes. For other purposes, the NIV, while not perfect, has much to commend it, as this report and its many appendices have attempted to show. It is good to remember as well that according to many (see, for example, appendix 1 § 13), the NIV is in many respects very close to the RSV.

In the light of everything that has been submitted in this report and its appendices then, the committee appointed by Synod Lincoln 1992 recommends to Synod Abbotsford 1995 that synod

⁵⁴ Cf. S. L. Greenslade who says "Strictly speaking, the Authorized Version was never authorized, nor were parish churches ordered to procure it," *Op.cit.*, 168.

Committee on Bible Translations

1. recommend the *New International Version* for use within the churches.
2. remind the churches about the usefulness of the *New American Standard Bible* for study purposes.
3. appoint a committee which would receive comments from churches and/or members about passages in the NIV in need of improvement, scrutinize those comments, and pass on valid concerns to the NIV Translation Center. This committee should also glean from previous synod reports as well as from this report and its appendices any recommendations for change which need to be presented to the NIV Translation Center.

Respectfully submitted by your Committee,
P. Aasman
J. Geertsema
W. Smouter
C. Van Dam
G. H. Visscher

APPENDIX IV

Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise Report to General Synod Abbotsford, 1995

Esteemed brothers,

The Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* hereby submits its report on its activities in regard to the mandate given to it by General Synod Lincoln 1992.

1. Printing and Distribution

A new printing of the revised edition appeared in the spring of 1993. This edition incorporated the changes of Synod 1989 and Synod 1992. Unfortunately, a few typographical errors slipped in which must be corrected in a future printing. Generally, however, this revised printing is a marked improvement over the previous printing.

The errors to be corrected concern the Athanasian Creed:

- a. Line 9 of the preface: change 43 to 41.
- b. correct the next sentence as follows:

The teachings of Augustine (354-430 AD) in particular form the background to the section on the Trinity, and the decision of the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.) forms the background to the Christological section.

- c. In Art. 22, change “nor begotten” to “but begotten”

2. Renewal of Contract

Following the mandate of Synod Cloverdale 1983, our Committee has taken the necessary steps to renew the contract with Premier Printing in February 1995. Up to this point the printer has done an excellent job to provide us with a good product at a reasonable price, especially considering the average cost of this material in today's market.

3. Corporate Status

The Committee has maintained its status as a corporation, and all necessary documents for this purpose have been kept up to date.

4. Publicity

The Committee continues to deal with various requests for information regarding the *Book of Praise* on a regular basis. We have also extended permission to various individuals and groups to copy our material, as long as they are not using this material for commercial purposes.

5. Mandate

With respect to the mandate we received from Synod 1992 we may report the following:

- a. General preface

The general preface has been updated and now appears in the latest printing to the revised edition of the *Book of Praise*.

- b. Introduction: Church Order

The Committee has prepared an introduction to the church order, which is to be found in Appendix 1 of our report. The arrangement of this introduction follows the pattern of the introduction to the creeds and confessions.

- c. Preface: Canons of Dort

The Committee has prepared a linguistically updated version of the preface to the Canons of Dort, (see Appendix 2). However, the Committee is hesitant

about the inclusion of this material in the *Book of Praise*. The historical preface does not belong with the text of the creed itself, and had no authoritative status. Moreover, the contents are not readily understandable to one who is not familiar with the historical context in which the Canons of Dort were written. The Committee approached the professor of Dogmatology at the Theological College for his advice on this matter. His remarks are included with the Preface (see Appendix 2 a). On the basis of his advice, we recommend that Synod refrain from including this and other prefaces in the *Book of Praise*. The prefaces could eventually be published through other channels in a more scholarly edition of the creeds.

d. Preface: Heidelberg Catechism

The Committee has also included an updated version of the preface to the Heidelberg Catechism, (see Appendix 3). This version was originally submitted to Synod 1974. For the reasons cited above, we would argue against including this preface in the *Book of Praise*.

e. Revision of the Nicene Creed

In accordance with the mandate of Synod 1992, the Committee has reviewed and reworked the revision to the Nicene Creed. The final form of the proposed revision is included at the end of this report (see Appendix 4). We have solicited the help of the

Professor of Dogmatology at the Theological College, and he has passed on to us his remarks concerning the linguistic changes made in the creed, (see Appendix 4a) In some instances, we have preferred alternative approaches, and we have also attached our reasons for this, (Appendix 4b).

f. Evaluation of Melodies of the Creed

The Committee solicited the help of three musical experts in forming an opinion concerning the melodies to the Apostles' Creed. The melodies were sent to Prof. Jan Overduin, professor of Music at Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario; Dr. Emily Brink, professor of music and worship at Calvin College, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Drs. Jan Smelik, a doctoral candidate associated with the Center for Liturgical Sciences at the University of Groningen, in the Netherlands. All of these people are outside of our immediate community, and thus were able to give an impartial judgment of all the melodies sent to them.

The Committee offers the following summary of their response:

a. Schoof Melody

The Schoof melody is inadequate on technical grounds and therefore ought not to be included in the church book. All of our musical advisers pointed out that there were serious problems with this melody. Much work would need to be done in order to make it a workable melody for congregational singing.

b. Teitsma 'adaptation'

Musically, this melody received some good reviews, although these were not unanimous. But the copyright problems associated with this rendition make it impossible to proceed with this melody. The Committee contacted Mr. M.M. DeGroot, a former member of the Publication Committee, who now owns the copyright to the Schouten melody. In his response to our queries, he made it clear that fundamental changes to the text of the Schouten melody of the kind proposed by Br. Teitsma would be a breach of copyright.

c. Schouten melody

The remarks on this melody indicate that there are good reasons for retaining it in the church book. One of the musical advisers suggested not to include this melody in the *Book of Praise* on the grounds that it had too much of an artificial flavour. However, the other advisers were rather favourable towards it.

d. Zwart melody

The responses on this melody indicate that it is suitable for use in congregational singing. However, since there was some difference of opinion among the advisers on the over-all suitability of this melody, the Committee cannot give a wholesale endorsement to its inclusion in the church book. One of the advisers suggested giving the melody a “test-period” by placing it in a book outside the scope of an ecclesiastically adopted hymnal.

e. Other possibilities

The Committee considers it worthwhile to pass on other possibilities suggested in the advice of the musical experts. One advisor was emphatic in stating that the Zwart melody should not be the only version of the Creed in the church book. Another gave a strong recommendation to the version in the church book of Martin Bucer in Strasbourg 1539. This rendition of the creed corresponds in form with the Genevan tunes, since it belongs to the same time period. We have included this melody in our report (See Appendix 5) and would recommend that Synod give serious consideration to adopt this version as an alternate melody to the present Hymn 1A. Some work would need to be done to fit the setting to the English text of the creed.

g. Questions of Mr. L. VanZandwyk

The Committee also solicited the help of Dr. N.H. Gootjes with regard to the questions raised by Mr. L. VanZandwyk. He noted the following:

- i. Br. VanZandwyk wants to use the term “power” in Canons II/3 and Canons II/4. In both places the Latin text reads: *valoris et pretii*. Here *valor* means “value” in the sense of “to be powerful, to be strong, to avail, (cf. *valeo*, to be strong). Hence the nuance of “power” is implicit in this word.
- ii. There is no indication that the Christian Reformed translation is responsible for the rendition in our church book. It is more likely that the revisers simply worked with the Latin text as a further elucidation of what was meant by the Dutch text.
- iii. There are many other so-called pleonasms in the Canons of Dort. An abundant use of pleonasms forms part of the 17th Century prose style. See, for example, Canons II/5 (*promiscue et indiscriminatim; annuntiarum et proponi*), II/6 (*defectu vel insufficientia*) and II/7 (*liberantur ac servantur*).
- iv. The Latin term in Answer 17 of the Heidelberg Catechism and in Article 19 B.C. is *potentia* (Fr.: puissance; Gr.: Kraft). This carries a different connotation than the Latin *valor*.

On the basis of these considerations, we recommend that the emendations proposed by br. VanZandwyk not be adopted in the *Book of Praise*. The suggestions of br. VanZandwyk indicate that he has made no examination of the confessions in their original languages, and therefore they lack sufficient credibility to be incorporated in the *Book of Praise*. In this regard, the Committee assumes that the consistent viewpoint of our Synods occupied with revisions has been to restrict linguistic changes to those strictly necessary, and to honour the original texts as much as possible.

6. Future Revision

If the Synod can adopt the changes as we have proposed them, then there will be a need for a new printing incorporating the changes of Synod 1995. Once this printing has been issued, it should serve the churches for some time to come.

At the same time, the Committee feels that improvements are always necessary, and these should be promoted. We propose that the Committee keep a running file of possible improvements to all sections of the *Book of Praise*. Particularly if the churches adopt a new Bible translation to be recommended for use by the churches, the *Book of Praise* will need to be substantially modified to reflect this change.

At present we do not see the need for a new edition. However, the matter of more substantial changes and improvements should be left open, so that the churches can continue to suggest ways and means to improve our congregational singing. Improvements of some of the poetry of the present psalm and hymn rhymings should be considered for a new edition. Also, the Committee has received several requests for the possible inclusion of more hymns. The Committee proposes that the consideration of possible improvements become part of its mandate.

7. Further Recommendations

Pursuant to this approach we propose above we would make the following recommendations:

- a. that the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* be continued and that the size of the Committee be kept to four members. We propose the appointment of one member with talents in the musical area, in order to work with suggested changes and improvements re the Psalm and Hymn section. (Note: Dr. W. Helder has indicated that, considering he has served on the Committee for about twenty-five years, he finds it appropriate to step down from the Committee).
- b. that the Committee be given the mandate:
 - i. to function according to the arrangements for publishing and distribution accepted by General Synod Cloverdale 1983 (Cf. *Acts*, pp. 297-299).
 - ii. to maintain its corporate status in order to be able to protect the interests of the Canadian Reformed Churches in all matters concerning the *Book of Praise*.
 - iii. to foster an increased awareness of the existence of the *Book of Praise* among others and to promote the availability of a book of harmonizations facilitating the use of the *Book of Praise* in the English speaking world;
 - iv. to serve as the address to which any correspondence regarding the *Book of Praise* can be directed.

Respectfully submitted
Dr. J. De Jong (reporter)
Dr. W. Helder (convener)
Mr. M. Kampen
Rev. G. Nederveen
October, 1994

Though General Synod decided not include the appendices to the Reports, the following appendices have been added because they form an integral part of the Report.

A. Proposed Text for the Nicene Creed (Linguistic revision)

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages; God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten, not made; of one substance with the Father; through Him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation, He came down from heaven and became incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man.² He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and He arose on the third day,³ in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead; His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; with the Father and the Son He is worshipped and glorified;⁴ He has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in⁵ one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge⁶ one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We await the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.⁷

Amen.

B. Report for a linguistic revision of the Nicene Creed, for the Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise, submitted by N.H. Gootjes

1. General Remarks Concerning the Text of this Creed

The creed which we now call 'Nicene Creed' is the creed decided upon by the Council of Constantinople, 381.¹ The original text is in Greek, it can be found in J.N.D. Kelly's book *Early Christian Creeds*, pp. 297ff. with a careful translation in English. The translation in Kelly differs in a number of details from the text in our *Book of Praise*. This English text goes back to a Latin text used in the liturgy of the Mass.²

Your committee has to make a general decision as to what kind of version it wants to present to Synod. Generally speaking, three avenues are open to you:

- a. To update the version in the *Book of Praise* in today's English, without considering the original Greek text;
- b. To translate the original text as literally as possible, without taking into consideration the history of this creed (including the English translation in the *Book of Praise*);
- c. To translate the original text, but not in a rigid way, making allowances for English usage and theological development.

The disadvantage of the first alternative is that the text will grow away from its roots if the original text is not considered. The second alternative will end up in a scholarly correct rendering (see e.g. the translation in Kelly) which may not be fitting for a congregation today confessing God and his work for us. The third alternative seems to be the best and is, in fact, in agreement with the way the Forms of Unity have been updated in the 1980s. If you opt for this route it means that it should be argued case by case what version is most satisfactory.

Following this approach I present the following translation for your consideration. The numbers inserted in the text correspond with explanations following the text.

2. Translation

We believe (1) in one God, the Father almighty, Maker (2) of heaven and earth, of (3) all things visible and invisible.

We believe (4) in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten from (5) the Father before all ages (6) [(7)], Light from Light, true (8) God from true (8) God; begotten, not made; [(9)] of one substance with the Father; through Him (10) all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation He (11) came down from heaven; by (12) the Holy Spirit He became (13) incarnate of (12) the virgin Mary and was made man;

He (11) was crucified (14) for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried;

on (15) the third day He arose (16) according to the Scriptures;

He (15) ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father;

He (15) will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead;

His (15) kingdom will have no end.

We believe (4) in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life;

He proceeds from the Father and the Son (17);

He is worshipped and glorified together with the Father and the Son (18); He spoke through (19) the prophets.

We believe (4) in (20) one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We confess (21) one baptism for the forgiveness (22) of sins.

We look forward (23) to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the coming world (24).

Amen.

3. Explanation

1. We believe. The Greek text has the plural. The majority of the Eastern Creeds use the plural, rather than the singular in the Western Creeds. The singular "I believe" in our version of the Nicene Creed is an adaptation of the Nicene Creed to the Apostles' Creed. There can, of course, be no objection against retaining the expression from the *Book of Praise*: "I believe." I am, however, in favour of following the original form: "We believe." This underlines that the personal and the communal aspect of faith complement one another. With the Apostles' Creed we express that I personally am committed to this faith. With the Nicene Creed we express that we share this faith with the catholic church.
2. Maker. The *Book of Praise* has in the Apostles' Creed "Creator" but in the Nicene Creed it has "Maker." This is a correct rendering of the Greek text and can be retained.
3. The Greek does not have "and" here. *Te* should not be translated as "and," it forms part of the parallel, *oratoon te kai aoratoon* 'of visible as well as invisible things'.
4. The Greek text has "We believe" only in the first line, and it is nowhere repeated. In fact, most of it, up to baptism, is one long sentence. Such long sentences are possible in Greek, also because the meaning is indicated in the repetition of the accusative case. In English, however, they are awkward, and more difficult to understand. In the version of the *Book of Praise* the verb is added to the articles on the Spirit and the church. It is, therefore, inconsistent that 'we believe' is not added to the confession of the Son. If "We believe" is added here, "and" could be deleted.

5. "From" replaces "of" four times in the *Book of Praise*. This is closer to the Greek text (*ek*). Kelly uses in all instances "from," the New International Consultation Text has "of" once and "from" three times. Is "from" not better English?
6. Ages. The Greek word *aeon* can be translated in a temporal sense (age) as well as in a local sense (world). The meaning of the plural "worlds" is difficult to understand in this context, and the obvious meaning of the plural is "ages."
7. God from God. These words are missing in the Greek original, they have been added later to the Latin version. Since these words are repeated in "true God from true God" this later addition does not contribute anything substantial and the original text can be restored.
8. True. The Greek word *alethinous* does not mean "very" but "true." The translation "very" may be a case of scholarly Latinized English, derived from the Latin *verum*. But in today's English *verum* does not mean "very" but "true."
9. Being (of one substance). The Greek does not have a participle. I would prefer to omit "being" if that is possible in English.
10. Through Him. Two remarks: a) "through" is closer to the Greek *dia* than "by" (would be: *hupo*). b) I would not translate this as an independent sentence: "Through Him..." since it is connected with the preceding phrases as part of the proofs for the Son's full divinity.
11. He. The Greek does not have a full stop after "made"; the sentence continues. If one wants to stay close to the Greek text the translation could read: ... through Whom all things were made; who for us man... I follow the suggestion of the New International Consultation Text to begin a new sentence here.
12. By... of. Actually, the Greek has only one preposition: *ek*: "He became incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary," see Kelly. This could give the impression that the Holy Spirit is the Father of Jesus Christ. The proposed translation avoids this impression.
13. Became incarnate. This is a better rendering of the aorist than the usual: "He was incarnate."
14. Crucified. The *Book of Praise* has "was crucified *also*." The word *te*, however, should be read in connection with *kai pathonta*: He was crucified... as well as He suffered (the construction is the same as in nr. 3). If the redundant "also" is dropped the line reads better, too.
15. On. The Greek connects the sentences with repeated *kai*, "and," see the translation in Kelly. This sounds awkward in English.
16. Arose. The word "again" seems to imply that Jesus Christ had risen before this. The Greek verb does not convey the notion of "again." The word can be omitted here, just as it has already been omitted in the Apostles' Creed.
17. Proceeds from the Father and the Son. The text as decided by the Council of Constantinople has only: "proceeds from the Father."
The words "and the Son" were added to the Nicene Creed by the Synod of Toledo, 589 as the result of the theological development in Augustine. I, for one, would not easily give up this addition.
18. He is worshipped and glorified together with the Father and the Son. The *Book of Praise* has a different order: "Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified," – which sounds somewhat ponderous. The proposed translation tries to follow the usual word order in English.

19. Through. The *Book of Praise* has: "by the prophets." The Greek, using *dia* and indicating that the prophets are God's means of revelation, could be translated as *through*; see also *dia* in (10).
20. In. The Greek text shows that the verb "to believe" is used in all cases (Father, Son, Holy Spirit, church) with the preposition "in." The Apostles' Creed, however, makes a distinction, by adding "in" only to the triune God, not to the last part of the creed. The result was that via Augustine the difference between "to believe in" and "to believe" became part of western theology. The Nicene Creed, on the other hand, does not use the preposition to express the difference between believing God and believing something. The committee has to make a hard choice between two equally valid approaches:
 - a. Follow the Greek text and maintain "believe in" in connection with the church. This would show that we know ourselves to be heirs of the Council of Nicea, Constantinople and of Athanasius. The difference between believing God and believing the church is so obvious that it does not need a terminological distinction.
 - b. Bring the Greek text into agreement with the formulation of the Apostles' Creed. The reason for this change could be that we should not create difficulties in a church where the Augustinian explanation has become popular knowledge.
21. We confess. The *Book of Praise* reads: "I acknowledge." Lampe's *Dictionary of Patristic Greek* gives both translations for the verb: to confess, to acknowledge, so either translation is possible. "To confess" fits better in the context.
22. Forgiveness. The Greek word, when used in the New Testament, is usually translated as "forgiveness" (Mt. 26:28; Mk. 1:4, Luke 1:77 etc).
23. Look forward. The expression "I look for" has a different connotation in today's English. The Greek verb is now usually translated as "to look forward to," see also Kelly.
24. Coming world. Is this not smoother English than "world to come"?

Yours in Christ's service

N.H. Gootjes, December 9, 1993

C. Committee Notes on Proposed Translation:

1. The Committee prefers "of" for stylistic reasons.
2. This word order follows the Greek text. The Committee felt that we must hold to this text as much as possible.
3. Here we have followed the Greek text.
4. Here we have followed the word order of the Greek text.
5. The Committee opted for the first of the two choices put forward to us on this matter by Dr. Gootjes (see Appendix 4a). Our rationale for this is two-fold: first, it honours the original text; second, it allows for the fact that, if properly qualified, one may speak of "believing in the church." That is, one may state that he believes in the church as an indestructible reality, and a life-giving divine work present on earth. The church is then looked upon not as a human work, but as a divine work. As such, one may believe in it. This, it seems to us, is also the unique element which the Nicene Creed serves to isolate.
6. The Committee prefers "acknowledge" for stylistic reasons.
7. According to Lampe, the Greek *prosdokao* means: expect, (cf Latin: *expecto*, *are*). The Committee opted for the term "await."

¹See on this especially J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (third ed.; New York: Longman Inc. 1983) 313-331.

²See the Latin text printed in H. Denzinger, A. Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum* 33. ed. (Barcinone: Herder, 1965) 67. The differences between the Greek and the Latin text are duly noted here.

APPENDIX V

Report of the Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to General Synod 1995 of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

I. MANDATE – OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

A. Mandate from Synod Lincoln 1992

General Synod Lincoln 1992 decided to continue the Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with the specific mandate as recorded in the Acts, Article 72:

1. to maintain the contact with the OPC, according to the rules for “Ecclesiastical Contact” as determined by Synod Coaldale 1977, and to request comment on the rules of ecclesiastical fellowship to determine whether there are presently acceptable.
2. to continue the discussion of divergencies which are considered to be impediments to ecclesiastical fellowship, and to see whether these divergencies stem from ecclesiological and/or historical differences (as outlined [in the considerations] IV, A3 vi . . .), with the purpose of having these impediments removed.
3. to respond to the question of Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations to the problem of receiving congregations and ministers that have been or are members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, as outlined under Considerations IV, A2a, b, and c.
4. to continue to discuss and evaluate the current third party relationships of the OPC.
5. to inform the OPC that the matters which still require resolution for the establishment of full ecclesiastical fellowship are (see [Consideration] IV, A3v):
 - a. the matter of confessional membership
 - b. the matter of supervision of the Lord’s table, and
 - c. the matter of the relationship with the Christian Reformed Church,
6. to serve the churches with regular reports of the work of the Committee and to serve General Synod 1995 with a report, to be sent to the churches at least six months prior to the beginning of Synod.

B. Membership of the Committee

Synod Lincoln 1992 appointed the following brothers to the Committee: Revs. D.G.J. Agema (convener) (since 1989), P.G. Feenstra (since 1992), Prof. Dr. N.H. Gootjes (since 1992), brs. G.J. Nordeman (since 1989), T.M.P. Vanderven (since 1986) (Synod Lincoln 1992, Acts Art. 124).

C. Overview of the Committee’s Activities

Since Synod Lincoln 1992 the Committee has met 15 times; two combined meetings were held with the OPC’s Committee for Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations (CEIR). All minutes of the meetings of our Committee, outgoing and incoming correspondence, and reports are on file in the archives of the Committee and are available to Synod.

1. *Regarding Mandate 1:*

The Committee has maintained contact with the OPC by means of correspondence with and a visit to the General Assemblies (see section II.A), and by means of correspondence and meetings with the CEIR (see section II.B). We solicited from the CEIR comments regarding the rules for ecclesiastical fellowship (see section II.B.2.a.).

2. Regarding Mandate 2 & 5:

The Committee informed CEIR about three matters which still require resolution for the establishment of full ecclesiastical fellowship. However, we were not able to complete these mandates with regards to the matters of confessional membership and the supervision of the Lord's Supper (see section II.B.2.b).

The discussions at the joint meetings with the CEIR included questions regarding the relationship of the OPC with the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) in its discussions with the CEIR. We noted with gratitude the strong stand taken by the OPC in particular against the CRCNA's view of the offices and homosexuality. This matter will be on the agenda of the 62nd General Assembly (1995) (see section II.B.2.d; II.B.3.d.), and we are awaiting the outcome.

3. Regarding Mandate 3:

The Committee explained to CEIR Synod Lincoln 1992's recommendations regarding the procedure for receiving of congregations and ministers into the federation (see section II.B.2.c.)

4. Regarding Mandate 4:

The current third party relationships of the OPC received some discussion (see section II.B.2.d.), but we were not able to evaluate these relationships any further at this point.

5. Regarding Mandate 6:

A report of the activities of the Committee was published in *Clarion* (see section II.D.). The present report was submitted to the churches during February 1995.

II. ACTIVITIES SINCE SYNOD LINCOLN 1992

A. General Assemblies of the OPC

Between November 1992 and December 1994, two General Assemblies were held. The brs. Rev. P.G. Feenstra and Prof. Dr. N.H. Gootjes attended the 60th General Assembly (1993) at Geneva College, Pittsburg, PA. We were unable to send a delegation to the 61st General Assembly (1994), held at Harvey Cedars, NJ, and sent a letter of Christian greetings.

We note that over the past number of years we have been able to attend General Assemblies approximately every other year.

B. Meetings and Correspondence with CEIR

The CEIR consists of nine members, and is charged by the OPC's General Assemblies to maintain worldwide ecumenical contacts on its behalf. Contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches is only a part of CEIR's mandate. In order to facilitate matters, CEIR has established a number of subcommittees, although all its members have access to and are involved in all matters before the full committee. Further, the members of the CEIR are drawn from across North America; it is our understanding that they meet as a full committee only twice every year.

Considering these limitations, we are pleased to report that we were able to arrange one full-day meeting and one half-day meeting since Synod Lincoln 1992. A meeting scheduled for January 1994 had to be cancelled due to inclement weather.

Our Committee found it nearly impossible to fulfil its mandate because of the CEIR's reaction to the decision of Synod Lincoln 1992 to extend a relationship

of ecclesiastical fellowship to the PCK and the FCS. The brothers of the OPC considered this of such concern that they could not continue the planned discussions. Much of our efforts were directed towards re-opening communication so that the three divergencies could be discussed and hopefully resolved. Since this matter is of such crucial importance, we include extensive quotations (rather than summaries) from the various letters.

1. Letter from CEIR – March 3, 1993

In this letter, CEIR reacted to our request for a further meeting following Synod Lincoln 1992. In its letter, CEIR commented on the new rules for ecclesiastical fellowship. Further, in the fourth section of CEIR's letter it was noted that the mandate given to our Committee largely concerned the tensions between our two federations and the perceived barriers to a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship. The letter continues to make the following observations:

...

4.1. *Concerning these points we make the following observations:*

- 1) *Synod Lincoln 1992's adoption of recommendation B. (Article 72, pp. 14-15) is a most welcome and constructive action. We understand it to the effect that, in view of the actions of past synods, the only known "divergencies" that remain as "impediments for ecclesiastical fellowship" are the three listed in point 5. of your mandate.*
- 2) *In view of point 3. of your mandate, we believe it proper for us to make our still unresolved concerns about Blue Bell and Laurel a priority in our mutual discussions, particular our concern about the ecclesiastical order (or lack thereof) which makes it possible for these congregations to have been received in the manner they were.*

We agree fully with the observation of Synod in this respect that "the Canadian Reformed Churches have no uniform procedure in place" – that is just the problem. But we fail to see how the reason that Synod appends, "because the present relationship of "ecclesiastical contact" is of a temporary nature" (IV, A, 2, a; p. 8), provides an adequate or even a valid justification, particularly when Synod has reaffirmed its recognition of the OPC as "true church" (IV, A, 2, c; p. 10).

- 3) *Much time at our meeting was spent pondering the actions of Synod concerning the Presbyterian Church in Korea, Kosin (PCK) and the Free Church of Scotland (FCS). If accurately reported in CLARION (p. 561), Synod, in the light of the recommendations of by the CRCA, has accepted an offer of ecclesiastical fellowship with the PCK and has initiated an offer of ecclesiastical fellowship with the FCS.*

These actions have left us thoroughly perplexed. Although we have not inquired officially, we know from informal contacts with ministers in both those churches, whose reliability we have no reason to doubt, that both the PCK and the FCS have essentially the same position as the OPC in matters of confessional membership and supervision of the Lord's table! Additionally (on a past issue in CanRC-OPC discussions), the FCS tolerates among its members and even among special office bearers a small though diminishing number of Freemasons.

Brothers, we are bound to ask you: Are the CanRC dealing fairly and evenhandedly with the OPC? Are you not applying a double standard in your interchurch dealings? Why is the OPC apparently being held to more rigorous and more exacting requirements for a relationship of

ecclesiastical fellowship with the CanRC than other churches are? Why are we being subjected to more searching treatment by you than other churches receive? (Why, for instance, is there a separate committee for contact with us?; why is the CCOPC not a subcommittee of the CRCA?)

Such questions, consequently, have left us with the further question about the appropriateness, much less the usefulness, of continuing joint discussions.

4.2. *In the light of the observations and questions in 4.1 especially, we have reached the following decisions:*

- 1) *We request that the first item on the agenda for our proposed meeting on April 15, 1993 be a discussion of why the CanRC are not now prepared, immediately, to offer to the OPC a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship (as you already have to the PCK and FCS)? Why, supposing that the OPC should seek a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship, are the CanRC not ready to grant that request? In other words, why are the stipulated divergencies (the OPC views on confessional membership and supervision of the Lord's table, and its relationship to the CRCNA) impediments to ecclesiastical fellowship? Why can't these differences be discussed within the bonds of such a relationship, according to point a. of your Rules?*
 - 2) *We request that the issue of ecclesiology, which we had previously agreed upon to take up next in our joint meetings, be discussed only as it bears on request 1). Other than that, we believe that further discussions of this issue, including whatever differences exist between us on it, ought not to be made a precondition for ecclesiastical fellowship but is appropriate within that relationship.*
 - 3) *We request that from now on the situation of Blue Bell and Laurel be discussed as they bear on request 1); in other words, as they may constitute an impediment to a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship.*
5. *Brothers, our discussions have reached a critical point. But we desire that the present impasse be resolved and we hope that our joint discussions can still have a constructive future for both our churches, and so be honoring, in some measure perhaps, to the great Head and King of the church.*

...

2. Rochester – April 15, 1993

This was the first meeting with CEIR after Synod Lincoln 1992. CEIR's letter of March 3 formed the most important part of the agenda. We attempted to structure the discussion as closely as possible to the mandate given to our Committee by Synod Lincoln 1992.

a. *Regarding the proposed rules for ecclesiastical fellowship:*

The term "broadest assemblies" (rule #2) is unknown to the OPC, and they suggested the term "major." Since the reference is to the General Synod and the General Assembly it was suggested that for clarity's sake these terms could well be used.

The use of the phrase "consult . . . when entering" in rule #3 was questioned, suggesting that contact ought to be established *before* entering into a new relation with third parties. The OPC preferred: "inform . . . when contemplating." It was pointed out that this point was discussed at Synod (Article 50, II (Observations, E); III (Considerations, C)).

The CEIR considered the term “in principle” in rule #5 rather vague. In our answer we pointed to Synod’s Consideration which led to this formulation: “By a Synod decision the pulpits are “in principle” opened; the actual opening is a matter of an invitation by a local church.” (Article 50,III,D).

It was pointed out that the term “church” as used in this set of rules is ambiguous. At times it seems to refer to the whole federation, at other times only to the local congregation. CEIR suggested that this be clarified.

In their letter of March 3, 1993, the CEIR stated: “3.2. It is our understanding that the Rules are bilateral, that is, in the case of the OPC they would apply only to our relationship with your Churches and not to our relationship with other churches.” This understanding was confirmed by the CCOPC, although it was noted that ideally speaking churches would use the same set of rules for third party relationships.

- b. *Re Synod Lincoln 1992 Mandate C.2 and C.5.: “To continue the discussion of the divergencies”*

The CEIR raised the question why these divergencies remain impediments with respect to the OPC and why these divergencies do not form impediments with respect to the FCS and the PCK; these two federations have the same practices as the OPC has. Why is the OPC treated in a different way? Are the CanRC dealing fairly and evenhandedly with the OPC?

Our response centred on two points: (a) the current mandate ought to be considered within the historical context of the contact between the OPC and the CanRC; and (b) indeed, the two sets of decisions are not on the same level and this needs to be resolved by Synod. However, there are different backgrounds at play here which should be distinguished, and are not to be used to remove the need for a continued discussion of the issues identified by Synod.

The CEIR’s position remained that these issues cannot be discussed without bringing in the seemingly contradictory actions of the CanRC. The question remained – aside from the OPC’s relation with the CRCNA – whether the OPC is acceptable to the CanRC and whether our differences can be tolerated and discussable within this relationship. CEIR found it difficult, at this point, to clearly determine what needs to be resolved as a result of a discussion on ecclesiology.

- c. *Regarding Synod Lincoln 1992 Mandate C.3: the receiving of OPC congregations within the Federation of CanRC.*

Appreciation was expressed for the frank comments which Synod Lincoln 1992 made in Article 72. IV (Considerations), A, 2, in particular paragraph vi which speaks of the need for “open discussion with the ecclesiastical assemblies involved.” The OPC remained concerned that in a number of instances the relation between our two federations is rather strained. Reference was made to the relation with Blue Bell and Laurel and the situation in Denver. CEIR pointed out that the main thrust of the OPC’s concerns in these matters regard good ecclesiastical order.

- d. *Regarding Synod Lincoln 1992 Mandate C.4: third party relations.*

The OPC believes it to be its responsibility to warn and admonish the CRCNA as long as possible, while the CanRC point out that the urgency of the issues which separate us from the CRCNA make fellowship

impossible. In the discussion the differences between the two respective approaches were highlighted. We were informed that the OPC is heading towards an "hour of decision": concerns regarding the CRCNA have been and will be raised before the OPC's General Assembly.

Regarding the PCA, it is noted that the OPC's relationship is at a critical juncture with a possible termination of the contact unless the PCA is willing to discuss concerns raised by the OPC.

It is noted that the OPC has decided to apply for membership with the ICRC and that the CanRC will support this application.

The Rochester meeting resulted in a decision to continue the discussion between our two committees, and to focus on this topic: Does a Biblical ecclesiology require that the differences (as defined in the Acts of Synod Lincoln 1992, Article 72) must be resolved before a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship can be established?

3. An exchange of letters

An exchange of letters followed this meeting which eventually changed the direction determined at the Rochester meeting. Instead of continuing as agreed, the OPC placed before us their grievances in reaction to Synod Lincoln 1992's decisions regarding the PCK and the FCS, and confronted us with a charge of double standards in our ecumenical relationships.

a. From CEIR – July 13, 1993

...

In further reflection, particularly considering the overall situation resulting from actions taken by your General Synod last November, the full committee decided that rather than for us to prepare a position paper at this time, it would be appropriate for us, in light of that situation, to request you to prepare a paper addressing the question formulated at the close of our April 15th meeting . . .

If that paper could be sent to us sufficiently in advance of our next meeting, we could prepare a written response. Otherwise, your paper could be the basis for discussion at that meeting.

...

b. Further correspondence resulted in planning a meeting for January 1994 in Philadelphia. We responded to CEIR's letter of July 13, 1993 as follows (Letter to CEIR, December 2, 1993):

...

We discussed your letters in our meetings of October 13 and November 25 since we were somewhat disappointed by the change you propose. You write on July 13, "On further reflection, particularly considering the overall situation resulting from the actions taken by your General Synod last November, the full committee decided that rather than for us to prepare a position paper at this time, it would be appropriate for us, in the light of that situation, to request you to prepare a paper addressing the question formulated at the close of our April 15 meeting." As far as we are concerned, this is a change to the arrangements which we arrived at on April 15. At that time we were encouraged by your agreement that both of our committees would simultaneously deal with that question so that we may arrive at a good understanding of the respective positions. We do hope that the approach suggested will indeed help us reach the results desired by

our Synod (see Acts of Synod Lincoln 1992, Article 72), that is, the realization of the way to ecclesiastical fellowship.

We have begun to develop a response to the April 15 question and we hope(d) that your efforts would help to complement ours, rather than batting the issue back and forth. It is our sincere desire to resolve the issues that stand yet between us so that the way to ecclesiastical fellowship may be realized. That will require your cooperation so that we can report to our next Synod truly and fully your position on these remaining issues and make recommendations accordingly.

...

We began to study the following topics: church government, confessional membership, Calvin's view of the church, the history of relationships with foreign churches, and the implications of Art. 50 of the CO.

CEIR responded to our letter of December 2, 1993, restating their problem with the direction of the discussions which we desired.

- c. From CEIR – December 16, 1993

...

Apart from other considerations, it will not be possible for us at this late stage to prepare any sort of position paper/statement, other than the fourth paragraph [third paragraph quoted here] of this letter, for our meeting next month.

We do understand the disappointment you express in this letter. Also, we recognize that we (=our full committee) have changed the arrangements arrived at last April. What we must ask you to bear in mind, however, is that, unlike your committee's relationship to your General Synod, we do not have a mandate directly from our General Assembly. Our work is that of a subcommittee, under the oversight of and subject to review by the committee as a whole. We regret if that was not made clear to you at our April 15th meeting.

We believe that it will be best at this point for you to present a response to the April 15 question, keeping in mind that the issues and questions raised in 4.1.3) and 4.2.1) and 2) of our March 3, 1993 letter to you are still unresolved for us. From our side we remain baffled as to how to address the question. Even if we were to be persuaded that a biblical ecclesiology requires that the matter in parentheses have to be resolved as a condition for ecclesiastical fellowship, we would still be at a loss to explain on what ecclesiological principles two of these matters can be a barrier to such a relationship with some churches but not with others.

...

Unfortunately, the meeting at Philadelphia, PA, scheduled for January 1994 did not take place. A severe winter storm forced us to return to Canada before we reached our destination. The CEIR was able to meet, and as part of their agenda discussed the current state of affairs of the relationship with the CanRC. Subsequently, we received further correspondence regarding CEIR's views on the current state of our relationships.

- d. From CEIR – January 21 1994 (another copy of this letter was received February 21 over the signature of Rev. J.R. Hilbelink):

Dear Brothers,

During the course of our meetings, January 18-21, we discussed the relationship between our two Churches. This letter was approved by

the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations at that meeting.

We want to inform you of the result of those deliberations, especially concerning continuing contact between our two committees and how such future contacts may be truly meaningful and productive. We seek your response and any advice you may have for us.

First, we sincerely apologize for backing away from the agreement reached with you by our subcommittee at the April 15, 1993 meeting. We recognize your understandable concern and the disappointment you have expressed about this change of mind on our part. Again we ask your forgiveness for our inconsistency.

Increasingly since last April we have come to recognize that a mistake was made in the agreement reached at the meeting. We believe, however, that an even greater mistake would be made not to recognize that mistake and seek to rectify it. Brothers, please try to see the situation as we see it. Last April's basis for continuing discussions between us is in the form of a general, in this question (Does a biblical ecclesiology require that these differences [confessional membership, fencing the Lord's table, third-party relationships] have to be resolved before a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship can be established?). But this is a question that, on the first two of the differences specified, the Canadian Reformed Churches currently give two, flatly opposing answers: "yes" to the OPC. "no" to the Free Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Kosin).

How can we continue discussion under these conditions? In the words of our liaison's letter of December 16, 1993,

From our side we remain baffled as to how to address the question [W]e [are] at a loss to explain on what ecclesiological principles two of those matters can be a barrier to such a relationship with some churches but not with others.

It appears to us that the issue that needs to be addressed and resolved, before anything else can be discussed between us, is the Canadian Reformed Churches' use of a double standard in this matter.

Brothers, in the light of the actions of your last General Synod, we have to question the usefulness and even the ecclesiastical appropriateness of continuing ongoing discussion for the present. We believe that your Committee has been put in an impossible situation by your Synod, a situation, we recognize, that can be addressed and rectified only by your next General Synod. But until such action is taken, there seems to be little point to further discussions between us.

On the matter of our relationship with the CRCNA, we can report that we have a subcommittee at work with the mandate "to study the recent history of the CRCNA which would trace doctrinal/ethical developments in that church to serve to draw up grounds that would be appropriate for severing of the relationship with the CRCNA." We hope to report on this matter to our next General Assembly.

We are concerned to express clearly to you our deep regret at the latest turn the relationship between us has taken. We hope that this impasse can be removed so that we may yet proceed as Churches to a harmonious relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship.

We also want to make clear that it is not the case that the OPC is now refusing to talk with the CCOPC. But we need to be shown how we can talk constructively under the shadow of the double standard applied to us.

We are willing to meet with you to discuss the contents of this letter, and we have appointed representatives who would be willing to meet with you for that eventuality.

...

- e. We responded in our letter of May 16, 1994:

...

1. *We have discussed your letter of February 21, 1994, and we understand you to say that at this time there is little point for further discussions between our two committees because in your opinion the Canadian Reformed Churches operate with a "double standard."*
2. *In our Rochester meeting (April 1993) we indicated that we could understand your questions, but we also tried to explain the actions of our most recent Synod which caused your charge against us (see our Press Release attached). Obviously, this explanation did not satisfy you.*
3. *Seeing the seriousness of the charge involved, we would like to receive more clarification on this point. Some of the questions that came to our mind include: Are, indeed, the histories of the FCS, the PCK and the OPC the same? Are their practices the same? Does the fact that we deal differently with different churches necessarily mean that we apply a double standard? Could you provide us with proof that, unjustifiably, we deal differently with the OPC than with the FCS and the PCK?*
4. *Our Synod expressed the desire to come to unity with you – I quote from the Acts of General Synod Lincoln 1992, p. 55: Synod expresses the fervent wish that these matters may be resolved so that the way to ecclesiastical fellowship, in accordance with the Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship, may be realized. In that spirit, we, from our side, would still like to meet with you to seek for ways to resolve the remaining issues.*

...

As a result of this correspondence, a further meeting between our Committee and a subcommittee of CEIR was scheduled for September 27, 1994 in Grand Island, New York.

4. Grand Island – September 27, 1994

On the agenda were the CEIR letter of January 21, 1994, and the CCOPC letter of May 16. The focal point of the discussion was the OPC's charge of 'double standard' since they feel that the practices of the FCS and the PCK are sufficiently similar to those of the OPC. Consequently, the discussion centred on the question whether this is, indeed, so.

We responded that our contacts with the FCS and the PCK cannot be compared in a simplistic manner to the contacts with the OPC. On the basis of information received by Synod Lincoln 1992 we showed that we have reasons to believe that the practices of the FCS with respect the supervision of the Lord's Supper and confessional membership are dissimilar from those

of the OPC. We found it more difficult to show the same for the PCK. CEIR contested this assertion, and we concluded that more evidence regarding the respective practices of guests at the Lord's Supper should be provided by both sides. Further discussion is necessary to clarify the respective understanding of the role of the confessional statements.

This meeting showed that continued discussions between our respective committees is fruitful and constructive. There is general agreement that we understand each other's position and reactions much better. With thankfulness it is noted that the discussions of that morning took place in good harmony. The brothers of the OPC will report to the full CEIR (probably during the Fall 1994), while the CCOPC will prepare a report for Synod 1995.

C. Communications

1. We received several reports from Classis Alberta-Manitoba regarding their contact with the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the OPC. These have been filed for information.
2. Various reports were received regarding the admission of the American Reformed Church at Denver, CO, following the various appeals at Classes and Regional Synods West.
3. Correspondence was received regarding the discussions between the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic of the OPC and the church at Laurel, MD.
4. Two requests were received for archival materials regarding the relationship between the OPC and the Canadian Reformed Churches.

D. Press Releases and Reports

1. A report of the joint meeting with a subcommittee of CEIR at Rochester, NY (April 15, 1993), as well as of the visit of Rev. P.G. Feenstra and Dr. N.H. Gootjes to the 60th General Assembly of the OPC was published in the *Clarion* 43(2), January 28, 1994.

III. DISCUSSION & EVALUATION

A.1. We need first to evaluate the present state of affairs between the OPC and the CanRC. Synod Coaldale 1977 decided to recognize the OPC as a true church of our Lord Jesus Christ as confessed in Article 29 of the Belgic Confession (*Acts 1977*, Art. 91, II, p. 41). This decision has been appealed over the years, but subsequent Synods have upheld it, including the last Synod Lincoln 1992 (*Acts 1992*, Art. 72, IV, B, 1, p. 53).

On the basis of our contact since 1992, we gratefully acknowledge that the OPC has shown continued commitment to be faithful to the Scriptures and to defend the reformed heritage. We also note the fact that in 1993 the OPC was admitted as a member of the ICRC, and that it continues to warn the CRCNA. We are, therefore, of the opinion that the recognition of the OPC as true church in the confessional sense of BC, Articles 27-29 should be maintained.

During the period since 1977 the relationship between the OPC and the CanRC was never a full sisterchurch relationship. Synod Coaldale 1977 approved a temporary relationship of ecclesiastical contact, as distinct from a relationship of full correspondence (*Acts 1977*, Art. 92, III, p. 42). Within this context a number of divergencies was discussed. Synod Lincoln 1992 concluded that the divergencies evaluated in 1971 and 1986 have been sufficiently discussed to confirm that these are not impediments to ecclesiastical fellowship with the OPC, but may be discussed within the framework of church unity (*Acts 1992*, Art. 72, V, B, p. 55).

A.2. Synod Lincoln 1992 charged the Committee for Contact with the OPC to continue the discussion of the divergencies which are considered to be impediments to ecclesiastical fellowship, and to see whether these divergencies stem from ecclesiological and/or historical differences, with the purpose of having these impediments removed. We attempted to engage in such discussion, but we did not get very far. The reaction of the CEIR to the decisions of Synod Lincoln 1992 were such that further discussion of the outstanding issues could not proceed. This has been detailed in section II above.

Reflecting on this situation, we note that our discussions now take place within a different framework from what was in place when the contact with the OPC began. Two changes have contributed to this different situation. First, there is a change in our concept of foreign relations. We used to speak of "full correspondence"; now we speak of "ecclesiastical fellowship." The rules determining inter-church relations have been changed by Synod Lincoln 1992 (*Acts 1992*, Art. 50, IV, B, p. 33). We discussed these rules with CEIR (see II.B.2.a. above), and we can report that CEIR received these rules favourably. Second, Synod Lincoln 1992 decided to accept the request for ecclesiastical fellowship from the Presbyterian Church of Korea (*Acts 1992*, Art. 111, IV, p. 73), and to offer this relation also to the Free Church of Scotland (*Acts 1992*, Art. 128, IV, p. 93).

B.1 Within the limited context of the relationship with the OPC we could not come to a definite conclusion regarding the remaining three divergencies: the matters of confessional membership and admission of guests to the Lord's Table, and the relationship of the OPC with the CRCNA. The first two divergencies are to be distinguished from the third.

With respect to the first two divergencies we outline two directions, each of which has received discussion within our committee, and received attention in some form in recent publications as well: (a) to continue the discussions regarding the divergencies as a precondition for ecclesiastical fellowship, and (b) to offer the OPC a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship, and discuss these divergencies within such a relationship.

a. *Re: To continue the discussions with the OPC regarding the divergencies as a precondition for ecclesiastical fellowship.*

This direction proceeds from the premise that the divergencies identified by previous Synods involve confessional matters. Synod Lincoln 1992 considered the following (IV.A.e.i, ii, p. 50).

Gratitude may be expressed for the progress made in the taking away of misunderstandings and achieving clarification of some parts of the discussions regarding (i) "the fencing of the Lord's table" and (ii) "confessional membership."

i. It appears, in view of the OPC's ongoing internal deliberation [...] that there is still reason to continue the discussion on this point. It is hoped that in time the OPC and the Canadian Reformed Churches may come to a common understanding and unified practice regarding the supervision of the Lord's Table.

This is not to say that an identical practice is required with respect to the supervision of the Lord's table to come to ecclesiastical fellowship. It should be agreed, however, that a general verbal warning alone is insufficient and that a profession of the Reformed faith is required in the presence of the supervising elders from the guests wishing to attend the Lord's Supper.

- ii *With respect to “confessional membership” the different situations in the OPC and the Canadian Reformed Churches must be taken into account as resulting in various practices [...]. It should be agreed, however, by the Canadian Reformed Churches and the OPC that all who profess their faith accept the doctrine of God’s Word as summarized in the confessions (standards) of the churches. This means that all members are bound by the Word of God in the unity of faith as confessed in the accepted standards.*

These matters have not been resolved as yet, and no agreement as required by Synod has been achieved. To proceed with establishing a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship without resolving these issues first would not take seriously the view that these are confessional matters; these are not mere differences in emphasis on certain points. In addition, leaving the debated practices unresolved might affect our churches adversely. If these matters cannot be resolved, the relationship between the CanRC and the OPC will have to be reevaluated and possibly terminated.

- b. *Re: To offer the OPC a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship, and discuss any divergencies within such a relationship.*

Apparently two divergencies identified by Synod Lincoln 1992, namely the supervision of the Lord’s Supper and confessional membership, formed no impediments for Synod to offer a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship to the PCK and FCS. The OPC claims that their practices are comparable to those of the PCK and the FCS. The OPC has argued that the divergencies could well be discussed within a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship. Indeed, the purpose of the relationship with the OPC is not a merger, resulting in one federation of churches, but a fellowship in which both federations maintain their own identity and practices. Within such a relationship there is ample opportunity for mutual admonition and edification. Our continued contact has shown that there is more agreement than disagreement between our two federations.

This direction takes into account that since Synod Lincoln 1992, the nature of our relationships with churches abroad has changed from a “sisterchurch” relationship to a “relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship.” The PCK and the FCS could be recognized on the basis of the new Rules of Ecclesiastical Fellowship. Up until that time, the CanRC had contact only with those churches who have the same confessions, church order, practices, and history. This perception of a “sister church relation” was the reason for the discussions of identified divergencies in doctrine and practice. To now not extend a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship would isolate our churches from churches of Presbyterian background, and go contrary to our ecumenical calling as churches.

- c. Our Committee is acutely aware that neither one nor the other solution will lay the matter to rest within the churches. Both directions have valid arguments in favour which ought to be taken seriously; yet both solutions have drawbacks which call us to proceed carefully. Further, it is important that we include the third divergency in our deliberations as well.

- B.2** The third divergency, the contact between the CRCNA and the OPC, did not prevent Synod Coaldale 1977 from declaring the OPC a true church. Subsequent synods did not see the continuing contact with the CRCNA as a sufficient reason to rescind the declaration of true church. At the same time, several synods since 1977 have expressed that this contact with the CRCNA remains a great concern, making full ecclesiastical unity impossible. Synod Lincoln 1992 stated:

It is regrettable that the OPC did not sever its relationship with the CRCNA as yet. The relationship becomes an increasing concern in the process of establishing ecclesiastical fellowship with the OPC. At the same time, the OPC's warnings directed at the CRCNA must be thankfully noted (Article 72, IV, A, c).

Recent developments in the relationship between the OPC and the CRCNA do perhaps lessen this concern, but do not, as yet, remove it. From the beginning, our churches have maintained that they could not join with the CRCNA; in fact, we may say that the legitimacy of the CanRC is related to this issue. Efforts to establish ecclesiastical contact were thwarted (see the Appeals of 1964 and 1977 sent to the CRCNA). In past discussions with the CEIR (in particular at our meeting in Burlington 1988) we have explained in detail why the CanRC could not (and we believe today: cannot) establish an ecclesiastical relation with the CRCNA. The OPC's own stand in the REC against the GKN, and within the NAPARC against the CRCNA in fact underscore our views.

It must be gratefully acknowledged the OPC has shown an earnest desire to remain faithful in their contacts with the CRCNA. Most recently this was the case at the 1994 General Assembly which discussed at length the relationship of the OPC with the CRCNA. The OPC delegates were instructed to place before representatives of the CRCNA the OPC's concerns in several matters, including its toleration of the ordination of women and "its toleration of the unbiblical aspects of CRCNA statements concerning homosexuality" (*New Horizons*, August/September 1994). Further, the question of severing the fraternal relation with the CRCNA has been placed on the agenda of the 1995 General Assembly. However, these developments do not take away our concerns. We recommend that the severing of this relationship is necessary before the OPC and the CanRC can enter in a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship. This recommendation is consistent with our own history and with the present situation.

- B.3** When we consider these things all together, we must come to the conclusion that there is little point in further discussion of divergencies as such. Of the three remaining divergencies, we conclude that both sides have a clear understanding with regards to the respective positions on the matters of confessional membership and the admission of guests to the Lord's Table. We note that at least one of the divergencies (admission of guests to the Lord's Table) was included in the report of the ICRC Committee on Theological Affirmation, presented at its 1993 meeting at Zwolle, the Netherlands. This report concludes under subheading *Intercommunion* that *we can say that members of churches that are recognized as true churches should be allowed to participate in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, upon valid attestation or certification.* The OPC delegates present at this meeting did not object to this conclusion. We also note that this ICRC report places the discussion of these matters against a background of ecclesiology. This report concluded that there is much agreement between the views of those who adhere to the Westminster Confession and those who adhere to the Belgic Confession.

As reported in section II above, our most recent meeting in Grand Island took place in good harmony and showed that continued discussions between our two committees can, indeed, be fruitful and constructive. We are confident that the full CEIR can endorse the understandings arrived at in this meeting, thus providing us with a starting point for further discussion.

We recommend that Synod Abbotsford 1995 provides a mandate which will allow the protracted discussions between the CanRC and the OPC to be

concluded, as was the desire of Synod Lincoln 1992 (*Acts 1992*, Art. 72, V, p. 55). The focused statements provided by Synod Lincoln 1992 (*Acts 1992*, Art. 72.IV.A.1.e.i, ii, p. 50) form a most useful guideline. We believe that this recommendation is in harmony with our mandate and with the history of the contact with the OPC, and sufficiently takes into account the concerns expressed by CEIR (see section II above).

- C. Our committee has gained some sympathy for the OPC complaint that we are perceived to lack even-handedness in our dealings with Presbyterian churches. Our actions can be explained from the past because our contact with the OPC has a different history from our contact with other Presbyterian churches. The result has been, however, that decisions about contacts with other Presbyterian churches have been made independently from decisions concerning the contact with the OPC. Such confusion could be prevented in the future by combining the work of the Committee for Contact with the OPC and the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad. By combining the two committees, a much more effective platform for discussion and considerations will have been created. Further, the goal of the contact between the CanRC and the OPC is ecclesiastical fellowship according to the adopted rules. This belongs to the mandate of the CRCA.

We recommend that Synod Abbotsford 1995 combine the Committee for Contact with the OPC (CCOPC) and the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA).

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends that General Synod 1995 of the Canadian Reformed Churches decide:

- A. to gratefully acknowledge the commitment of the OPC to be faithful to the Scriptures and to defend the reformed heritage.
- B. to consider the comments of CEIR on the rules of ecclesiastical fellowship.
- C. to use the statement of Synod Lincoln 1992 (*Acts 1992*, Art. 72, IV.A.1.e.i, ii) as a guideline to arrive at an agreement with the OPC on the matters of the fencing of the Lord's Table and confessional membership.
- D. to note with gratitude the OPC's continued warnings against the unscriptural course taken by the Christian Reformed Church in North America, and to advise the OPC that the severing of this relationship is necessary before we can enter into a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with them.
- E. to combine the work of the Committee for Contact with the OPC with that of the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. D.G.J. Agema
Rev. P.G. Feenstra
Prof. Dr. N.H. Gootjes
Br. G.J. Nordeman
Br. T.M.P. Vanderven

APPENDIX VI

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON RELATIONS WITH CHURCHES ABROAD OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD ABBOTSFORD 1995

Esteemed Brethren,

We hereby submit to you our report on the activities of the Committee on Relations With Churches Abroad (CRCA), appointed by General Synod 1992.

I. MANDATE

General Synod Lincoln 1992 gave our Committee the following mandate:

A. General

1. To continue the Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland [Vrijgemaakt]), and the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa in accordance with the adopted rules. (Acts 1992, Art. 49, V, B)
2. To charge the CRCA to send an invitation to our sister churches abroad to attend the next General Synod as soon as its date has been established and published by the convening church and to have our churches represented by a delegate to General Synods of such churches abroad if invited and when feasible. (Acts 1992, Art. 49, V, D)

B. The Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA)

- 3.1. to request the CRCA to convey our appreciation for support given by the FRCA to our Theological College in Hamilton.
- 3.2. to mandate the CRCA delegates to attend, if possible, the meeting organized by the FRCA to discuss their concerns regarding the ICRC and report about this to the General Synod.
- 3.3. to mandate the CRCA to convey our reservations about the rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship adopted by the FRCA. (Acts 1992, Art. 49, V, C, E, F)

C. The Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK)

- 4.1. to inform the PCK of our acceptance of their request for Ecclesiastical Fellowship using the adopted rules.
- 4.2. to formalize this relationship in a manner satisfactory to both church federations.
- 4.3. to inform the churches and to report to the next General Synod on the relationship with the PCK. (Acts 1992, Art. 111, IV, B, 1, 2, 3)

D. The Free Church of Scotland (FCS)

- 5.1. to recognize with gratitude the Free Church of Scotland as a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 5.2. to offer the Free Church of Scotland, including the Free Church of Scotland congregation in Canada, a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship under the adopted rules.
- 5.3. to thank the CRCA for completing its mandate thus far with respect to the FCS and to charge the CRCA to convey to the FCS the decision of Synod

1992, and to advise the churches and Synod 1995 of the response of the Free Church of Scotland. (Acts 1992, Art. 128, IV, A, B, C)

E. The Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS)

- 6.1. to thank the church at Carman, MB and the CRCA for their work done with regard to the RCUS and express our appreciation for the desire of the RCUS to establish fraternal relations with our churches.
- 6.2. to mandate the CRCA to investigate the RCUS with a view to entering into a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship, making use of the findings of the church at Carman, MB. (Acts 1992, Art. 79, IV, A, B)

F. The International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC)

- 7.1. that the CanRC continue to participate in the ICRC.
- 7.2. that the CanRC be represented at the next meeting of the ICRC, Zwolle 1993.
- 7.3. that two members of the CRCA be sent to the ICRC, Zwolle 1993, as voting delegates and Dr. N.H. Gootjes as advisor (with Dr. J. Faber as alternate).
- 7.4. that the CRCA report to the next General Synod, as well as to the churches, giving a report and evaluation of the ICRC, Zwolle, the Netherlands, (D.V.) 1993. (Acts 1992, Art. 94, IV, A, B, C, D)

G. Committee Mandate

- 8.1. to give the CRCA the following mandate:
 1. to investigate diligently all the requests received for entering into ecclesiastical fellowship;
 2. to respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests made to attend Assemblies, Synods, or meeting of other churches;
 3. to report on its findings with suitable recommendations, to the next General Synod.
- 8.2. this mandate allows the CRCA to further investigate the Reformed Churches in South Africa (RCSA) and the Eglise Reformee Confessante au Zaire (ERCZ).
- 8.3. that the CRCA submits to Synod 1995 a financial statement and budget. (Acts 1992, Art. 112, IV, A, 1, 2, 3, B, C)

II. RULES FOR ECCLESIASTICAL FELLOWSHIP

General Synod 1992 revised the existing Rules of Correspondence and decided to call them officially "Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship." The revised rules read as follows:

1. The churches shall assist each other in the maintenance, defence and promotion of the Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline, and liturgy, and be watchful for deviations.
2. The churches shall inform each other of the decisions taken by their broadest assemblies, if possible by sending each other their Acts or Minutes and otherwise, at least by sending the decisions relevant to the respective churches (if possible, in translation).
3. The churches shall consult each other when entering into relations with third parties.
4. The churches shall accept one another's attestations or certificates of good standing, which also means admitting members of the respective churches to the sacraments upon presentation of that attestation or certificate.

5. The churches shall open their pulpits for each other's ministers in agreement with the rules adopted in the respective churches.

In exercising these relations, the churches shall strive to implement also the following:

6. When major changes or additions are being considered to the confessions, church government or liturgy, the churches shall be informed in order that as much consultation can take place as possible before a final decision is taken.
7. The churches shall receive each other's delegates at their broadest assemblies and invite them to participate as much as local regulations permit." (Acts 1992, Art. 50, IV B, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

III. GENERAL ACTIVITIES

1. Declarations

- a. The following ministers and professors of the Canadian Reformed Churches, planning to travel abroad, requested and received a declaration that they are ministers in good standing in the Churches:
The Revs. D.G.J. Agema, J. Huijgen, K. Jonker, E. Kampen, Cl. Stam, J. Kroeze, G.A. Snip, M. van Beveren.
- b. The following ministers of the Free Reformed Churches in Australia and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands visited Canada:
The Revs. Tj. Boersma, C. Bouwman, A.J. Pol.

2. Acts

When the Acts of General Synod Lincoln 1992 were received, a sufficient number of copies was sent to those churches with which we maintain Ecclesiastical Fellowship.

3. Notifications and Invitations

Letters of notification and invitation were sent to the sister Churches regarding the convening of General Synod Abbotsford 1995. Copies of the Provisional Agenda were sent.

4. Interim Information to the Churches

A number of articles have appeared in *Clarion* during the last couple of years informing the Churches of some of the activities of the CRCA. They are as follows:

- July 16, 1993, Rev. E. Kampen reported on his visit to the 247th Synod of the RCUS;
- Oct. 22, 1993, Rev. Cl. Stam reported on the Third Meeting of the ICRC in Zwolle, the Netherlands;
- Year End Issue 1993 and March 11, 1994, Rev. J. Visscher reported on his visit to the General Synod Ommen of the RCN and to the General Assembly of the FCS;
- Sept. 9 and 23, 1994, Rev. E. Kampen reported on his visit, along with the Rev. M. van Beveren to the FRCA;
- Year End Issue 1994, br. A. Nap reported on his visit to the 248th Synod of the RCUS.

In addition, in the January 28, 1994 issue the CRCA informed the Churches that Ecclesiastical Fellowship had been entered into with the FCS and the PCK. In the April 22, 1994 issue the Churches were informed that the CRCA had delegated the Revs. E. Kampen and M. van Beveren to visit the FRCA.

IV. THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA (FRCA)

1. Correspondence

- a. After the Synod of 1992 met, the FRCA were informed about the decisions taken that pertained to them. A copy of the new Rules for relations with Sister Churches was sent to them. Copies of the Acts of 1992 were sent as soon as they were received from the printer. Appreciation for their support of the Theological College was expressed.
- b. In a letter from FRCA deputies dated Feb. 15, 1993, it was expressed that the FRCA wish to maintain Hymn 1A unaltered.
- c. Concerning the ICRC, a letter was sent indicating that we were not opposed to an informal meeting with sister churches. The delegates at the ICRC met informally and discussed the difficulty among the Australian churches with the expression "unity of faith" at the ICRC. The Australian opinion that closer unity in credal statements and church polity must be reached before we can speak of such unity was discussed at length. The difficulty of the Australian sister churches was not shared by the others at the meeting.
- d. In a letter dated 31 January 1994, we were informed of the Synod scheduled to be held in Byford, starting June 14, 1994. The letter stated "...we would plead with you to send a delegation to our next synod." Input was sought especially in two matters on the agenda, namely Bible translation and the ICRC. Rev. C. Stam and Rev. J. Visscher were delegated, with Rev. E. Kampen as alternate. (See Appendices)

2. Acts of Synod Bedfordale, 1992

Synod Bedfordale met from May 18-June 8, 1992. Since the Acts were not available in time to report to Synod Lincoln, 1992, we as yet note some items from the Acts that will serve to give a picture of the life of the FRCA.

- a. The following officers were elected: Chairman – Rev. A. Veldman; Vice chairman – Rev. A. van Delden; First clerk – elder J. Eikelboom; Second clerk – Rev. C. Bouwman.
- b. A tremendous amount of time was spent on matters of interchurch relationships, not only on a national level (Australia) but also internationally. The following is gleaned from the Acts:
 - i. Synod decided to continue contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches. In the *considerations* disappointment was expressed that there is not more information about our churches. The specific example mentioned was contact with the OPC. The deputies were urged to give more content to the contact with our churches.
 - ii. Sister church relations were continued with the Presbyterian Church in Korea, the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa, as well as with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN). Disappointment was expressed that the "RCN in the matter of recognizing sister churches did not honour their commitment under the adopted Rules for relations with churches abroad (Rule e)." This pertains especially to the RCN entering into sister church relations with the RCUS, the Eglise Reformee Confesante au Zaire and the Free Reformed Church of the Philippines without informing or consulting the sister churches in Australia.
 - iii. Sister church relations were continued with the Reformed Churches of Sumba Timor Savu (RCSTS). The Musyafir Churches in Timor were to be further investigated to see if they can be recognized as true and faithful churches. Johnson Dethan from the Musyafir Churches and

Rev. Doko from the RCSTS were to be invited to Australia for orientation and training.

- iv. With respect to the PCEA, the committee was mandated to “work towards a mutual recognition of each other as true churches of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the light of this goal: To continue to study and discuss further with the PCEA the remaining areas of concern specified by Synod 1987, viz, the supervision of the Lord’s table, the practice of pulpit exchanges and the position of children in the covenant.”

Due attention is also to be given to “inter-denominationalism.”

- v. With respect to the Reformed Churches of Australia (RCA), deputies were mandated to observe what the next RCA Synod would do with the report which their deputies for dialogue with the FRCA will submit, and report to the next FRCA synod.
 - vi. With respect to the Reformed Church of New Zealand, the same level of contact was to be maintained. Discussions were to continue especially about contact with third parties (Reformed Church in Australia and NGK).
 - vii. Continued efforts were to be made for closer contact with the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore (ERCS).
 - viii. Synod decided to leave contact with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia to the churches at the local level.
 - ix. Efforts to become more acquainted with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland were to be continued.
 - x. It was decided not to accede to the request of the Free Reformed Churches in the Philippines and the Reformed Church of Zaire (RCZ) to establish relations with them, as the resources of the churches are stretched to the limit when it comes to international contacts. Further information is to be gathered.
 - xi. Continued efforts are to be made with respect to the Free Church of Scotland to come to full sister church relations.
 - xii. Contact with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland will be kept at a low level.
- c. It was decided to continue the support for the Theological College at \$37.50 cm. At the same time, the FRCA will stay alert to the possibility of establishing an Australian based theological training.
 - d. Deputies were instructed “once more to communicate to our sister churches our rules about declarations for ministers who visit abroad or who visit us.” This was due to the fact that visiting ministers, some of whom led worship services, did not come accompanied with proper declarations.
 - e. The following rules for exercising sister relations were adopted:
 - 1. Sister relations shall be used mutually to assist, encourage and exhort one another to live as churches of God in this world.
 - 2. The churches shall mutually care for each other that they do not depart from the reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline and liturgy.
 - 3. The churches shall inform each other of the decisions taken by their broadest assemblies, if possible by sending each other their Acts or their Minutes and, otherwise, at least by sending the decisions relevant to the respective churches (if possible in translation).
 - 4. The churches shall give account to each other concerning the establishing of relations with third parties.

5. The churches shall accept one another's attestations, which also means admitting the members of the respective churches to the sacraments upon presentation of these attestations.
6. The churches shall in principle open their pulpits to each other's ministers in agreement with the rules adopted by the respective church federations. Also the churches agree in principle to the possibility of calling each other's ministers, while the churches reserve for themselves the right to maintain their own rules in connection with the extension and approval of calls.
7. In cases of substantial changes or additions to the confession, church order or liturgical forms this intention shall be brought to the special attention of the sister churches, so that as much consultation as possible can take place before a final decision is reached.
8. The churches shall receive each other's delegates at their broadest assemblies and invite them to sit as advisers, as much as possible.

The Dutch churches specifically, as well as the other sister churches, were to be asked to adopt these rules. It was also decided to discontinue offering "temporary ecclesiastical contact" and to work toward sister relations with those churches with whom the FRCA has this relationship.

- f. Much time was spent on the issue of the ICRC. Synod had to deal with a great number of submissions by church members. A key concern was the issue of "unity of faith." Synod decided to continue membership in the ICRC. Due to the concerns signaled, a meeting of sister churches was to be convened prior to or coinciding with the next ICRC.
- g. The matter of Bible translation continued to be of concern. It appears that the RSV has never gained much acceptance. It was decided to "recommend to the churches that the NKJV be used for study, instruction and family purposes," and to appoint new deputies who are "to continue the study of the NKJV, in comparison with the NIV, to determine whether the NKJV can be endorsed as a final recommendation to the churches." This decision was to be communicated to Synod Lincoln 1992, in order that our churches might reach a similar decision.

3. Acts of Synod Byford, June 14-27, 1994

From the Acts we note the following details:

- a. The following officers were elected: Chairman – Rev. W. Huizinga; Vice chairman – Rev. C. Bouwman; Clerk-Elder A. Slobe; Second Clerk – Rev. C. Kleyn.
- b. Upon a proposal from the Church at Kelmscott, it was agreed to use advisory committees only for those items that synod as a whole decides would benefit from such referral and revert to the 1985 decision to use the headings MATERIAL, DECISION, and GROUNDS.
- c. Synod adopted a final version of the Church Order in the tradition of Dort adapted to the Australian situation.
- d. With respect to Bible translation, it was decided: "To endorse the NKJV as a faithful and reliable translation for use in the churches, as well as for study, instruction and family purposes."

"To allow the NIV to be used in the church service, and for study, instruction and family purposes."

"To allow a period of transition for the churches to move away from the RSV in two years." (Art. 55)

- e. It was decided to continue support for the Theological College at \$38.00 cm.
- f. It was decided to continue membership in the ICRC. The Synod also proposes to the next ICRC to adopt the following amendment of the first Purpose of the ICRC as stated in its Constitution so that it will read: *"1. to express and promote unity in the reformed faith which the member churches confess."* One of the grounds for this amendment is that the present reading, "the unity of faith that the member churches HAVE in Christ" implies to many that unity already exists, while full ecclesiastical fellowship has not yet been realized.
- g. With respect to interchurch relationships, the following is gleaned from the Acts:
 - i. Synod decided to continue contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches.
 - ii. Sister church relations were continued with the Presbyterian Church in Korea, the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa, as well as with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN).
 - iii. Sister church relations were continued with the Reformed Churches of Sumba Timor Savu (RCSTS). Contact with other churches in Indonesia will be continued. Support will continue to be given for the studies of Yonson Dethan from the Musyafir Churches
 - iv. With respect to the PCEA, FCS, EPCI and RPCI it was decided to continue contacts/relations at a low level (passing on Acts and greetings, etc.) leaving the discussions in abeyance while the churches study /discuss the matter of contacts/relations with Presbyterian churches in general (Art. 111)
 - v. With respect to the Reformed Churches of Australia (RCA), it was decided not to send an observer to the next RCA Synod
 - vi. With respect to the Reformed Church of New Zealand, the same level of contact was to be maintained.
 - vii. Continued efforts were to be made for closer contact with the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore (ERCS).
 - viii. The Free Reformed Church of the Philippines will continue to be investigated to see if official contacts should be opened with them.
- h. With respect to the Ecumenical Creeds, the present text of the Apostles' Creed was maintained, the revised text of the Athanasian Creed was adopted, and the text of the Nicene Creed was retained for the present.

In response to the letter dated January 31, 1994, a delegation was sent to the Synod of the FRC scheduled to start on June 14, 1994 in Byford, WA. A report of the visit by the delegates can be found in Appendices.

4. Consideration

From the correspondence received, from the Acts of Synod 1992 and Synod 1994, and from the Report on the visit made to the Synod of 1994 we may conclude that the Free Reformed Churches of Australia continue to be faithful to the Word of the Lord, to the Confessions which sum up that Word and the adopted Church Order.

5. Recommendation

Your Committee recommends to General Synod 1995 that we continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia in accordance with our adopted rules.

V. THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN KOREA (PCK)

1. Correspondence

- a. In December of 1992 a card, with an enclosed letter, was received from the Korea Theological Seminary, wishing our churches the blessings of the Lord for 1993 and informing us of changes in the Seminary faculty as well as the fact that 436 students were enrolled at the Seminary. Among these students there exists considerable financial need.
- b. On January 25, 1993, the PCK was informed that Synod 1992 of the Can-RC had accepted the invitation of the PCK to enter into a sister church relationship. We informed them of our Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship, as revised by Synod 1992, and of our desire to maintain our relationship on the basis of these Rules. Due to the costs involved, Synod did not deem it appropriate for a delegation to travel to Korea, but it was suggested that perhaps this relationship could be formalized at the upcoming meeting of the ICRC in Zwolle, the Netherlands. This suggestion was later agreed to by the PCK.
- c. In a letter dated Feb. 22, 1993, the PCK informed us about the highlights of the 42nd General Assembly which met on Sept. 21-25, 1992. Some of the highlights include:
 - the addition of three new presbyteries;
 - that divorce be permitted “when other party who is unbeliever makes his (or her) christian life impossible and forces him (or her) to divorce when other party who is fallen in sectarian belief hinders proper christian family life and requests divorce;”
 - the immediate past chairman is ineligible for re-election to the chair;
 - to attend the third meeting of the ICRC (Sept., 1993) and to send two delegates;
 - the Assembly set aside 1992-3 as the year for the study of Reformed evangelism; 1993-4 as the year for the study of mission; 1994-5 as the year for the study of diaconal works;
 - every congregation was urged to choose at least one region in North Korea and pray for evangelization, while looking forward to the day of liberation and union;
 - to appoint one person to study and gather information on mission work in communist China;
 - the wording of the Constitution of the PCK was modernized;
 - it was reported to the Assembly that the General Assembly building (to be called the Rev. Bruce Hunt Memorial building in honour of this OPC missionary) was progressing and would be completed in August of 1993;
 - 41 ministers of the PCK are serving as army chaplains;
 - 19 new churches were instituted in 1992 and 6 joined the PCK; 1 church was closed;
 - \$5,000.00 US was donated to Christians who had suffered from the riots in Los Angeles and Atlanta, USA.
- d. On September 2, 1993, a joint meeting was held in Zwolle, the Netherlands to formalize the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship between the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Presbyterian Church in Korea. (For particulars on this meeting see the Appendices);

- e. On Dec. 22, 1993, the PCK sent us a letter expressing their happiness at the newly established relationship between our respective churches. They also suggested that one way to make this relationship more effective would be through an exchange of professors. Currently such an arrangement exists between Kampen and Pusan. They suggest that travel costs be borne by the sending churches and lodging costs by the accepting churches. They would like us to consider this matter seriously.

The PCK also informed us that the 43rd General Assembly had decided to enter into Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in the USA. They would also appreciate any information that we can supply them on the FCS, the RCUS, and the ERCZ.

For the academic year 1994, there were 221 applications for admission to the Theological Seminary in Pusan of which 159 were accepted;

- f. On Dec. 17, 1994, the Fraternal Relations Committee of the PCK sent us a letter with the highlights of the 44th General Assembly which met from Sept. 26-30, 1994. These include:
- a decision to demand that the Bible Society produce a total revision of the “Standard New Translation” because of its theological unsoundness;
 - to organize a mission committee for special fields: handicapped, prisons, hospitals, gay quarters, etc.;
 - to appeal to the Government to stop holding official functions on Sundays;
 - to divide a presbytery into two, bringing the total number of presbyteries to 34;
 - to contribute \$1.25 US per member for the support of needy fishing and farming village churches;
 - to take up contact with the Presbyterian Church in Japan and to ask the advice of the sister church, the Reformed Church in Japan, on this matter.

2. Considerations

- a. On the basis of the above information, we may conclude that the PCK continues to be faithful to God’s Word, to its confessional standards, and to its church government.
- b. Since the PCK has formally suggested that an arrangement be made for exchanging professors between Hamilton and Pusan, the Synod should give proper consideration to this matter and, if it so decides, instruct both the CRCA and the Board of Governors of the Theological College to expedite this matter further.

3. Recommendations

Your Committee recommends to General Synod 1995 that Ecclesiastical Fellowship be continued with the Presbyterian Church in Korea in accordance with the adopted Rules.

VI. THE REFORMED CHURCHES IN THE NETHERLANDS (RCN)

1. Correspondence

- a. On January 25, 1993, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands were informed about the decisions of Synod 1992 that had a bearing on them. A copy of the new Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship were sent to them. The Acts of Synod 1992 were sent as soon as they arrived from the printer.

- b. On March 29, 1993, we notified the Dutch deputies that although we had taken a decision not to send a delegate to Synod Ommen 1993, that decision had since been reviewed and altered due to the urging of the Free Church of Scotland. The Committee on Ecumenical Relations of the FCS had unanimously decided to recommend to the Assembly to accept the offer of Ecclesiastical Fellowship from the CanRC and asked if a member of the CRCA could be in attendance. As a result, the CRCA delegated Dr. J. Visscher to attend and seeing that he could travel just as economically via Amsterdam as London decided also to delegate him to attend Synod Ommen.
- c. The CRCA received a letter from the Dutch deputies, dated Nov. 25, 1993, in which they informed us of pertinent decisions taken by Synod Ommen. They relayed that Synod Ommen had decided to continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the CanRC. They also notified us that this Synod had adopted new Rules for this relationship and that those Rules were very similar to the Rules adopted by Synod Lincoln 1992. (A comparison reveals that Synod Ommen adopted verbatim the Rules that the CRCA had proposed to Synod Lincoln. Synod Lincoln decided to make some alterations in the CRCA's proposal, Synod Ommen did not.)
- d. On Jan. 17, 1994, we received another letter from the CRCA of the RCN telling us that they had been instructed by Synod Ommen to send a delegation to Brazil to take up contact with the Igreja Presbiteriana do Brasil (IPB) and the Igreja Evangelica Reformada do Brasil (IERB). They asked if the CanRC had made any decisions with respect to these two churches. In addition, they promised to send a copy of the report of this visit. On March 28, 1994, we informed them that no decisions had been made by the CanRC with regard to these two Brazilian churches.
- e. On March 25, 1994, the Dutch deputies wrote us again and told us once more about their new Rules. They stated that the Rules adopted by the Free Church of Scotland correspond to the new Dutch Rules. They also expressed happiness that a sister church relationship had been established between the CanRC and the FCS. Appreciation was conveyed over the fact that Dr. J. Visscher had been delegated to attend Synod Ommen.

On a different note, the Dutch deputies also asked us for information on the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC) and the Reformed Presbyterian Church – General Assembly (RPCGA). They asked as well whether we could keep them up to date on developments in the Christian Reformed Church. On Oct. 24, 1994, we responded in detail to their request regarding the CRC, but were not able to share with them much knowledge about ARPC. As for the RPCGA, a packet of information had been received by the CRCA and was under study.

- f. On Dec. 9, 1994, the RCN Deputies sent us a copy of a report made by Mr. J. van Dijk and Rev. J. T. Oldenhuis regarding the IPB and IER of Brazil. It is currently being studied by the CRCA.

2. Acts of Synod Ommen 1993

From the Acts we pass on the following highlights:

- a. Synod Ommen granted retirement to Prof. Drs. H.M. Ohmann and appointed as his successor, Drs. G. Kwakkel.
- b. Dr. J. Visscher visited this Synod on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches. Other fraternal delegates were: Rev. N. Hoeflinger (Reformed Church in the US), Rev. G. Ball (Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland), Rev. I.N. a Kuibondo and Rev. N.K. Kasastika (Eglise Reformee Confessante au Zaire), and Rev. C. Bouwman (Free Reformed Churches of Australia).

- c. Synod approved a proposal to give voting rights to women in the churches. The following grounds were offered by Synod (summarized):
 - i. The Scriptures do not explicitly forbid granting voting rights to women in the congregation.
 - ii. The submissiveness of women is to be seen not as a general aspect but more specifically pertaining to the marriage relationship. Women also share in the office of all believers, and thus may participate in the act of voting. It is also their calling to cooperate in the upbuilding of the congregation.
 - iii. Voting is not to be seen as “governing” and is not to be isolated as part of a process to which women also have access.
 - iv. The decision to grant voting rights to women is not to be seen as a capitulation to the “spirit of the times” and will not lead to granting women the right to hold office in the churches, since the Scriptures are quite clear on this matter.
- d. Synod decided that in worship services where no minister is available, the votum and benediction may be said unchanged and laid upon the congregation by the elder who conducts the service. To make this clear, the elder may raise his hands in the benediction.
- e. Synod decided that special services for handicapped members are permitted and useful. Deputies were appointed to prepare an inventory on what is available in this field and to make recommendations regarding general rules in this respect. The church at Zwolle-Zuid was appointed to call a minister who will give pastoral care to the deaf.
- f. Synod appointed Deputies to study developments in the churches with respect to liturgy, with special attention for variation in and expansion of the liturgies and the number of Liturgical Forms. These Deputies will also investigate the desirability and possibility of expanding the present Hymn section of the Dutch *Book of Praise*.
- g. Synod decided to continue the discussions with De Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerken “to seek ways and means to come to ecclesiastical unity.” The CGK will be asked to be precise about their objections concerning the “appropriation of salvation” and the view on the “church.” Synod expressed the desire that the CGK and the Gereformeerde Kerken, “who recognize in one another the will to live by God’s trustworthy Word and in a sincere bond to the Reformed confession, also may indeed find one another in the experience of Word and sacrament.”
- h. Synod decided to continue the Deputies for Ecclesiastical Unity and gave an outline for the procedure of local contacts. Synod spoke of three phases in these contacts: one of exploration to see where agreement and disagreement lies, one of recognition as true churches and a pledge to work towards ecclesiastical unity (involving also the major assemblies), and a final phase of acquaintance and fellowship.
- i. The Deputies were also given the mandate to investigate whether there are possibilities to have contact with the Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken, and if so, in what way.
- j. Synod adopted new Rules for relations with sister churches.
- k. Fraternal relations were initiated/continued with the Canadian Reformed Churches, the Reformed Church in the U.S., the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, the Eglise Reformee Confessante au Zaire,

the Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke of South Africa, the Gereja-gereja Reformasi de Indonesia, La Iglesia Cristiana Fe Reformada in Venezuela, Igreja Reformada Colonia Brasolandia (Unai), the Free Reformed Churches of the Philippines, and the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Kosin).

- l. The offer of sister church relations to the Free Church of Scotland was again extended under the new Rules.
- m. It was decided to strive towards a sister church relationship with the Presbyterian Church in Eastern Australia, because this is to be recognized as a true church of the Lord.
- n. Contacts will be initiated/continued and intensified with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Churches of New Zealand, the Presbyterian Association in England, the Ely Reformed Church in Cardiff, the Union des Eglises Reformees Evangeliques Independantes de France, the Greek Evangelical Church, the Iglesias Reformadas de Espana, the Iglesia Christiani Reformada in Madrid and Portugal, the Gereformeerde Kerke in South Africa, the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in South Africa, the African Evangelical Presbyterian Church of East Africa, the Reformed Church of East Africa, the Nongo u Kristu u Ken Sudannen Tiv (Nigeria), the Gereja-gereja Masehi Musyafir, Igreja Presbyteriana do Brasil, Igreja Evangelica Reformada do Brasil, the Reformed Church in Japan, the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Korea (Hapdong), the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, the Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore, the Dutch Reformed Church in Sri Lanka, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of India.
- o. The membership in the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) was continued.

3. Considerations

- a. From the correspondence and the Acts of General Synod Ommen, the Committee may gratefully conclude that the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands have shown themselves to be faithful to God's Word and have abided by the Reformed Creeds and Church Order.
- b. The new Rules for sister church relationships adopted by Synod Ommen are almost literally a translation of the Rules adopted by the Canadian Reformed Churches. These Rules therefore pose no problems for the Canadian Reformed Churches, but instead show a remarkable and desired harmony for which we have pleaded in the past.
- c. The decision to grant women in the churches the right to vote does not affect the relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches, who have in the past also struggled with this matter and have not made any definite pronouncements on it, except to say that "there is an obvious lack of consensus on this matter" (Acts 1983, Art. 160, C. 1).
- d. With respect to granting elders the right to extend the benediction, the question should be asked how this decision impacts on the relation between the offices, as confessed in Article 30 of the Belgic Confession, and explained in the Form for Ordination of Office Bearers. Do the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands still hold to a three-office view, and if so, what is the relation and distinction between the office of minister and the office of elder?
- e. The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands show increased activity with respect to relations with churches abroad. While this is in itself quite laudable, care must be taken to consult with sister churches, especially in areas where the sister churches are actively involved (e.g. in the case of Brazil, the Igreja Presbyteriana do Brasil and Igreja Evangelica Reformada do Brasil, where also the Canadian Reformed Churches conduct mission work).

4. Recommendations

- a. Gratefully to continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands according to the adopted Rules.
- b. To request the CRCA to pass on to the Dutch Deputies the question concerning offices, as posed above, and to solicit a response from the Dutch churches on this matter.

VII. THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND (FCS)

1. Correspondence

- a. On Jan. 25, 1993, we wrote to the FCS and informed them via the Committee on Ecumenical Relations about the decision of Synod Lincoln 1992 to invite the FCS to enter into Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the CanRC. A copy of the new Rules for this relationship was enclosed. Copies of the Acts 1992 were sent as soon as they were received.
- b. A letter was received from the FCS, dated Feb. 4, 1993, in which we were informed that the General Assembly of the FCS would meet in Edinburgh from May 17 - 21, 1993. Since this year marked the 150th anniversary of the Disruption, special attention would be paid to this historic event. In addition, it was stated that the Committee on Ecumenical Relations had decided unanimously to recommend that the Assembly accept the invitation of the CanRC to enter into Ecclesiastical Fellowship. In light of this development, the CRCA was urged to send a delegate to the General Assembly.

The CRCA weighed this request carefully because of the expense factor and because of the synodical charge to send two delegates and an advisor to the third meeting of the ICRC in Zwolle in 1993. After further discussion by telephone with the chairman of the Committee on Ecumenical Relations, Prof. C. Graham, it was decided to delegate Dr. J. Visscher to represent the CanRC. The fact that he could also fit in a visit to Synod Ommen of the RCN influenced the CRCA's decision.

- c. On Feb. 8, 1994, the FCS extended an invitation to the CanRC to be represented at their 1994 General Assembly. Seeing that our churches had been represented in 1993, it was decided not to delegate anyone but to send a letter of best wishes. On June 2, 1994, the FCS wrote expressing appreciation for the fraternal greetings received.

2. Acts of the General Assembly 1993

The General Assembly met from May 17 - 21, 1993, in Edinburgh. Some of the highlights include:

- a. Principal-Emeritus Clement Graham was elected as the Moderator. Years before he had also served in this office and the fact that he was elected for a second time (a most unusual thing!) reflects the honour and esteem that is accorded him for his many years of faithful labour in the Free Church.
- b. The FCS decided to recommend the Reformed Church in the United States, the Free Reformed Church in North America and the Free Church of Central India for membership in the ICRC.
- c. The Assembly accepted with gladness a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Canadian Reformed Churches in accordance with the agreed upon Rules.
- d. Time was also set aside for the Assembly to give proper attention to the 150th Anniversary of the Disruption.

- e. The Assembly decided to exhort Her Majesty's Government to have regard for the sanctity of the Lord's Day, as well as other moral issues.
- f. A considerable amount of time was also spent on the matter of Church Extension work.
- g. Since the closure, amalgamation and start-up of new churches falls under the work of the Assembly, several matters had to be dealt with. In addition, the sale and purchase of church property and manses also involves the Assembly, along with the local congregations affected.
- h. The Thursday evening of the week that the Assembly meets is customarily devoted to matters of foreign mission. The report of the Board was received and representatives from the mission fields in India, Peru and South Africa spoke.

3. Acts of the General Assembly 1994

The General Assembly met from May 23 - 27, 1994, in Edinburgh. Some of the highlights were:

- a. The Assembly entered into a sister church relationship with the Reformed Churches (Liberated) in the Netherlands in accordance with the agreed Rules.
- b. The Assembly accepted a report from the Finance, Law and Advisory Committee which contained new regulations for sick leave and leaves of absences by ministers, missionaries and professors. It also passed a supplement as to how disciplinary matters should be handled before the courts of the Church.
- c. A report was received from the Committee on Public Questions, Religion and Morals. This Committee makes representation to the government in moral matters. A report was also received from the Committee on Church Extension. It drew the attention of the Assembly to places where there are encouraging signs of church growth, to home missionaries, and to efforts that needed assistance.
- d. A special committee appointed to visit and examine the workings of the Free Church College in Edinburgh tendered a report that included a number of proposals for change in the exams, semesters, and placement of students.

It was decided that students who have completed the first year of the three year course and students who have completed the second year of the four year course, shall be placed with an experienced minister for a period of six weeks. The programme for the student's placement is to be set out by the minister in consultation with the Kirk Session. Both the minister and the Kirk Session will submit reports on the student's ability, attitude, progress, etc. to the Professor of Practical Theology. These reports will become part of a student's overall assessment.

- e. In its report to the Assembly the Committee on Assembly Arrangements and Ecumenical Relations commented on the ICRC meeting in Zwolle as follows: "Probably the most encouraging feature of the whole Conference was the obvious development of respect and trust between the participating Churches. There was a total lack of the confrontation which had featured occasionally in previous Conferences. Differences of viewpoint emerged from time to time but were always expressed in a pacific manner appreciative of the position of others. For example, though the Free Church representatives were not won over to the idea of replacing preaching from the Scriptures with preaching from the Catechism, we were persuaded that our Church should make much more use of the Westminster Catechism as a teaching tool."
- f. In its report the Visitation Committee to the Free Church College stated, "It is our conviction that we should as a Church be profoundly thankful for the

fact that we have our own theological training establishment. One of the plainest lessons of past years in some other denominations is that when churches give up control over the appointment of their professors they virtually hand over the training of their future ministers to outsiders." It added, "We should as a Church be grateful for the fact that our College has been held in esteem world-wide as a school in which Calvinism has been taught with love and conviction. Such establishments are comparatively rare in our modern world. For this reason it is all the more important that we should appreciate the work of Professors and make their service to Jesus Christ a matter of constant prayer. Professors need to show the highest examples of theological and personal integrity and inspire in their students a life-long love of the gospel in all its richness and fullness."

4. Consideration

On the basis of the above, we may conclude that the FCS continues to be faithful to the Word of God, to its confessional standards and to its church government.

5. Recommendation

Your Committee recommends to General Synod 1995 that Ecclesiastical Fellowship be continued with the Free Church of Scotland in accordance with the adopted Rules.

VIII. THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA (FRCSA)

1. Correspondence

- a. On Jan. 25, 1993, the FRCSA were informed about the decisions of Synod Lincoln 1992 that had a direct bearing on our mutual relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship. A copy of the new Rules for this relationship was enclosed. When the Acts 1992 appeared, copies were sent to the South African churches.

Seeing that Synod had mandated the CRCA to investigate the Reformed Churches in South Africa (RCSA), we asked the South African deputies for information on these churches, as well as for their evaluation.

- b. On March 3, 1993, a letter was sent to us by the South African deputies thanking us for our previous letter and stating that they saw no problems with our new Rules. Furthermore, they said that they might propose similar Rules to Synod Johannesburg 1994.

They also urged the CRCA to organize another workshop on rules for inter-church relations at the forthcoming meeting of the ICRC in the hope that all reformed and presbyterian churches would as yet adopt exactly the same rules. The CRCA decided that sufficient progress had been made on this matter and that there was little to be gained by organizing yet another workshop.

As far as information and evaluation about the RCSA was concerned, the South African deputies referred us to the forthcoming Acts of Synod Pretoria 1992.

- c. The deputies of the FRCSA sent us another communication on Jan. 18, 1994, in which they notified us of the convocation of Synod Johannesburg on May 4, 1994. The CRCA did not feel free to send a delegate to South Africa in view of the planned Australian visit and hence greetings were conveyed via the post office. Special mention was made of the political difficulties being experienced in the nation of South Africa, and in the Free Reformed Churches due to the high number of ministerial vacancies.

- d. On May 11, 1994, we received two copies of the report of the South African deputies to the Synod Johannesburg 1994. In this report the Deputies ask Synod for a mandate to study and recommend the new Rules adopted by the Canadian and Dutch churches.

2. Acts of Synod Pretoria 1992

From the "Handelinge" we pass on:

- a. A sister church relationship will be continued with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.
- b. Synod decided to continue Ecclesiastical Contact with the Reformed Churches in Sumba/Savu, the Presbyterian Church in Korea, and the Free Church of Southern Africa.
- c. Synod appointed delegates to examine the possibilities of a theological training for members of the FRCSA at Potchefstroom University.
- d. Synod appointed deputies to select 50 hymns from the "Afrikaanse Koraalboek" to serve as an addition to the Psalms sung in the worship services.
- e. Synod expressed a preference for the 1933/53 Bible translation, but also allowed the usage of the New African Bible for study purposes.
- f. Synod re-evaluated the contacts with the Reformed Churches in South Africa. After concluding that the FRCSA and the Reformed Churches in South Africa recognize Scripture as the infallible Word of God, accept the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed and the Three Forms of Unity, have a similar Church Order and Subscription Form, Synod decided that it was time for new initiatives, possibly leading to recognition.

3. Consideration

On the basis of the above, we may conclude that the FRCSA continues to be faithful to God's Word, to the confessions and to the adopted Church Order.

4. Recommendation

Your Committee recommends to General Synod 1995 that Ecclesiastical Fellowship be continued with the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa in accordance with the adopted Rules.

IX. THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES (ICRC)

1. Context

The Canadian Reformed Churches are one of the founding members of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC). Delegates were sent to the 1982 Constituent Assembly which met in Groningen, the Netherlands, to the first official meeting which was held in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1985, to the second meeting which was held in Langley, B.C., in 1989, and to the third meeting which was held in Zwolle, the Netherlands, in 1993. This third meeting was to have taken place in Seoul, Korea, however, since their facilities were not ready, it was shifted to Zwolle, and held there from Sept. 1 - 9, 1993.

2. Correspondence

- a. On Dec. 14, 1992, a letter was sent to us by the ICRC Secretary, the Rev. M. van Beveren, stating that churches applying for admission needed to have two sponsors and that due to their limited contacts, the Free Reformed Church of North America (FRCNA) and the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS) had difficulty obtaining two sponsors. He asked whether the CRCA was prepared to sponsor these two churches.

On Dec. 14, 1992, the Rev. C. Pronk wrote us on behalf of the FRCNA and asked if the CanRC would be willing to recommend the FRCNA for membership in the ICRC.

Earlier on March 16, 1992, the RCUS had made a similar request to the CRCA.

- b. On Jan. 26, 1993, we informed both the FRCNA and the RCUS that the CRCA disagreed with the ICRC Secretary's interpretation of the Constitution and that the two letters of recommendation mentioned refer to churches desiring to send observers to the meetings of the ICRC. In order to avoid having these two churches caught in the middle of a matter of constitutional interpretation, however, the CRCA decided to give both churches a qualified recommendation. In our letters of recommendation to the Secretary of the ICRC we made clear that no official relationship existed between the CanRC and either the FRCNA or the RCUS. We based our qualified recommendation on local contacts between our churches and the two applying churches. We mentioned the fact that the FRCNA sends its students for the ministry to our Theological College and that Synod Lincoln 1992 decided that we had sufficient confidence in the RCUS to approach them with a view to establishing Ecclesiastical Fellowship.
- c. On April 27 and May 22, 1993, the Secretary informed us that contrary to some reports the PCK is not a member of a new organization called the International Reformed Fellowship. He also sent a provisional agenda for the 1993 ICRC meeting in Zwolle.
- d. On Feb. 8, 1994, the Secretary wrote seeking input from the CanRC in the matter of regional conferences. The CRCA is of the opinion that unless a specific need can be cited, there is little justification for such regional conferences.
- e. On Nov. 7, 1994, the Secretary sent us a ICRC Newsletter informing us of the new Mission Newsletter, the fact that the ICRC member churches in Ireland, Scotland and the Netherlands were planning a regional conference for 1995, and plans for the next meeting of the ICRC in Seoul, Korea.
- f. On Jan. 4, 1995, the Secretary told us that the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) had submitted a proposal to amend Art. III, sub 1, of the ICRC Constitution. The FRCA proposes to change the statement "to express and promote the unity of faith that the member churches have in Christ" to "to express and promote unity in the reformed faith which the member churches confess."

The decisions of Synod 1992 on the ICRC indicate that the Canadian Reformed Churches are satisfied with the present formulation and therefore the CRCA recommends that no further changes be entertained and supported.

The Secretary also informed us that the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA) is applying for membership in the Conference, and that a paper presented at the Zwolle meeting has been translated into French and will be available soon.

3. The Third Meeting of the ICRC in Zwolle, the Netherlands, Sept. 1 -9, 1993

- a. For specific details of this meeting we refer you to the *Proceedings of the International Conference of Reformed Churches*. (September 1 - 9, 1993, in Zwolle, the Netherlands)
- b. Our delegates to this meeting were Rev. Cl. Stam and Dr. J. Visscher, with Dr. N.H. Gootjes as advisor. Dr. J. Faber was also present as Convener of the Committee on Theological Affirmation. Rev. M. van Beveren and

br. H.A. Berends also attended as Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer, respectively.

Prof. Gootjes contributed a paper on the subject of "Catechism Preaching."

In view of some editorial comments made in the *1994 Yearbook* of the CanRC, it should be noted that the Canadian Reformed Churches paid directly for the travelling expenses of their two delegates and their one advisor. The other three participants either paid their own way or had their way paid for by the Conference.

- c. The following churches were received as new members:
 - the Free Church of Central India;
 - the Free Reformed Church of North America;
 - the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (USA);
 - the Reformed Church in the United States.

This brings the membership in the ICRC to 15.

- d. The Conference accepted a proposal from the Finance Committee "to assess each member Church, with the understanding that no member Church would bear more than 49% of the assessment." (*Proceedings*, 28:1)
- e. The next meeting of the Conference has been scheduled for Seoul, Korea. The commencement date will be D.V. August 20, 1997.

4. Considerations

Generally speaking, CanRC participation benefited our delegates, advisor, and members and was well received by the other participants. The papers delivered stimulated much constructive discussion. During the plenary sessions and especially during the intermissions, there were many opportunities to learn more about the struggles and difficulties that exist in the member Churches. It was good to hear not only about hardships, but also to hear and observe that the Lord in His grace gathers His Church in many different places in the world. The ICRC provides an excellent forum for sharing experiences and knowledge, and so acts as another means to promote the Church gathering work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

5. Recommendations

- a. Your Committee recommends that the Canadian Reformed Churches continue to participate in the ICRC and that the CRCA submit a report to General Synod 1998 containing its findings and evaluation.
- b. Your Committee recommends that the Canadian Reformed Churches be represented at the next meeting of the Conference scheduled to take place in Korea during the month of August in the year of our Lord 1997.
- c. Your Committee also recommends that Dr. J. Visscher and Rev. C. VanSpronsen be sent as voting delegates and that in view of his familiarity with the language and customs of Korea, Dr. N.H. Gootjes be appointed as advisor.

X. THE REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES (RCUS)

1. Correspondence

- a. On Jan. 25, 1993, the CRCA informed the RCUS that Synod 1992 had charged us to investigate the RCUS with a view to entering into Ecclesiastical Fellowship. We requested that appropriate documents be sent in order that we might be able to commence work on this mandate. Some weeks later the RCUS sent us a large box filled with the material requested.
- b. On Jan. 25, 1993, we also supplied the RCUS with a letter of qualified recommendation to accompany their application for membership in the ICRC.

In an accompanying letter we informed the RCUS that such a letter was not really required according to our interpretation of the Constitution of the ICRC. In addition, we informed them that our recommendation would need to be somewhat qualified seeing that as yet no official relationship existed between the CanRC and the RCUS.

- c. On Feb. 1, 1993, the Canadian Reformed Church at Carman wrote and asked advice on how it might continue its contact with the RCUS seeing that the CRCA had now been mandated by Synod to involve itself. The CRCA has no intention of discouraging the local contacts of the Church at Carman, but as to what form such contacts should take must be left in the freedom of the Church at Carman to decide.
- d. On Feb. 3, 1993, the RCUS invited the CRCA to send an observer to its 247th Synod to be held in Sutton, Nebraska, from May 24 - 27, 1993. The CRCA delegated the Rev. E. Kampen to act as the CanRC observer.
- e. On March 16, 1994, the RCUS invited the CRCA to send an observer to its 248th Synod to be held in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, from May 16 - 19, 1994. The CRCA delegated Mr. A. Nap to act as the CanRC observer.
- f. On July 11, 1994, we received two copies of the 1994 Abstract of the 248th Synod.

2. Other Activities

In order to carry out its mandate, the CRCA decided

- a. to appoint a sub-committee consisting of the brs. E. Kampen, A. Nap and C. VanSpronsen. This Committee indicated which areas needed discussion with the RCUS. It also studied in detail the Constitution of the RCUS. Some of their findings are included under the next section (see Consideration c);
- b. to delegate both the Rev. E. Kampen and Mr. A. Nap as observers to successive Synods of the RCUS. In this way different impressions could be formed and added information and insight received. The reports of both brothers are appended and contain valuable data about the RCUS;
- c. to organize a meeting with members from the InterChurch Relations Committee and the "Study and Defend RCUS Ecclesiology Committee" of the RCUS. The intent of this meeting between representatives of the CanRC and the RCUS would be to gain further understanding of the history, confession and life of our respective churches. At the time that this Report is being finalized, a date and place for such a meeting has yet to be established.

3. Considerations

- a. Rev. F.H. Walker visited Synod Lincoln 1992. In a part of his report to the RCUS Synod 1993 (Sutton) he complained about "overly critical and often inaccurate reports." He preferred to wait for further developments in contacts between the CanRC and the OPC before establishing official contact with the CanRC.
- b. Rev. E. Kampen visited the 1993 RCUS Synod on behalf of the CRCA. In his contacts and speeches he followed up the discussion items identified by the sub-committee. These are:
 - the doctrinal standards in the RCUS;
 - the Constitution of the RCUS;
 - ecclesiology;
 - inter-church relations.

- c. From a report of our Sub-committee to study the Constitution of the RCUS we quote:

“Preliminary Remark:

The Committee discussed for some time to what extent we are expected to discuss the basic structures of the Constitution in as far as they resemble those of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and have already been evaluated and not found to be an obstacle to recognition as a true Church. Do we start from the assumption that the Presbyterian church polity as such is not an impediment to establish ecclesiastical fellowship? If so, several points ...ought to be presented to their committee for further discussion and clarification.”

General Comments:

1. It appears that this Constitution is a remarkable blend of Reformed and Presbyterian church polity. In its general make-up it does, however, give the impression of being more presbyterian than reformed. Presbyterian concepts are given reformed names: consistory, classis, synod, instead of session, presbytery and general assembly but function in a similar manner as under the presbyterian system....
 6. The place of the Heidelberg Catechism is prominent. The Constitution stresses knowledge of and adherence to this confession for all members.
 7. Their ecclesiology shows in the manner of receiving ministers into their communion from other “Orthodox Protestant Churches” (art. 5, 74) as well as at the table of the Lord. What are “other branches of the Christian Church” (art. 4)? What are other denominations “holding the essential doctrines of the Gospel” whose members should be invited to participate in the Holy Supper (art. 189)? Is the pluriformity one of being more or less pure or a matter of different historical/ethnic origins?”
- d. Br. A. Nap visited the 1994 RCUS Synod (Manitowoc). He reported that the RCUS adopted the Belgic Confession of Faith and the Canons of Dort as additional confessional standards.

The CRCA expresses deep thankfulness for this decision.

- e. The 1994 RCUS Synod appointed a committee “to study and defend the Reformed Church in the United States’ view of Church Government and Form of Government.” This committee expects to present a final report in May, 1995. Included in this report will be:

- “1. An overview of the Canadian Reformed Churches’ Church Order;
2. An exegetical study on women voting in the congregational meeting;
3. An exegetical study of the ‘one true church’ concept;
4. An exegetical study of the idea that the local congregation is not a judiciary;
5. A search of our denominational Constitution as to the idea of judiciary.”

4. Recommendation

Your Committee recommends that General Synod 1995 renew the mandate of the CRCA to continue its investigation of the Reformed Church in the United States with a view to entering into Ecclesiastical Fellowship according to the adopted Rules.

XI. THE REFORMED CHURCH IN QUEBEC (ERQ)

1. Correspondence

- a. On June 23, 1994, the Church at Ottawa adopted in principle an extensive report on the Eglise Reformee du Quebec (for our purposes and in keeping with the rest of our report we translate this name as follows: the Reformed Church of Quebec and we abbreviate this name as: ERQ) and decided to send it as an overture to Classis Ontario North of the Canadian Reformed Churches.
- b. On July 11, 1994, the ERQ wrote the CRCA informing us that in March of 1994 the ERQ decided to begin talks with the CanRC in order to seek an official relationship. To that end two deputies from the ERQ visited with the Consistory of the Canadian Reformed Church at Ottawa. After a positive discussion, it was decided to prepare an overture asking for Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the CanRC. The text of the overture was completed and accepted by the Consistory of the CanRC at Ottawa.

On June 16, 1994 the Synod of the ERQ expressed the need for more time before coming to the CanRC with an official request for Ecclesiastical Fellowship. As a result, the Synod of the ERQ decided to invite two representatives from the CanRC to be present at the next Synod of the ERQ to be held in Montreal on Sept. 16 and 17, 1994. As representatives they invited the Rev. J.L. VanPopta of the Church at Ottawa to be present and they also requested the CRCA to send one of its members.

- c. On Sept. 5, 1994, the CRCA informed the ERQ that it could not send a member of the CRCA because none were available. It had, however, found the Rev. C. Bosch of the Canadian Reformed Church of Burlington-South, Ontario, willing and able to accompany the Rev. J.L. VanPopta to the September Synod of the ERQ.

It should also be mentioned that from the very beginning the CRCA questioned and debated whether or not this was really a matter for our Committee seeing that, as our name indicates, we are to deal with "churches abroad" i.e. foreign churches.

- d. Subsequent to his visit, the Rev. C. Bosch sent us a report of his visit which we have appended for your consideration. In his recommendation he requests the CRCA to send a delegation to visit the ERQ as soon as possible and to submit a report of this visit to the churches.
- e. On Nov. 21, 1994, the Rev. P. Bedard, the deputy of the ERQ appointed to develop relations with the CanRC, wrote us and asked for additional information on the CanRC. The requested information was sent.
- f. On Dec. 14, 1994, the Church at Ottawa informed us that Classis Ontario North had gone on record as stating that "the information provided by the church at Ottawa demonstrates that l'Eglise Reformee du Quebec can be recognized as a true Church of Christ. Therefore Classis requests Synod 1995 to respond to the request of l'ERQ by mandating the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad to intensify and confirm the contact initiated by the church at Ottawa with a view to entering a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship."

2. Considerations

- a. Your Committee is impressed with the extensive submission prepared by the Church at Ottawa and appreciated the invitation received from the ERQ to send an observer to its September Synod. It also appreciated the willing-

ness of the Rev. C. Bosch to represent the CRCA and is grateful for his report. Furthermore, it is thankful that Classis Ontario North could come to its above-mentioned statement.

- b. At the same time the CRCA is of the opinion that while it had a right to respond positively to the request of the ERQ to send an observer to its September Synod (cf. Acts 1992, Art. 112), it could not do more than that without receiving instructions from General Synod. As a result, we did not feel free to arrange an official visit to the ERQ and to commence a formal investigation.
- c. The CRCA has been urged to initiate such an investigation also because of the immediate needs of the ERQ; however, we are of the opinion that many of the needs of the ERQ can be responded to positively by the CanRC even if there is as yet no formal relationship between our respective church federations.

3. Recommendation

Your Committee makes no recommendation in this matter but awaits further instruction, if any, from General Synod 1995.

XII. OTHER REQUESTS

A. The Reformed Church in Zaire (RCZ)

1. Correspondence

- a. On Jan. 15, 1993, the Reformed Church in Zaire wrote to the CRCA requesting close relations with the CanRC and asking us to pay a visit to Zaire. This Church also requested that missionaries from Canada be sent to work in Zaire.
- b. On Jan. 25, 1993, we wrote to the Reformed Church in Zaire as per instruction of General Synod 1992 asking it to supply us with information regarding its confessional position, church government, number of congregations and ministers, ecumenical relations, etc. We also asked in what way it differed from the Eglise Reformee Confessante au Zaire (ERCZ).
- c. On April 30, 1994, we received another letter from the Moderator of the RCZ, the Rev. P.H. Kazadi Lukonda Ngube-Ngube, in which he stated that the RCZ was different from the ERCZ, although they will probably have fellowship in the future. He said that the ERCZ has the Belgic Confession but not the Canons of Dort, whereas, the RCZ is based on the Ecumenical Creeds and the Three Forms of Unity.

Rev. Ngube-Ngube stated that he founded the RCZ four years after his return from Zambia where he received his theological training in the Reformed Church in Zambia. The government of his church, he said, is based on the synodical system of synods, presbyteries and consistories. In addition, there are presently 70 congregations, 17 pastors and candidates who will be ordained at a meeting held from June 22 to July 3, 1994. He again expressed a desire to have a relationship with the CanRC and invited us to visit. He also reiterated an earlier request for missionaries. He would like us to send publications and videos tapes of CanRC life.

- d. On May 23, 1994, Rev. Ngube-Ngube wrote us again informing us that an economic crisis existed in his country and asking us to send money for food.
- e. On Aug. 17, 1994, Rev. Ngube-Ngube sent us another letter asking us to participate in the first General Assembly of the RCZ to be held on June 25, 1995 and to assist in the food costs for the 200 expected participants.

We decided not to send an immediate reply but to wait for information about the RCZ from Rev. Kishimba of the ERCZ. (See Appendix: "From Mantowoc and Lubumbashi" by Mr. A. Nap)

2. Considerations

- a. It is obvious that the RCZ, through its representative the Rev. Ngube-Ngube, continues to persist in their request for a relationship with the CanRC, as well as for missionaries and financial assistance.
- b. As CRCA we find it very difficult to respond to these requests in a positive way seeing that none of our normal contacts are familiar with the RCZ. Furthermore, we have been informed that our sister churches in the Netherlands, the RCN, has Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the ERCZ, as does the RCUS.
- c. At the moment we are awaiting information from other sources about the RCZ, and about the relationship between the RCZ and the ERCZ.
- d. Our cautious approach in this matter is caused by our well-established procedure of careful investigation before entering into an official relationship with another church.

3. Recommendation

Your Committee recommends that the CRCA be mandated to continue its investigation and report to the next General Synod on its findings with respect to the Reformed Church in Zaire.

B. The Reformed Presbyterian Church – General Assembly (RPCGA)

1. Correspondence

- a. On May 11, 1993, we received a letter from the Rev. G.W. Donnan, Chairman of the Committee on Ecumenicity of the Reformed Presbyterian Church General Assembly requesting that ecclesiastical contact be established between the RPCGA and the CanRC.
- b. On Feb. 28, 1994, we received another letter from the RPCGA reiterating their previous request and informing us that their federation consists of nine congregations and 500 members. They also asked if the CanRC would be prepared to recommend them for membership in the ICRC seeing that we had done the same for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
- c. On March 28, 1994, we responded to the letter of the RPCGA by requesting additional information about their churches.
- d. On April 23, 1994, we received additional information from the RPCGA. This information included a list of names of congregations, ministers, and membership figures for each local church. A very informative book called The Book of Church Order was included. In addition, the RPCGA informed us of their hopes of developing closer relations with the OPC, RCUS, Independent CRC of Nicaragua, the Evangelical Reformed Church of Russia, the RCN (Vrijgemaakt) and a long list of other reformed and presbyterian churches around the world. Also, they sent observers to the meeting of the ICRC in Zwolle and to the Alliance of Reformed Churches. They are also in contact with North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC).
- e. On April 24, 1994, the RPCGA invited the CRCA to send an observer to their General Assembly to be held on July 26, 1994, in Louisville, Nebraska.
- f. On Oct. 24, 1994, we informed the RPCGA that we had been unable to send an observer to their General Assembly.

2. Considerations

- a. At the present time we are still studying the material sent to us by the RPCGA. In addition, we are asking for information about the RPCGA from our sister churches and from other contacts in the USA.

- b. When the RPCGA stated that we recommended the OPC for membership in the ICRC, they were mistaken. We issued qualified recommendations for the Free Reformed Church in North America and the Reformed Church in the United States.
- c. In all honesty the CRCA is a bit taken aback by the membership figures supplied by the RPCGA and wonders how congregations of 8-10, 20, 25, 30 members can be viable and support a pastor. It is also astonished at the extensive ecumenical plans of this small federation.

3. Recommendation

Your Committee recommends the CRCA be mandated to continue its investigation and report to the next General Synod on its findings with respect to the Reformed Presbyterian Church General Assembly.

XIII. FINANCIAL STATEMENT 1993-1994 AND BUDGET 1995-1998

General Synod 1992 charged the CRCA to present a financial statement and budget to General Synod 1995.

With respect to the Financial Statement, the Church for the General Fund (the Church at Carman) has informed the CRCA that in the period 1993 - 1994 a total of \$14,052.98 was spent. The major expenses related to:

the visit to the FRC of Australia	\$5,048.44
the meeting of the ICRC	\$2,542.00 (approx.)
ICRC membership fee	\$1,896.30
the visits to the RCUS	\$1,600.00 (approx.)
the visit to RCN and FCS	\$1,500.00 (approx.)

With respect to a Budget for 1995-1998

ICRC fees	\$2,500.00
the meeting of the ICRC in Korea	\$4,000.00
meeting with the RCUS	\$1,500.00
misc.	<u>\$4,000.00</u>
	\$12,000.00

XIV. RE-APPOINTMENT

The Rev. Cl. Stam has requested the CRCA to inform General Synod 1995 that he not be re-appointed for personal reasons. As Committee we would like to express our thanks to Rev. Cl. Stam for the work that he has done as a member of the Committee and for the Churches.

Respectfully submitted by your Committee,
January 13, 1995

- Elder H. A. Berends
- Dr. S.H. DeBoer
- Rev. E. Kampen
- Elder A. Nap
- Rev. Cl. Stam
- Dr. J. Vanderstoep
- Rev. C. VanSpronsen
- Dr. J. Visscher (convener)

List of Abbreviations:

CanRC =	Canadian Reformed Churches
CRCA =	Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad
EPCI =	Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland
ERCS =	Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore
ERCZ =	Confessing Reformed Church in Zaire
ERQ =	Reformed Churches in Quebec
FRCA =	Free Reformed Churches in Australia
FCS =	Free Church of Scotland
FRCNA =	Free Reformed Churches of North America
FRCP =	Free Reformed Churches of the Philippines
FRCSA =	Free Reformed Churches in South Africa
ICRC =	International Conference of Reformed Churches
NAPARC =	North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council
OPC =	Orthodox Presbyterian Church
PCEA =	Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia
PCK =	Presbyterian Church in Korea
RCA =	Reformed Churches of Australia
RCN =	Reformed Churches in the Netherlands
RCNZ =	Reformed Church of New Zealand
RCSA =	Reformed Churches in South Africa
RCSTS =	Reformed Churches of Sumba-Timor-Savu
RCUS =	Reformed Church in the United States
RCZ =	Reformed Churches in Zaire
RPCGA =	Reformed Presbyterian Church General Assembly
RPCI =	Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland

APPENDICES TO REPORT OF THE CRCA:

1. Visit to the 247th Synod of the Reformed Church in the U.S.A. by Rev. E. Kampen
(*Clarion*, July 16, 1993)
2. Address to the Synod of the RCUS by Rev. E. Kampen
3. Third Meeting of the ICRC. by Rev. Cl. Stam
(*Clarion*, Oct. 22, 1993)
4. Meeting of the delegates of the Presbyterian Church of Korea and the Canadian Reformed Churches by Rev. Cl. Stam
(*Clarion*, Oct. 22, 1993)
5. A Visit to the Netherlands and Scotland by Rev. J. Visscher
(*Clarion*, Year End Issue 1993 and March 11, 1994)
6. Address to Synod Ommen of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands by Rev. J. Visscher
7. The New Rules for Sister Church Relations in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands adopted by Synod Ommen 1993.
8. Address to the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland by Rev. J. Visscher
(*Clarion*, March 11, 1994)
9. Responding to a Plea: Report on a visit to the Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia held in Byford, WA. by Rev. E. Kampen.
(*Clarion*, Sept. 9 and 23, 1994)
10. Addresses to Synod Byford of the FRCA by Rev. E. Kampen
11. Manitowoc (Wisconsin) and Lubumbashi (Zaire) by Mr. A. Nap
(*Clarion*, Year End Issue 1994)
12. Visit to the ERQ (Sept. 16, 17, 1994) by Rev. C. Bosch.
13. Letters Regarding ICRC Membership:
 - i. Dec. 3, 1992, from the ICRC Secretary
 - ii. Dec. 14, 1992, from the External Relations Committee of the FRCNA
 - iii. Jan. 26, 1993, to the ICRC Secretary
 - iv. Jan. 26, 1993, to the External Relations Committee of the FRCNA
 - v. March 16, 1992, from the Interchurch Relations Committee of the RCUS
 - vi. Jan. 26, 1993, to the ICRC Secretary
 - vii. Jan. 25, 1993, to the Interchurch Relations Committee of the RCUS

APPENDIX VII

Report of Deputies for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity to Synod Abbotsford 1995.

A. MANDATE

Deputies worked under the following mandate from Synod Lincoln 1992:

Synod decide ... to appoint deputies for the promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity, consisting of an equal number of committee members from the two Regional Synod districts, to promote the unity of Reformed believers who have left the Christian Reformed Church with the mandate:

1. to make their presence known for the purpose of information and consultation;
2. to represent the churches, whenever invited, at assemblies or meetings held for the purpose of coming to ecclesiastical unity;
3. to report on its activities to the churches and to the next General Synod.
(*Acts General Synod Lincoln, ON 1992, Art. 36.V.B*)

B. ACTIVITIES

1. *General Comments*

Since deputies are spread across the country and since we saw no urgent need to come together at considerable expense, all the deputies never met in person together but conducted their business primarily by mail. In view of these rather unique circumstances, the convener became de facto the secretary of the deputies.

To keep the churches as fully informed as possible, material was published in *Clarion* as appropriate.

Because virtually all our business was conducted by mail, including the preparing of this report, this report comes to the churches later than we would have liked. Another factor for the relative lateness of this report is that deputies had to attend the November 1994 meeting of the Alliance of Reformed Churches and digest and distribute the results of that meeting prior to making a report.

2. *Making our Presence Known*

By way of letters (dated Feb 5, 1993) we officially informed The Confessional Fellowship of Reformed Churches (c/o Rev. J.S. Gangar) and the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches (c/o Dr. B. Short) of our existence and mandate and indicated that we were available within that context.

We have received no response from the Confessional Fellowship, presumably because this body which was formed on May 23, 1992 (see *Clarion*, August 14, 1992), and met only once since then (Nov 19, 1992) basically ceased to function when the Independent Churches formed a regional Ontario fellowship on June 18, 1994 (see *Clarion* Oct 21, 1994).

We received no response from the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches and Dr. C. Van Dam later heard from Rev. H. Bout of the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches that our letter had never been tabled at a major assembly of these churches. A copy of our original letter was subsequently sent to Rev. H. Bout (Nov 20, 1993) and the hope was expressed that we would receive an official response from the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches. At the time of writing this report we have received no response.

In the context of making our presence known, two additional points can be mentioned. Firstly, our existence was made known to the Alliance of Reformed Churches by our presence and speaking at these meetings (see below under "3. *Public Meetings*"). Secondly, shortly after Deputies were appointed, Christian Renewal interviewed Dr. C. Van Dam with a view to learning more about the role and function of the Deputies for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity. The interview appeared in *Christian Renewal* (February 1, 1993) and was reprinted in *Clarion* (February 26, 1993).

3. *Public Meetings*

There were several occasions that some deputies were involved in public meetings. There were first of all the meetings of the Alliance of Reformed Churches held in Lynwood, Illinois in the middle of November. Due to a variety of circumstances, the ideal of having a rotating representation (from among the deputies) at these meetings could not be realized. The 1992 meeting was attended by ad hoc deputies appointed by Synod Lincoln for the occasion, namely, Rev. J. Mulder and Dr. C. Van Dam. They reported on this meeting in *Clarion* (Jan 15 and 29, 1993) by publishing an account of the event and the text of a short speech as observer. The 1993 and 1994 meetings were attended by Rev. R. Aasman and Dr. C. Van Dam who reported to the churches in *Clarion* (Jan 14, 1994 and Jan 13, 1995) by publishing both the reports and the speeches as observers. (All the published reports and messages can be found in Appendix I.)

Canadian Reformed observers were clearly welcome at these meetings and their presence was appreciated. It is also very important for the Canadian Reformed Churches to observe these meetings and get a sense of the direction of the Independent Churches associated with the Alliance of Reformed Churches.

Rev. W. den Hollander, Elder H. T. VanderVelde, and Dr. C. Van Dam attended a meeting of the Independent Reformed Churches which was held in St. Catharines on May 29, 1993. A report of this meeting was published in *Clarion* (August 13, 1993).

Several deputies were also involved in public meetings. Although it was not always clear whether their being a deputy was decisive in being involved, we would nevertheless like to note these occasions here for they were essentially part of the work of those appointed to be deputies. Rev. J.D. Wielenga spoke on "Federation of Confessionally United Churches" for the Conference on Reformed Ecumenical Action on April 3, 1993 which was in Calgary. This speech was published in *Clarion* (May 21, 1993). Rev. Wielenga also spoke at a combined congregational meeting of Orthodox Christian Reformed Church in Kelowna, B.C. and the Canadian Reformed Church in Vernon, B.C. on September 30, 1994.

Dr. C. Van Dam spoke at congregational meetings in Fergus, Ancaster, and Burlington Ebenezer in the spring of 1994 on "The Independent Christian Reformed Churches and the Canadian Reformed Churches." The speech was published in *Clarion* (Oct 7 and 21, 1994).

Rev. W. Den Hollander spoke on "Conditions and Compromise for Ecclesiastical Unity" at the Minister's Workshop held on January 9, 1995 in Hamilton.

4. *Discussion Paper*

Your deputies adopted a discussion paper, "Pursuing Ecclesiastical Unity," which is included in Appendix II. This paper reflects how the deputies think about the issues relating to our goal for unity. It was published in *Clarion* (Feb 11, 1994) and in *Christian Renewal* (March 7, 1994) in the hope of helping to

further the discussion that was underway between consistories meeting to discuss unity. One consistory and one minister responded to it. The consistory of Port Kells (June 6, 1994) expressed wholehearted agreement with the ecumenical direction and also asked several questions, namely: Is the language not too vague when we speak about not binding one another to each other's idiosyncrasies? (Response: The vagueness was on purpose. We would like to stress the positive, namely, that any unity should be on the basis of Scripture and the accepted confessions.) Would it not be better not to have our ministers on non-Canadian pulpits in the interim situation? (Response: The paper leaves both possibilities open. It is up to the minister involved and his consistory.) Where does the local church's responsibility end and that of the federation begin in seeking unity? (A good question. Synod 1992 correctly tried to give both the local church and the federation their due place.) Rev. R.F. Boersema also responded (July 14, 1994) positively with some suggestions for improvement. Two of these have been adopted.

We request Synod to adopt this discussion paper so that consistories who are in the process of ecumenical discussions can be helped by it and so that any future deputies to be appointed can build on this work.

5. *The Ecumenicity Committee of the Alliance of Reformed Churches*

At the 1993 meeting of the Alliance of Reformed Churches, there were four overtures which requested the ARC to contact several ecclesiastical conferences and churches. A committee was appointed consisting of the Independent churches of Calgary, Edmonton and Lethbridge, Alberta, and mandated to do the following:

- i. Contact the International Conference of Reformed Churches, the International Reformed Fellowship, and other Reformed fellowships, to investigate their membership, goals, and confessional foundations, and determine whether fellowship with them is feasible or desirable.
- ii. Contact the Canadian Reformed Churches, the Free Reformed Churches, the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches, the Protestant Reformed Churches, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Christian Presbyterian Church, and the Reformed Church in the United States, requesting some official communication from them to see whether they are interested in working toward federative unity with the independent churches, and if so, according to what procedure they would suggest such federative unity be sought.

Your deputies received a letter in February, 1994 (see Appendix III) from this ecumenicity committee of the Alliance inviting us to respond. We answered by letter (March 14, 1994, also in Appendix III) in which we introduced ourselves and our mandate, responded positively to the question whether the Canadian Reformed Churches were interested in working toward federative unity with the independent churches, and included for their information a copy of the discussion paper *Pursuing Ecclesiastical Unity*.

The Ecumenicity Committee reported to the 1994 meeting of the Alliance of Reformed Churches. It is of interest to note that this committee had received responses only from the Canadian Reformed Churches (i.e. from the Deputies for Ecclesiastical Unity) and from three Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches. All the responses were positive. The Committee's report was rather brief and incomplete. It simply passed on the correspondence received, drew no inferences from it, and gave no recommendations for further action. It was also disappointing that this Committee had not placed their report on the

provisional agenda of the Alliance of Reformed Churches and only distributed it near the end of the Alliance meetings. Thus no consistory had an opportunity to study it beforehand.

In the discussion at the Alliance meeting that followed, appreciation was expressed for the correspondence received. The Alliance of Reformed Churches decided to dismiss the committee since its mandate was completed and a new committee for contact would be appointed. Its mandate would be to study the letters received and to take such action as it deems necessary. To date no answer has been received to our initial response.

To be realistic, it should be noted in this context that as long as the Independent Churches are not federated in some form, it is very difficult for them to deal meaningfully with matters of ecumenicity.

6. *Other Activities*

- i. Respecting local Canadian Reformed ecumenical activities, we received the following official information:
 - a. a copy of the agenda for the combined meeting (of Feb 8, 1993) of the consistories of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Edmonton and the Orthodox Reformed Church in Edmonton, along with a report of this meeting.
 - b. from the Canadian Reformed Church at Hamilton a letter (Feb 9, 1993) informing us of a letter they sent to the Independent Christian Reformed Church (at Upper Wellington) in Hamilton in which they invite this church to a combined meeting of the respective consistories to discuss matters of mutual concern and benefit. We also subsequently received a copy of the answer of the Hamilton Independent Reformed Church (April 11, 1993) to the Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church in which they gratefully accepted the invitation.
 - c. a copy of the agenda for the combined meeting of the consistories of the Canadian Reformed Churches at Taber and Coaldale and the Independent Christian Reformed Church at Lethbridge, along with other materials on these meetings including a report.
 - d. a copy of a letter that the Canadian Reformed Church at Winnipeg sent (April 29, 1993) to the consistory of the Independent Reformed Church in Winnipeg respecting beginning ecumenical discussions as consistories.
 - e. a copy of the (draft) "Okanagan Accord" from the Canadian Reformed Church at Vernon. This document details the decision of the consistories of the Orthodox Reformed Church at Kelowna, B.C. and the Canadian Reformed Church at Vernon, B.C., to enter into a relationship of local ecclesiastical fellowship with a view to working towards a federative unity, subject to the advice of the respective Classes.
- i. A letter of inquiry (Feb 5, 1993) was written to the American Reformed Church in Grand Rapids asking for information on its plans to expand their ministry-at-large project to target especially those who have left the Christian Reformed Church. In our letter, this church was reminded of the mandate Synod Lincoln 1992 had given the Deputies for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity. (After our letter had gone, we received a copy of a letter dated Feb 23, 1993) from Burlington-West to Grand Rapids in which similar issues were raised.)

Grand Rapids responded by providing information (April 19, 1993) and a second letter about the same matter (Oct 12, 1993) reminded Deputies that Grand Rapids remained the address church for the United States. On

November 15, 1993 (just before the 1993 meeting of the Alliance of Reformed Churches) a fax was received from the Grand Rapids consistory in which they gave information on recent developments in their area and in which they expressed their view on the churches associated with the Alliance of Reformed Churches, namely, that these churches “have not demonstrated a Scriptural understanding of a legitimate secession from the CRC,” that they “must conclude that the CRC is a false church” and that “they ought to seek ecclesiastical unity with the Canadian and American Reformed Churches” and not federate themselves. The Deputies responded (December 6, 1994) thanking Grand Rapids for their information and input and enclosing a copy of the message that was delivered to the Alliance on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches. We also indicated that we did not have the same difficulty Grand Rapids did in the probable formation of a federation of the present Independent Christian Reformed Churches and saw it as a possible step toward a union of Reformed churches.

- iii. Via Rev. J. Mulder, we received material addressed to the Canadian and American Reformed Churches relating to the Nineteenth Meeting of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council. Since we did not have any mandate respecting this organization, this mail was received for information.

C. PROGRESS AND ISSUES

It is good in a report such as this to reflect for a moment how things have changed from the time the mandate was given until now. We would like to bring the following to your attention.

1. With respect to the Alliance of Reformed Churches we can say that there is slow but steady progress to these churches becoming federated with each other. There are encouraging indicators that they desire to federate on the basis of a Reformed Church Order. Once the Independent Christian Reformed Churches are federated, we may expect, under God's blessing, more movement on the ecumenical front. In the first place, one would hope that the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches and those that are now federating would want to seek unity. In the second place, it is to be hoped that the interest shown in the Canadian Reformed Churches up to now will result in meaningful federative dialogue once a federation of the present Independent churches is in place. In light of this, it is important that Synod once again appoint Deputies for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity. It is also of great importance that the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches and the federated Independent Christian Reformed Churches realize where we officially stand and that we fervently desire the unity of all Reformed confessors. This knowledge will help these respective churches to act upon the ecumenicity issue with us.
2. With respect to the home front, we as Deputies have received official information from several churches about their ecumenical endeavours. This was greatly appreciated. However, in general we officially know little about what is happening in the midst of our own churches. Besides the official information we have received, our knowledge of local efforts comes primarily through fellow deputies (information on ecumenical discussions in Chilliwack, and Guelph) or from speaking to colleagues elsewhere. We do not blame any church for this situation (Synod also never gave any hints in this direction), but this circumstance is a handicap for us as deputies and could be detrimental for the churches for several reasons.

Firstly, if churches were to keep us informed, it would be a valuable learning experience for us. We are at this point of history in an unprecedented situation

ecclesiastically in North America and we should share our collective insights and attempts as we seek to do the Lord's will with respect to church unity. If deputies would be called upon to give advice where discussions are just starting, they will be in a more knowledgeable position to do so if kept informed on different approaches and results experienced elsewhere.

Furthermore, if Deputies were to be kept fully informed, it would also enable the Deputies to get a more accurate sense of where the churches are at, so that the Deputies can more effectively speak for the churches in ecumenical settings where they are involved.

Finally while we as Deputies certainly wish to uphold the jurisdiction of the local church, it should be recognized that in local ecumenical discussions also federative aspects quickly come into the picture (to mention a few obvious ones, questions surrounding the *Book of Praise*, the Church Order, and the translation of the confessions). Churches should therefore be encouraged to keep Deputies fully informed and to call upon Deputies should a local church wish to have their input.

3. It is clear from one of the letters we received (Port Kells, June 6, 1994) and from what we have unofficially heard from colleagues that many in the churches are wondering what to do once two local churches have recognized each other as true churches. Another question that appears to live is what exactly is a federative and local responsibility in these discussions. How far can a local church go? These questions are important for not having answers for them can hold up and sour promising local ecumenical discussions because one is unsure how to proceed. Unless events have overtaken us by the time this report is discussed at Synod, it may be helpful that Deputies be asked to study such questions since these type of issues (e.g., possible pulpit exchange once churches recognize each other officially) are not generally covered by our Church Order. A common approach would be beneficial for the churches.
4. A final consideration that we wish to pass on to you is that if, so the Lord wills, these ecumenical concerns take more of the spotlight in the life of churches in our midst, it may become necessary for the Deputies to meet periodically. The present system of geographically separated Deputies has its advantages, but it would be wise for Synod to take the possibility of periodical meetings of Deputies into consideration when approximate budgets are drawn up for the Church at Carman to collect.

D. CONCLUDING REQUESTS

We respectfully request Synod:

1. to approve the work of deputies
2. to adopt the discussion paper so that any future deputies to be appointed can build on this work.
3. to express officially that the Canadian Reformed Churches truly desire a Biblical ecclesiastical unity with the Independent Churches, Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches and all those who wish to be church on the basis of the Scriptures as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity and that Canadian Reformed deputies are available to discuss with them any issues that may form a stumbling block to realizing this ecumenical goal.
4. to ask the churches to keep the deputies fully informed of activities or decisions in their discussions with those who have left the Christian Reformed Church.
5. to appoint again Deputies for Ecclesiastical Unity with the following mandate:
 - i. to make their presence known for the purpose of information and consultation where still necessary,

- ii. to authorize Deputies to officially approach the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches and the future federation of Independent Christian Reformed Churches with the request that these respective churches appoint deputies for church unity who are mandated by their respective assemblies to speak on their behalf and to meet with their Canadian Reformed counterparts,
- iii. to receive reports from the Canadian/American Reformed Churches on local ecumenical developments,
- iv. to be available to consistories for counsel as necessary in local ecumenical discussions or developments,
- v. to represent the churches, whenever invited, at assemblies or meetings held for the purpose of coming to ecclesiastical unity,
- vi. to report on its activities to the churches and to the next General Synod.

Respectfully submitted
Rev. R. Aasman,
Rev. W. den Hollander,
Dr. C. Van Dam, convener/secretary
Elder H. T. VanderVelde,
Elder P. Van Woudenberg,
Rev. J. D. Wielenga

APPENDIX VIII

Report of the Board Of Governors of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches to General Synod Abbotsford, 1995.

Esteemed Brothers in the Lord,

The Board of Governors of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches hereby submits to your assembly, according to By-Law 1, section 3.17, a report of its work and decisions since November 1992.

The Board notes with great thankfulness that the work in the College could continue unhindered during the past two and a half years. A highlight in the past years was the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the College. This was remembered on the Convocation in September 1994. We can with thankfulness to our heavenly Father look back at twenty five years in which by the grace of God the churches could be provided with ministers. May the College continue to be a blessing for the churches.

The Board also wants to express thankfulness for the substantial help the College continues to receive from the sisters churches in Australia.

This report is divided in four parts. First, an account will be given of the work of the Board. In the second part, the work in the College will be highlighted. The third part deals with the facilities and staff of the College. The fourth part addresses several miscellaneous matters.

I. Meetings of the Board

Since the General Synod of 1992 the full Board has met 5 times. In November 1992, during General Synod 1992, the Board met so that the newly appointed Governors could sign the required Declaration and tasks within the Board could be assigned. Regular Annual Board meetings were held in September 1993 and 1994. Each full Board meeting was preceded by a meeting of the Academic Committee. In February 1994 the Board met to deal with the Survey and Questionnaire sent out to graduates and consistories. In February 1995 the Board met to finalize the report to General Synod 1995. These February meetings were possible since the two Governors who live out West were scheduled to visit the lectures.

The Executive has met twice in the last two years. In June 1993 and in June 1994 it prepared the Agendas and Proposals for the Annual Meetings. The minutes of these Executive Meetings were forwarded to all the members of the Board.

The Finance and Property Committee of the Board of Governors has prepared a report for your assembly which is added to this report.

II. Theological College

With thankfulness the Board can report that the instruction at the Theological College could continue without major interruptions. The Lord spared the lives of professors and students, gave them strength for their respective tasks and blessed them with good health.

II.A. Faculty/Senate

Each Annual Meeting the Board received a detailed outline of the courses that were taught during the previous Academic Year. The Board could receive these reports with great thankfulness. The professors are faithful in teaching their courses. At times guest lecturers were invited. The Schedule of Lectures had to be changed at times due to extra curricular activities by the professors or for other reasons. The Board was always notified of these changes.

The bond between College and Churches was strengthened by the visits of several professors to the churches in Western Canada. The Board received

favourable reports about these visits. It therefore continues to ensure that each year one professor visits the churches in the West.

On December 18, 1993 the Board organized an "Open House" for Prof. and Mrs. J. Geertsema on the occasion of their 30th Wedding Anniversary and the 30th anniversary in the ministry of Prof. Geertsema. As a rule the Board remembers the 25th and 40th anniversary, however, the Board was of the opinion that in the situation of Prof. Geertsema the 30th should be remembered. Their 25th was not remembered. In addition, Prof. Geertsema concluded his studies for Master of Theology. The Board expressed its thankfulness and appreciation to Prof. and Mrs. Geertsema.

With regard to the Senate, the Board can report that it could continue its regular work as well. It should be mentioned that the Senate lost one member during the past term. On March 4, 1993 the Lord took Prof. L. Selles unto Himself. To quote from the Principal's report of 1993: "Since his retirement in 1986 at the age of 71, he stayed very much involved in the life of the College and participated fully in the meetings of the Senate." The Board remembers with thankfulness the work of Prof. Selles as one of the first professors at our Theological College. He has served the churches in many ways. Our praise goes to the Lord of the Church for what the churches could receive in Prof. Selles.

Prof. Drs. H.M. Ohmann is not a member of the Senate, yet as former professor he deserves mentioning in this report. In 1993 he retired from active duty as Professor of Old Testament at the Theological University at Kampen. We remember with thankfulness his work as Professor of Old Testament in the years 1968 – 1980 at our College.

II.B. Principal

On September 10, 1993 the principalship of the Theological College was transferred from Dr. C. Van Dam to Prof. J. Geertsema. General Synod 1992 had set as date September 1, 1993. According to this date the new principal would have to give the principal's report at the Convocation only a few days later, as well as confer the degrees. Faculty and Board were of the opinion that this was impractical. It was therefore decided to move the time of expiration to the day after the College Evening.

The Board can report that the previous Principal, Dr. C. Van Dam, and the current Principal, Prof. J. Geertsema, were present at the meetings of the Board and helped the meetings with their insight and advice.

General Synod 1992 designated Dr. N.H. Gootjes as Principal for the years 1996 – 1999. The Board recommends that this General Synod decides to appoint Dr. N.H. Gootjes as Principal and designate Dr. J. De Jong as Principal for the years 1999 – 2002, the Lord willing.

II.C. Visiting the Lectures

The Governors visited the lectures on a regular basis, once in the Fall and once in the Spring. A report of each visit was submitted to the members of the Board. With thankfulness the Board can report to your assembly that each time the visitors could report that the work at the College is done in faithfulness to the Word of God and in harmony with our Reformed Confessions.

II.D. Curriculum

In its September Meeting of 1993 the Board decided to send out Survey to all the consistories within the Federation as well as a Questionnaire to all former students. The purpose of this was to find out whether the teaching at the College is geared to the work in the congregation. Suggestions were solicited.

The response was good, especially from former students. As a result of these enquiries the Board decided in September 1994 to

appoint a study committee consisting of the Principal, the Professor of Diaconology and two members of the Academic Committee to

1. evaluate moving from the present history-oriented approach to a more practice-oriented approach in certain courses in the diaconological department; and
2. consider the suggestions from the ministers and churches regarding the practical aspect of the training. For example, catechism teaching, speaking an edifying word, involving experienced ministers and guest lecturers, the use of workshops and seminars.

We can report that the committee has begun its work and will in due time submit a report to the Board. The Board wants to stress that it in no way questions the academic level of the teaching by the professors nor wants to diminish the academic character of the training at our Theological College. Our aim is to ensure that the students are well prepared for the work in the ministry. Any far reaching recommendation will be brought to a future General Synod.

II.E. Students

With thankfulness the Board reports that each year the Board and Faculty could admit several brothers to the College. In 1993 five brothers could graduate, of which four now are serving the churches. In 1994 two brothers completed their students, one of whom is now serving as minister. At present there are 15 students studying at the College.

III. Facilities and Staff

III.A. Library

The Library of the Theological College has been going through growing pains for some time. Twenty Five years of existence also means that the Library is maturing. When the College was opened the books were catalogued according to the Dewey cataloguing system. Currently, most libraries have adopted the Library of Congress cataloguing system. Some ten years ago the decision was made to put our library holdings in a computer cataloguing program with the Library of Congress numbering system. However, the transfer progressed too slowly. This in turn hindered an optimal use of the Library. The Librarian of the College made further study of these matters and this was discussed by the Board. The result was that Miss Margaret VanderVelde was hired as a full time associate librarian per November 1993. We are thankful to report that the transfer is now progressing much faster. Our hope is that in the near future the whole library will be on one system. This will certainly improve the accessibility of the library.

The Senate decided to appoint Miss Margaret Van der Velde, B.A., M.L.I.S., to the function of Librarian, and Dr. N.H. Gootjes to the function of Associate Librarian.

III.B. Women's Savings Action

In connection with the Library the work of the Women's Savings Action cannot go by unnoticed. Every Convocation the representatives of the Women's Savings Action presented the Librarian with a substantial amount of money. The monies raised by the Women's Savings Action are the main source of income for purchasing new books. It goes without saying that this work is greatly appreciated.

III.C. Facilities

The growth of the College Library necessitates a closer look at the future of our facilities. The Board of Governors established contact with the Board of the Teacher's College in order to see whether it was possible and feasible to establish a joint project. Committees from both Boards met several times. The conclusion was that the benefits of having one facility do not merit a sharing of facilities.

This does leave the Theological College with a need for more room. The Finance and Property Committee has prepared a proposal for your assembly. This proposal is added to this report. We request that your assembly give the Board a mandate with regard to future expansion of the College facilities.

IV. Miscellaneous

IV.A. Retirement and Appointment of Governors

Because Rev. B.J. Berends moved to Ontario there is one vacancy from the ministers from the West. In the Finance and Property committee the brs. H. Buist and C.G. Heeringa have served three consecutive terms of three years and need to be replaced. The Board has submitted names of brothers to fill these vacancies, with a confidential curricula vitae.

IV.B. Tenure Policy

General Synod 1992 decided to instruct the Board of Governors to establish a policy for the granting of tenure.

The Board of Governors has asked the Faculty to study this matter. Their report is added to this report.

The Board concurs with the conclusion of the Faculty and proposes that the suggestions of the Faculty be adopted by General Synod 1995 as the policy asked for by General Synod 1992.

IV.C. Publication Foundation.

Synod 1992 decided to refer the proposed By-Law 10 back to the Board of Governors and recommended that the following changes be made to it:

1. that Section 3 of the Act be referred to under 2 to read "all of which shall be consistent with the object and basis of the College as described in the Sections 3 and 4 of the Canadian Reformed Theological College Act, 1981."
2. that one representative of the Academic Committee of the Board of Governors be included in the Publication Committee
3. that an Annual Report of its activities be submitted to the Board of Governors.

The Publication Committee informed the Board of Governors that it could not agree with recommendation 2 and 3 of General Synod 1992. With regard to recommendation 2 the Committee gives the following reasons:

- a) The By-Law was set up according to the example of a similar committee at our sister institute in Kampen, where this system worked well.
- b) If the Board of Governors would have to be responsible for every publication it can no longer be appealed to if objections are brought in against a publication; in such a case an appeal would have to go immediately to the Synod.
- c) Making the Board responsible for publications through the Foundation would create an exception, since the professors do not submit other publication to a member of the Board.

With regard to recommendation 3 the Committee recommends that “a copy of this report or these reports shall be sent for information to the Board of Governors.”

The difficulties regarding this point centre on the question whether the Board of Governors ought to be involved in a Publication Foundation which carries the official name of the College. The Board agrees with Synod 1992. If the official Name of the College is used then the Board of Governors should be involved. If this involvement leads to great difficulties, as the Committee suggests, then the other option is that a separate Publication Foundation be incorporated.

IV.D. Sabbaticals

The Sabbatical Policy adopted by Synod 1992 allows a Sabbatical leave in the three year period after the principalship has been completed. In accordance with the adopted Policy, Dr. C. Van Dam has submitted to the Board a sabbatical proposal and a project proposal for research leave for the first half of 1996. The Board has in principle approved this.

IV.E. Australia

Last, but certainly not least, the Board wants to express deep gratitude for the support the Theological College continues to enjoy from the Australian sister churches. This support can be witnessed at several levels. We have several students that come from the Australian churches, the churches contribute to the costs and remember the work of the college in prayer. May through this the bond between our churches be strengthened.

V. Conclusion:

With thankfulness to our heavenly Father we bring this report to your assembly. The Lord of the Church has blessed us in many ways. This report is a witness to this. We hope and pray that this College may continue to be a blessing for the churches. To this end we pray that as Churches, Board, Professors and Students we remain faithful to God's Word and The Three Forms of Unity.

VI. Recommendations

The Board of Governors submits to your assembly the following recommendations:

- A. to receive this report and all its appendices.
- B. to accept the resignation of Rev. B.J. Berends and the brs. H. Buist and C.G. Heeringa as Governors with grateful acknowledgement of their labours, and pursuant to Section 5(2) of the Act and Section 3.04 of By-Law 1 (as amended)
 1. to appoint, elect or re-appoint six active ministers to hold office until the next General Synod and to appoint at least three substitutes from each Regional Synod area;
 2. to re-appoint the brs. K.J. Veldkamp and A. Van Egmond as Governors for a term from the date of their re-appointment until the first General Synod held after the date of their re-appointment;
 3. to re-appoint br. H.J. Sloots as a Governor for a term from the date of his re-appointment until the second General Synod held after the date of his re-appointment;
 4. to appoint the brs. M. Kampen of Burlington and J. VanderWoude from Hamilton as Governors for a term from the date of their appointment until the third General Synod held after the date of their appointment (with as alternates the F. Stoffels of Hamilton and L. Jagt of Burlington, in that order).

- C. to appoint Prof. Dr. N.H. Gootjes as Principal for the period of September 1996 to September 1999, and to designate Dr. J. DeJong as Principal for the years 1999 to 2002, the Lord willing. The transfer of principalship will take place the day after the Convocation in 1996.
- D. to approve all decisions and actions of the Board and of its committees for the years 1992, 1993, 1994 and 1995 until the day of this report.
- E. to adopt the suggestions of the Faculty regarding a Tenure Policy as the policy asked for by General Synod 1992.
- F. to give the Board a mandate with regard to future expansion of the College facilities.
- G. to consider the audited financial statements and the report of the Auditors for the previous fiscal periods; to relieve the Treasurer of the Board of all responsibilities for these fiscal periods; and to appoint sr. A. Spithoff C.A. as Auditor till next General Synod.

Wishing you the blessing of the Lord in your decisions,

The Board of Governors,

Dr. J. Visscher, chairman

Mr. K.J. Veldkamp, vice-chairman

Rev. D.G.J. Agema, secretary

Mr. C.G. Heeringa, treasurer

Rev. B.J. Berends

Mr. H. Buist

Rev. W. DenHollander

Rev. P.G. Feenstra

Mr. H. Sloots

Mr. A. VanEgmond

Rev. C. VanSpronsen

INDEX

Acts	Art. 109.....	p. 76
	Art. 117	p. 85
	Art. 123.....	p. 88
Address Church	Art. 83.....	p. 42
Advisory Committees	Art. 10	p. 11
Agenda	Art. 9.....	p. 7
Apostles' Creed	Art. 44.....	p. 19
Appeals		
Burlington-East and Fergus re: G.S. 1992, Art. 131.....	Art. 109.....	p. 76
Carman re: R.S. West 1993	Art. 78.....	p. 40
OPC – All appeals related to the	Art. 106	p. 62
Regional Synod West 1993 re: Denver ..	Art. 115	p. 79
Van der Hoven re: G.S. 1992, Art. 72	Art. 121	p. 87
Winnipeg re: General Synod Burlington 1986, Art. 85	Art. 53.....	p. 28
Winnipeg re: General Synod Lincoln 1992, Art. 127	Art. 67	p. 31
Appointments	Art. 116.....	p. 85
	Art. 118	p. 86
Archives	Art. 82.....	p. 42
Bible Translations	Art. 72.....	p. 33
	Appendix III	p. 107
Book of Praise	Art. 44.....	p. 19
	Appendix IV	p. 141
Censure Art. 34 C.O.	Art. 122.....	p. 88
Church Order		
Art. 32 C.O.	Art. 21	p. 16
Art. 39 C.O.	Art. 20	p. 16
Churches Abroad	Art. 19.....	p. 13
	Art. 101.....	p. 55
	Appendix VI	p. 164
Credentials	Art. 2.....	p. 5
Decisions – Format of	Art. 11	p. 11
Ecclesiastical Unity – Deputies for the Promotion of	Art. 86.....	p. 43
	Appendix VII	p. 190
Église Réformée du Québec	Art. 73.....	p. 38
	Appendix VI	p. 184
Finances of Synod	Art. 108.....	p. 75
Free Church of Scotland	Art. 62.....	p. 30
	Art. 101	p. 55
	Art. 106.....	p. 69
	Appendix I	p. 98
	Appendix VI	p. 176

Free Reformed Churches of Australia	Art. 5.....p. 6
	Art. 19.....p. 13
	Appendix VIp. 167
Free Reformed Churches of North America	Art. 52.....p. 27
Free Reformed Churches of South Africa	Art. 5.....p. 6
	Art. 19.....p. 13
	Appendix VIp. 178
General Fund	Art. 81.....p. 41
Guidelines for Synod	Art. 110.....p. 77
	Art. 111.....p. 78
	Appendix IIp. 103
Hymn 1A	Art. 44.....p. 19
ICRC	Art. 101.....p. 55
	Appendix VIp. 179
Nicene Creed	Art. 44.....p. 19
	Appendix IVp. 145
Orthodox Presbyterian Church	Art. 61.....p. 30
	Art. 106.....p. 62
	Appendix Ip. 94
	Appendix V.....p. 150
Presbyterian Church of Korea	Art. 101.....p. 55
	Art. 106.....p. 60
	Appendix VIp. 171
Press Release	Art. 127.....p. 88
Reformed Church in the U.S.	Art. 101.....p. 55
	Appendix VIp. 181
Reformed Churches in the Netherlands ..	Art. 18.....p. 13
	Art. 19.....p. 13
	Appendix Ip. 90
	Appendix VIp. 172
Relations with Churches Abroad	Art. 19.....p. 13
	Art. 101.....p. 55
Speeches	Appendix Ip. 89
Tenure Policy	Art. 97.....p. 50
Time Schedule	Art. 5.....p. 6
Theological College	Art. 97.....p. 48
	Appendix VIIIp. 197
Women's Participation in Election of Officebearers	Art. 51.....p. 26