



General Synod Smithers 2007

Acts

of

General Synod 2007

of the

Canadian Reformed Churches

held at

Smithers, BC

from

May 9-22, 2007

INDEX

The numbers refer to the Article(s) relating to the subject

Subject Article

– A –

Acts	
Adoption of the Acts	14, 22, 36, 51, 63, 71, 89, 109, 122, 158, 170, 176
Confidential Acts	171
Publication	175
Address church	76
Advisory committees	6
Advisor to synod	5, 147
Agenda of synod	9
Appeals	
from churches	
- Aldergrove re Art. 109 of Synod Chatham	39, 81, 112
- Aldergrove re Art. 114 of Synod Chatham	95
- Attercliffe re Art. 86 of Synod Chatham	54, 83
- Burlington Ebenezer re Art. 40 of Synod Chatham	155
- Calgary re Art. 52 of Synod Chatham	23, 27
- Calgary re Art. 111 of Synod Chatham	24, 28
- Coaldale re Art. 89 of Synod Chatham	82, 147
- Fergus North re Art. 115 of Synod Chatham	30, 67
- Guelph re Art. 89 of Synod Chatham	82, 147
- Guelph re Art. 7 of Regional Synod East 2005	168
- Lincoln re Art. 45 of Synod Neerlandia & Art. 86 of Synod Chatham	55
- Owen Sound re Arts. 10 & 11 of Regional Synod East 2005	37, 64, 85, 154
from individuals	
- R. Bosman	114
- W. DeHaan	115
- H. Endeman	18
- T. Kingma	19
- B. Van de Burgt	38, 65
- J. Vandenberg	17
Appointments	159
Archives	77

– B –

Board of Governors of the Theological College	
General report	53, 78
Fifth professor	84, 130

– C –

Church Order: Change to Art. 63 CO 156	
Closing of synod	177
Committee changes	174

Committee reports

1. CBT - Committee on Bible Translation	113, 134
2. CCA - Committee for Contact with Churches in the Americas	
2.1 ERQ	52, 75
2.2 KPCA	152
2.3 OPC	59, 92, 131
2.4 RCUS	107
2.5 IRB	128
2.6 RPCNA	139, 163
2.7 NAPARC	140
2.8 General Mandate	173
3. CPEU - Committee for Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity	
3.1 URCNA	
3.1.1 General	98
3.1.2 Church Order	99
3.1.3 Common Songbook	104
3.1.4 Theological Education	100, 103
3.2 FRCNA	105
3.3 OCRC	106
4. CRCA - Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad	
4.1 FCS & FCC	80
4.2 FRCA	123, 160
4.3 FRCSA	72, 124
4.4 PCK	60, 86
4.5 GKN	42, 94, 133
GKH	93, 143, 146, 167
4.6 ICRC	132
4.7 GGRI-NTT	117, 151
GGRC-NTT	150
4.8 PCEA	125
4.9. RCNZ	66
4.10 URCM	126
4.11 IRCK	127
4.12 General mandate	116, 142
5. SCBP - Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise	
5.1-6 Mandate and general matters	165
5.7 Apostles' Creed in the baptismal form	110, 137
5.8 Form of Subscription	111
5.9 Capitalization of pronouns	138, 166
5.10 Prose section with NIV Bible references	141
5.11 Expanded hymn section	149
5.12 Overleaf notation	164
5.13 Changes to the Book of Praise	172
5.14 Common Songbook	148
5.15 Review/revision of psalms	148
5.16 Further recommendations	148
5.17 Summary	148
6. Committee for the Official Website	31, 74
Concluding matters	175
Convening of Synod 2010	162
Credentials	2

	– E –	
Election of officers		3
	– F –	
Finance reports		
General Fund		56
Synod Chatham		161
	– G –	
General discussion re ecclesiastical fellowship		33, 40, 41
Guidelines for Synod		
Advisors		82, 147
Materials in digital format		32, 153
	– H –	
Housekeeping matters		5
	– I –	
Igreja Presbyteriana do Brasil (IPB)		129
	– L –	
Late submissions		7
Lord’s Supper to shut-ins		96
	– M –	
Mail received		8
	– O –	
Opening of synod		1
Overtures		
Regional Synod East - Art. 63 CO		156
Regional Synod West - Lord’s Supper to shut-ins		96
	– S –	
Speeches by delegates		
ERQ		45
GKN		46
OPC		47
PCK		11
RCNZ		48
URCNA		16
	– W –	
Women voting		29, 73, 136

Note to the reader:

In the Acts you will find several times a reference to reports that are found in the appendices. Please note that the reports are not included in the printed version of the Acts as that would make the document well over 800 pages, and the cost would be prohibitive. The reports are available on line at www.canrc.org (see point 4 below). If you do not have access to the internet, please consult a printed copy of the reports from your church library.

Index of Appendices

1. Speeches
 - 1.1 Opening address
 - 1.2 PCK
 - 1.3 URCNA
 - 1.4 ERQ
 - 1.5 GKN
 - 1.6 OPC
 - 1.7 RCNZ
 - 1.8 FRCSA
 - 1.9 Closing words
2. By-law Number 12 of the Theological College
3. Guidelines for Synod (see Art. 147)
4. Reports by the Board of Governors and the Standing Committees of Synod referred to in the Acts are found on www.canrc.org as follows:
 - 4.1 BoG - Report to GS 2007 - Vol. 1.3 -- Theological College
 - 4.2 CBT - Report to GS 2007 - Vol. 2.2 -- Bible Translation
 - 4.3 CCCA - Report to GS 2007 - Vol. 1.2 -- Churches in Americas
 - 4.4 CPEU - Report to GS 2007 - Vol. 3 -- Ecclesiastical Unity
 - 4.5 CRCA - Report to GS 2007 - Vol. 1.1 -- Churches Abroad
 - 4.6 SCBP - Report to GS 2007 - Vol. 2.1 -- Book of Praise
 - 4.7 Web - Report to GS 2007 - Vol. 2.3 -- Official Website
5. Synopsis OPC (see Art. 131)
6. Supplementary report of CCCA
7. Various
 - 7.1 Address church (see Art. 76)
 - 7.2 Financial report for the General Fund (see Art. 56)
 - 7.2 Financial statements of Theological College (see Art. 78) — These statements can be found in the BoG report to synod

List of Abbreviations used in these Acts

BBK	Dutch sister churches – Committee for Churches Abroad
BC	Belgic Confession
CanRC	Canadian Reformed Churches
CBT	Committee on Bible Translations
CCCA	Committee for Contact with Churches in the Americas *
CCCNA	Committee for Contact with Churches in North America * * CCCA renamed as CCCNA by Synod Smithers 2007 (see Art. 174)
CCU	Committee for Church Unity **
CPEU	Committee for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity ** ** CPEU renamed as CCU by Synod Smithers 2007 (see Art. 174)
CEIR	Committee on Ecumenical and Interchurch Relations (of the OPC)
CERCU	Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity (of the URCNA)
CO	Church Order
CRCA	Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad
ERQ	l'Église réformée du Québec
FCS	Free Church of Scotland
FCC	Free Church Continuing
FRCA	Free Reformed Churches of Australia
FRCNA	Free Reformed Churches of North America
FRCSA	The Free Reformed Churches of South Africa
GGRC	Reformed Churches of Indonesia (Calvin)
GGRI	Reformed Churches of Indonesia
GKH	Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (Restored)
GKN	Reformed Churches in The Netherlands
ICRC	The International Conference of Reformed Churches
IPB	Presbyterian Church of Brazil
IRB	Reformed Churches of Brazil
NAPARC	North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council
OPC	Orthodox Presbyterian Church
OCRC	Orthodox Christian Reformed Church
PCK	Presbyterian Church of Korea (Kosin)
RCNZ	Reformed Churches of New Zealand
RCUS	Reformed Church of the United States
RPCNA	Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America
SCPB	Standing Committee of the Book of Praise
URCNA	United Reformed Churches of North America



ACTS
General Synod Smithers
of the Canadian Reformed Churches

May 9 - 22, 2007

Day 1 — Morning Session
Wednesday, May 9, 2007

Article 1

Opening of Synod on behalf of the Convening Church

On behalf of the convening church the Reverend Julius M. VanSpronsen called the meeting to order. He requested all who were present to sing Psalm 1:1, 2 and 3 after which he read Isaiah 51:1-16. He gave a meditation on this passage and encouraged the delegates to seek their strength and wisdom in the Lord. He then led in prayer and requested the assembly to sing Psalm 67:1, 2 and 3. A welcome was extended to all the delegates to synod, including the fraternal delegates from sister churches who were introduced at this time. The opening address by Rev. VanSpronsen can be found in the appendices of these Acts.

Article 2

Credentials

The credentials were examined and all brothers were properly delegated. From among the ministers delegated, two ministers were alternates for the brothers Clarence VanderVelde and Richard Aasman who informed the meeting in writing that they could not attend. The following brothers were in attendance:

From Regional Synod East:

Ministers: Douwe G.J. Agema, Peter G. Feenstra, Eric Kampen (alternate), Gijsbert Nederveen, Anthon Souman and John VanWoudenberg

Elders: Harry DeVries, John G. Heyink, Chris J. Nobels, Gerard J. Nordeman, Ebel H. Pol and Fred Westrik

From Regional Synod West:

Ministers: Clarence Bouwman (alternate), Peter Holtvlüwer, John Louwerse, Robert A. Schouten, James Visscher and William M. Wielenga

Elders: Henk A. Berends, Peter DeBoer, Jacob Kuik, Ben Meerstra, Art Poppe and Albert VanLeeuwen

Article 3

Election of Officers and Constitution of Synod

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

Chairman:	D. Agema
Vice-chairman:	J. Visscher
First Clerk:	G. Nederveen
Second Clerk:	R. Schouten

On behalf of the convening church, Rev. VanSpronsen declared synod constituted. The elected officers took their places. Rev. Agema thanked the convening church for all the work they had done in preparation for synod. He also spoke some words of appreciation for the confidence that the meeting placed in the officers of synod and he stressed that the work of synod is to serve the churches. He mentioned that the work of synod will be scrutinized by the churches, which is good, because all the work of this assembly needs to be done according to the Word of God. He expressed the hope that the twenty four delegates would be able to do this work of service in an atmosphere of harmony. The chairman then called for a break to give the officers the opportunity to make some arrangements for the proceedings of synod.

Day 1 — Afternoon Session Wednesday, May 9, 2007

Article 4

Reopening

Synod reopened in plenary session. The meeting sang Hymn 4:1, 2 and 3. Rollcall was held and all members were present.

Article 5

Housekeeping Matters

After receiving a proposal from the officers of synod the following was decided:

1. *Presence on the Internet:* Synod decided to publish the Acts of Synod on the church website as they become available. However, as the Acts are adopted, synod will decide whether there are any decisions which should not be immediately posted on the Internet.
2. *Privileges of the floor:* Synod appointed Rev. J. VanSpronsen as advisor to synod. Synod will give the floor to all representative of the churches in ecclesiastical fellowship.
3. *Time Schedule:* Monday to Friday morning session 9:00 - 12:00
afternoon session 2:00 - 5:00
evening session 7:00 - 9:00
Exceptions: There will be no evening session on Ascension Day, May 17th
4. *Devotions:* Synod shall begin and close each day in plenary session with Scripture reading, a short meditation, prayer and singing. A schedule will be handed out.
5. *Press Release:* The press release will not be published until after synod has been closed.
6. *Committees:* Advisory committees shall provide each delegate with a copy of their reports before they are dealt with in plenary sessions.
7. *Synod Documents:* Copies of synod documents are available only to members of synod and fraternal delegates.
8. *Guidelines:* For all procedures the Guidelines for Synod will apply. See Appendix #2, *Acts of Synod Abbotsford 1995*.
9. *Travel expenses:* Expenses are to be submitted, with receipts, to br. Ralph Paize. Delegates are to be reimbursed for travel costs at 40 cents per km. This amount is not to exceed the cost of flying.

Article 6

Advisory Committees of Synod

The following committees were appointed:

Committee 1

Members: P. Feenstra (convener), H. DeVries, E. Pol, A. Souman
Topics: Appeals from the West and Board of Governors
Agenda Items: 8.1.a, h, j; 8.2.c; 8.3.g; 8.4.a, c; 8.5.i, j, m, r

Committee 2

Members: P. DeBoer (convener), A. Poppe, A. VanLeeuwen, W. Wielenga
Topics: Appeals from the East and CPEU
Agenda Items: 8.2.g, 8.3.c all; 8.4.b; 8.5.h, k, l, o, q

Committee 3

Members: E. Kampen (convener), P. Holtvlüwer, J. Kuik, C. Nobels
Topics: CRCA
Agenda Items: 8.2.a; 8.3.a. FCS & FCC and 8.3.a General Matter dealing with FCS & FCC; GKN; RCNZ

Committee 4

Members: C. Bouwman (convener), H. Berends, J. Heyink, B. Meerstra
Topics: CCCA and Bible Translation
Agenda Items: 8.2.b, e, h; 8.3.b all; 8.3.d all; 8.5.a, n, p

Committee 5

Members: G. Nordeman (convener), J. Louwerse, J. Vanwoudenberg, F. Westrik
Topics: Book of Praise and Website Committee
Agenda Items: 8.1.f, 8.2.d, f; 8.3.e all; 8.5.b, c, d; 8.3.f all

Committee 6

Members: D. Agema, G. Nederveen, R. Schouten, J. Visscher
Topics: Appointments, PCK and Miscellaneous
Agenda items: 8.1.c, d, e, f, g, i, k, l, m; 8.3.a re PCK; 8.5.e, f, g

Article 7

Late Submissions

Seven letters from several churches arrived late. Nevertheless, the executive recommended that these letters be accepted since 1) the submissions of Winnipeg were submitted before the deadline but were held up in the mail, and 2) the report for the fifth professor came a little late to the churches. This was adopted and the items are placed on the agenda as follows:

- 1) Flamborough - re fifth professor 8.3.g.14
- 2) Winnipeg Redeemer - re fifth professor 8.3.g.15
- 3) Burlington-Waterdown - re fifth professor 8.3.g.16
- 4) Winnipeg Redeemer - Book of Praise 8.3.e.27
- 5) Winnipeg Redeemer - GKN 8.3.a.12
- 6) Winnipeg Redeemer - FCS 8.3.a.7
- 7) Winnipeg Redeemer - CPEU 8.3.c.26

Article 8

Mail received

- 1) Letter of greeting and elucidation from the FCC - added as Agenda item 8.1.q and given to Committee 3
- 2) Corrections to appeal from Mr. T. Kingma - given to Committee 1
- 3) Report on inspection of archives by Burlington-Waterdown - added as Agenda item 8.2.i and given to Committee 6
- 4) Letter of greetings from the Australian churches and extract from their synod re GKN - added as Agenda item 8.1.n and given to Committee 3
- 5) Letter of greeting from the RCUS - added as Agenda item 8.1.o
- 6) Submission form the Gereformeerde Kerk Hersteld (GKH) - added as Agenda item 8.1.p and it will be decided by synod how to proceed in this matter

Article 9

Agenda of Synod

The following Agenda was **adopted**

1. Opening on behalf of the convening church
2. Examination of the credentials
3. Information from the convening church
4. Election of the officers
5. Constitution of synod
6. Adoption of the agenda
7. Setting of time schedule
8. Incoming mail

8.1 General Matters

- a) Church at Chatham
 - Request to publish the financial statements for the Theological College which were missed in the Acts of General Synod 2004
- b) Joint Committee of the Theological Education Committees
 - Meeting notes
- c) Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad
 - Requests and recommendations for appointments
- d) Church at Burlington Ebenezer
 - Fireproof safe for the archives
- e) Church at Burlington Ebenezer
 - Requests to the Address Church of the Federation
- f) Standing Committee for Publication of the Book of Praise
 - Consideration for new committee (Confidentiality requested)
- g) Committee for Contact with Churches in the Americas (CCCA)
 - Recommendation regarding Committee members
- h) Board of Governors of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches
 - Bylaw Number 12
- i) Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church at Hamilton
 - Consideration to move Synod 2010 to the month of July
- j) Canadian Reformed Church at Langley
 - Funding for the Pastoral Training Program
- k) Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church at Hamilton
 - Matter of Women Voting

- l) Church at Carman East
 - Financial Report of the General Fund
- m) Church at Smithers
 - Synod Guidelines
- n) Letter of greeting from the Australian sister churches
- o) Letter of greeting from the Reformed Churches in the United States (RCUS)
- p) Letter from the Gereformeerde Kerk Hersteld
- q) Letter of greeting from the FCC
- r) Letter from the CPEU regarding appointments

8.2 Committee Reports

- a) Committee of Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA)
- b) Committee for Contact with Churches in the Americas (CCCA)
- c) Board of Governors of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches
 - Additional report regarding a fifth professor at the Theological College.
(not in published report)
- d) Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise (SCBP)
- e) Committee on Bible Translation (CBT)
- f) Committee for the Official Website
- g) Committee for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity (CPEU)
- h) CCCA Report Addendums
- i) Inspection of Archives by Burlington-Waterdown

8.3 Letters from the Churches regarding:

a) Report: Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA)

General Matters

- 1) Willoughby Heights (FCS & RCNZ)
- 2) Guelph (ecclesiastical fellowship)
- 3) Spring Creek (RCNZ & GGRI-NTT)
- 4) Smithers (ICRC)
- 5) Smithers (CRCA mandate)
- 6) Burlington Fellowship (CRCA, CCCA, TCol, BOP, CPEU)
- 7) London (Cover letter & mandate)
- 8) Surrey (RCNZ & GGRI-NTT)
- 9) Owen Sound (L.S, FCC, RCNZ, RPCNA, CO, URCNA)
- 10) Edmonton Immanuel (General & FCS/FCC)
- 11) Chilliwack (FCS & RCNZ)
- 12) Ottawa (PCK, GKN, RCNZ, CCCA, BOP, CPEU)
- 13) Abbotsford (mandate)
- 14) Elora (FCS, FRCSA, GKN, ERQ, RCUS, BOP, CPEU)
- 15) Yarrow (FCS, ERQ, PCK, ICRC)
- 16) Smithville (GGRC)
- 17) Edmonton Immanuel (GGRC/ GGRI)
- 18) Abbotsford (RPC of Sudan)

Free Church of Scotland (FCS & FCC)

- 1) Guelph
- 2) Burlington Ebenezer
- 3) London
- 4) Brampton
- 5) Fergus Maranatha (+ GKN)
- 6) Glanbrook

7) Winnipeg Redeemer

Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN)

- 1) Willoughby Heights (Psalms & Hymns)
- 2) Willoughby Heights (4th Commandment)
- 3) Guelph (Marriage form)
- 4) Smithers
- 5) London
- 6) Grand Rapids
- 7) Carman East (+ RCNZ)
- 8) Smithville
- 9) Yarrow
- 10) Edmonton Immanuel
- 11) Fergus North
- 12) Winnipeg Redeemer

Reformed Churches of New Zealand

- 1) London
- 2) Coaldale
- 3) Chatham
- 4) Grand Rapids
- 5) Edmonton Immanuel
- 6) Lincoln
- 7) Fergus North

Presbyterian Church of Korea

- 1) Fergus North
- 2) Fergus North

b) Report: Committee for Contact with Churches in the Americas (CCCA)

l'Église réformée du Québec (ERQ)

- 1) Guelph
- 2) Grand Rapids
- 3) Chatham
- 4) Coaldale
- 5) Dunnville/Wainfleet
- 6) Lincoln
- 7) Yarrow

RPCNA

- 1) Spring Creek

Other

- 1) Hamilton (IRB)
- 2) London (RCUS & IRB)
- 3) Brampton (NAPARC)
- 4) Fergus Maranatha (RCUS & Budget)
- 5) Yarrow (OPC)
- 6) Yarrow (RCUS)
- 7) Carman East (RCUS, RPCNA, NAPARC)

c) Report: Committee for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity (CPEU)

- 1) Surrey
- 2) Guelph (FRCNA)
- 3) Spring Creek
- 4) Guelph

- 5) Smithers (Common Songbook)
- 6) London(URCNA, PCO, Com Song, OCRC, FRCNA)
- 7) Coaldale (PCO)
- 8) Carmen West
- 9) Flamborough
- 10) Grand Rapids (Theological Education)
- 11) Grand Rapids (Common Songbook)
- 12) Spring Creek (Common Songbook)
- 13) Carman East
- 14) Chilliwack
- 15) Lincoln
- 16) Grand Valley
- 17) Lynden
- 18) Edmonton Immanuel
- 19) Edmonton Immanuel (Common Songbook)
- 20) Langley (Common Songbook)
- 21) Neerlandia (Common Songbook)
- 22) Orangeville
- 23) Fergus North (Church Order)
- 24) Fergus North (Common Songbook)
- 25) Fergus North (Theological Education)
- 26) Winnipeg Redeemer

d) Report: Committee for Bible Translations (CBT)

- 1) Guelph
- 2) Spring Creek
- 3) London
- 4) Brampton
- 5) Carmen West
- 6) Carmen East
- 7) Chilliwack
- 8) Yarrow
- 9) Willoughby Heights
- 10) Orangeville

e) Report: Standing Committee for Publication of the Book of Praise (SCBP)

- 1) Guelph
- 2) Hamilton
- 3) Smithers
- 4) London
- 5) Chatham
- 6) Carmen West
- 7) Surrey
- 8) Flamborough
- 9) Burlington Ebenezer
- 10) Fergus Maranatha
- 11) Carmen East
- 12) Cloverdale
- 13) Chilliwack
- 14) Grand Valley
- 15) Yarrow

- 16) Smithville
- 17) Lynden
- 18) Carmen West
- 19) Glanbrook
- 20) Willoughby Heights (Psalms)
- 21) Willoughby Heights (Hymns)
- 22) Langley
- 23) Orangeville
- 24) Fergus North (report 13.3.3.1)
- 25) Fergus North (report 13.4)
- 26) Fergus North (report 15.2.5)
- 27) Winnipeg Redeemer

f) Report: Committee for the Official Website

- 1) Guelph
- 2) Hamilton
- 3) Burlington Ebenezer
- 4) Fergus Maranatha
- 5) Fergus North

g) Report: Board of Governors of the Theological College

- 1) Hamilton
- 2) Smithers
- 3) Carmen West
- 4) Surrey
- 5) Flamborough
- 6) Burlington Ebenezer
- 7) Chilliwack
- 8) Attercliffe
- 9) Cloverdale
- 10) Carmen East
- 11) Fergus Maranatha
- 12) Orangeville
- 13) Fergus North
- 14) Flamborough
- 15) Winnipeg Redeemer
- 16) Burlington-Waterdown

8.4 Overtures

- a) Church at Guelph
 - Overture to General Synod 2007 re Pastoral Training Program
- b) Regional Synod East of Nov 8 & Dec 7, 2006
 - Overture regarding Article 63 of the Church Order
- c) Regional Synod West of Nov 14, 2006
 - Overture regarding Article 6 of Classis Pacific West concerning Lord's Supper to shut-ins

8.5 Appeals

- a) Church at Burlington Ebenezer
 - Article 40 Synod Chatham, Church Order 54 – Days of Prayer

- b) Church at Aldergrove
 - Article 109 Synod Chatham 2004
- c) Church at Aldergrove
 - Article 114 Synod Chatham 2004
- d) Church at Fergus North
 - Article 115 Synod Chatham 2004– Binding of Form of Subscription
- e) Church at Coaldale
 - Article 89 Synod Chatham 2004– Advisory members to Synod
- f) Church at Guelph
 - Article 89 Synod Chatham 2004– Advisory Members to Synod
- g) Church at Guelph
 - Article 7 Regional Synod East 2005 – Contact with Government of Ontario.
- h) Church at Owen Sound
 - Article 10 & 11 Regional Synod East 2005
- i) Church at Calgary
 - Article 52 Synod Chatham 2004
- j) Church at Calgary
 - Article 111 Synod Chatham 2004
- k) Br. R. Bosman
- l) Br. W. DeHaan
- m) Br. B. Van de Burgt
- n) Church at Lincoln
 - Article 45 Synod Neerlandia & Art 86 Synod Chatham 2004
- o) Br. & Sr. J. Vandenberg
 - Article 10 Regional Synod East 2005
- p) church at Attercliffe
 - Article 86 Synod Chatham 2004
- q) Br. & Sr. H. Endeman
 - Regional Synod East 2005
- r) Mr. T. Kingma

- 9. Appointments
- 10. Censure ad Art. 34 CO.
- 11. Publication of the Acts
- 12. Financial Matters
- 13. Preparation of next General Synod
- 14. Adoption of the Acts
- 15. Approval of Press Release
- 16. Closing

After the adoption of the agenda, synod adjourned for committee work. The officers of synod met with the four delegates of the Presbyterian Church of Korea.

**Day 1 — Evening Session
Wednesday, May 9, 2007**

Article 10

Reopening

Synod reopened in plenary session. We sang Psalm 36:2. The chairman noted that all delegates were present.

Article 11

Delegates of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK)

Rev. Jong-soo Lim of the Presbyterian Church of Korea addressed the meeting. On behalf of his fellow delegates, the Reverends Tae Chun and Sung Bok Kim, as well as observer Jung Gyun Kim, he brought fraternal greetings to the Canadian Reformed Churches. He sketched the current state of affairs in the PCK and expressed the longing that the contact between the PCK and the CanRC would intensify. The chairman of synod responded with some appropriate words after which he requested Rev. Visscher to offer a word of prayer for the Korean brothers and bring the needs of the PCK before the Lord. The brothers then took their leave and synod adjourned once more for committee work. The copy of the speech can be found in the appendices of these Acts.

Article 12

Closing Devotion and Adjournment

Synod met in plenary session for the closing of the day. Brother DeBoer led in closing devotions from Psalm 93. The meeting sang Hymn 42:1, 2 and 8 followed by prayer. The chairman adjourned the meeting.

**Day 2 — Morning Session
Thursday, May 10, 2007**

Article 13

Opening Devotions and Rollcall

The chairman called the meeting to order. He read 1 John 2:1-14 and spoke a few words about that passage with the theme of light, especially the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Light. We sang Psalm 97:1 and 6 followed by prayer. Rollcall was held. All members were present.

Article 14

Adoption of the Acts — Day 1

The proceedings of Day 1, as recorded in Articles 1-12, were reviewed and adopted as part of the Acts of Synod. The meeting then adjourned for committee work.

**Day 2 — Evening Session
Thursday, May 10, 2007**

Article 15

Reopening

At 8:00 o'clock synod reopened in plenary session. The meeting sang Hymn 15:1 and 3. The chairman welcomed Rev. Paulin Bédard as a delegate of l'Église réformée du Québec.

Article 16

Address by the Fraternal Delegates from the URCNA

Reverend John A. Bouwers, who also spoke on behalf of his fellow delegates, the Reverends James Folkerts and Lou Slagter, brought fraternal greetings on behalf of the URCNA. He addressed synod on various matters which are of mutual concern and which also will have the attention of the URCNA Synod Schererville 2007 later this year. This address can be found in the appendices of these Acts. The chairman thanked Rev. Bouwers for his words of encouragement.

Article 17

Submission from brother and sister J. Vandenberg

The committee advising synod on this appeal made the following recommendation:

1. Material

- 1.1 Letter of appeal with supporting documents

2. Admissibility

- 2.1 The submission of brother and sister Vandenberg be declared inadmissible because:
- 2.1.1 Their submission is not an appeal against the decision of regional synod.
 - 2.1.2 Individual members do not have access to general synod unless they are appealing.

ADOPTED

Rev. Feenstra abstained from voting according to Art. 32 CO.

Article 18

Submission from brother and sister H. Endeman

The committee advising synod on this appeal made the following recommendation:

1. Material

- 1.1 Letter of appeal with supporting documents

2. Admissibility

- 2.1 The submission of brother and sister Endeman be declared inadmissible because:
- 2.1.1 Their submission is not an appeal against the decision of regional synod.
 - 2.1.2 Individual members do not have access to general synod unless they are appealing.

ADOPTED

Rev. Feenstra abstained from voting according to Art. 32 CO.

Article 19

Appeal from Mr. T. Kingma

The committee advising synod on this appeal made the following recommendation:

1. Material

- 1.1 Appeal of Mr. T. Kingma, including four binders of supporting material and a letter dated May 3, 2007 with corrections to his appeal

2. Admissibility

- 2.1 Synod declare this appeal inadmissible on the grounds:
- 2.1.1 On page 1 of his appeal Mr. Kingma states that the subject of his appeal is the inability of he and his wife to visit with the consistory of Lynden or its elders with church visitors (or with witnesses in good standing within a sister CanRC). There is no indication in this correspondence that he is appealing a decision of a minor assembly (Art. 31 CO).
 - 2.1.2 What he does request synod to do in his recommendation for Synod 2007 (p. 26) is not an appeal against a decision of Regional Synod West or of the previous general synod. Therefore synod can not deal with his requests.

ADOPTED

Br. Berends and Rev. Wielenga abstained from voting according to Art. 32 CO.

Note regarding Articles 17, 18 and 19 of these Acts

Synod confirmed the practice that inadmissible material will not be included in the archives of synod.

Article 20

Closing Devotions and Adjournment

Brother Heyink led in closing devotions based on Psalm 129. After we sang Psalm 66:1 and 2 the meeting was closed with prayer in which were also remembered the unity talks with the URCNA. The chairman adjourned the meeting.

**Day 3 — Morning Session
Friday, May 11, 2007**

Article 21

Opening Devotions and Rollcall

The chairman called the meeting to order. He read Genesis 1:1-3, Revelation 21:1-4 and Rev. 21:22 - 22:7. He spoke a few words about these passages with the theme of light, especially how great God's works are. Our future is light. We sang Hymn 55:1, 2 and 3 followed by prayer. Rollcall was held. All members were present.

Article 22

Adoption of the Acts — Day 2

The proceedings of Day 2, as recorded in Articles 13-20, were reviewed and adopted as part of the Acts of Synod.

Article 23

Appeal of Calgary re Art. 52 of Synod Chatham

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 24

Appeal of Calgary re Art. 111 of Synod Chatham

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 25

Adjournment

Synod adjourned for committee work.

**Day 3 — Evening Session
Friday, May 11, 2007**

Article 26

Reopening

The meeting was reopened in plenary session. The chairman requested everyone to sing Psalm 98:1 and 4. All members were present. He welcomed Rev. Bruce Hoyt as observer from the Reformed Churches of New Zealand.

Article 27

Appeal from Calgary re Art. 52 of Synod Chatham

The advisory committee presented its second proposal:

1. Material

1.1 Appeal from Calgary

2. Observations

- 2.1 Calgary requests that Synod Smithers 2007 rescind the decision recorded in Recommendation 5.2 of the Acts of Synod Chatham 2004 and revert back to the position taken by Synod Fergus 1998.
- 2.2 The church at Calgary states that Recommendation 5.2 of Article 52 of the Acts of Chatham is against the Word of God because it does not “speak and confess the truth honestly.”
- 2.3 Calgary argues that:
 - 2.3.1 Synod Fergus decided “to mandate the CRCA to *make and support* membership recommendations at ICRC for those churches only with which we have sister church relations.”
 - 2.3.2 The constitution of the ICRC states that: “Those churches shall be admitted which faithfully adhere to the Reformed Faith stated in the confessional documents listed in the Basis, and whose confessional standards agree with the said Reformed Faith.”
 - 2.3.3 When member churches vote on applications for membership, the criterion for voting must be the confessional faithfulness of those churches.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Calgary is correct in stating that voting is expressing a judgement whether a church is a true church or not. If you vote in favour of admitting a church, then you express that you believe that they faithfully adhere to the Reformed faith stated in the confessional documents listed in the Basis, and that their confessional standards agree with the said Reformed faith.
- 3.2 Calgary is not correct in assuming that recognizing as true church is the same as accepting as sister church. A church may be a true church but that does not mean that it is automatically also a sister church. If a church is not a sister church, we can not sponsor that church, but we can still vote in favor of admission of this church if this church adheres to the Reformed faith stated in the confessional documents listed in the Basis, and whose confessional standards agree with the said Reformed faith.
- 3.3 Calgary is incorrect in distinguishing ‘make’ and ‘support’ membership recommendations at the ICRC. To make and support membership recommendations is something that a sponsoring church does, which is something that Synod Fergus 1998 restricts to sister churches (see Fergus 1998, Art. 52, IV. E p.47). Voting is not ‘supporting’ but expressing a judgement as a member of the ICRC, a privilege belonging to membership.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To deny this appeal.

ADOPTED

Article 28

Appeal from Calgary re Art. 111 of Synod Chatham

The advisory committee presented its second proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 Appeal from Calgary

2. Observations

- 2.1 Calgary requests Synod Smithers 2007 to declare that Synod Chatham 2004 erred when denying Calgary’s appeal against the relevant decision of Regional Synod West of 2002.
- 2.2 Calgary requests Synod Smithers 2007 to consider the following:
 - 2.2.1 Synod Chatham qualified Calgary’s appeal as “technical in nature.” The term technical was not used in Calgary’s appeal. This qualification distorts the whole case as such.

Calgary's desire – as expressly stated – was that no financial consequences be attached to a decision in the line of its appeal.

- 2.2.2 Although Synod Coaldale 1977 recognized the OPC as a true church, no sister church relations were in force in the year 2000, when Rev. R. Boersma decided to move to a place where there was no Canadian or American Reformed Church and to join the OPC there.
- 2.2.3 Anyone who moves to a place where there is or is not a Canadian or American Reformed Church, nor a church with which the Canadian Reformed Churches entertain a sister church relation, and joins another federation there, breaks with the Canadian Reformed Church of which he or she was a member.
- 2.2.4 This carries with it the consequence that such a former member forfeits all the rights and privileges included in membership and status within the Canadian Reformed Churches.
- 2.2.5 Quoting “personal family circumstances” as an excuse for such breaking with the Canadian Reformed Church of which one was a member does not justify the act of separating oneself from the church.
- 2.2.6 Synod Chatham 2004 considered that the church at Calgary is correct in its position.
- 2.2.7 In spite of and contrary to this, Synod Chatham 2004 stated that the church at Surrey was justified in an exception in the Boersema's case.
- 2.2.8 Thereby Synod Chatham 2004 approved of a deviation from the generally accepted rules and of acting against the faithfulness to promises made in the Church Order (e.g., Art. 76) as well as creating a dangerous precedent to which in the future anyone can appeal, quoting “special family circumstances.”
- 2.2.9 This is disastrous and opens the door to all sorts of allegedly justified exceptions.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Synod Chatham should not have used the word ‘technical’ because that qualifies the appeal of Calgary in a way that is not in accordance with the intention of Calgary. Calgary intended to address a principial matter regarding abiding by the rules agreed on in the Church Order.
- 3.2 Calgary asked Synod Chatham 2004 “to finally provide a clear judgment on Calgary's appeal regarding the validity of a person remaining as a minister in good standing within the Canadian Reformed Churches while at the same time becoming a member of a church with whom the Federation of Canadian Reformed Churches have no sister church relationship (and therefore not under the supervision of the churches) as described in Article 13 of the Church Order. Synod Chatham 2004 agreed with Calgary about the general rule in such situations, but leaves room for exceptions in special circumstances.
- 3.3 Synod Chatham 2004 allowed for an exception to the rule in Articles 3 and 13 of the Church Order without explaining why such an exception was justified in Rev. Boersema's case. In fact, Synod Chatham 2004 acknowledged that the arguments brought forward by Calgary were ignored by Regional Synod (see Art. 111, 4.1, p.112). Synod Chatham 2004 stated too much when it said that the church at Surrey was justified in providing an exception in Rev. Boersema's case.
- 3.4 Synod Chatham's Consideration 4.2 that Calgary's arguments do not sufficiently acknowledge the lack of clarity in the relationship between the CanRC and the OPC during the time period involved is beside the point. There was no sister church relationship with the OPC at that time.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 Synod Chatham 2004 erred in denying Calgary's appeal.

ADOPTED

Article 29

Submission from Hamilton re Women Voting

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 30

Submission from Fergus North re Art. 115 of Synod Chatham

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 31

Committee for the Official Website

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 32

Submission from Smithers re Guidelines of Synod

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 33

General Discussion on our Relationship with Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship

In preparation for the discussion of the synodical reports on our relationship with churches in ecclesiastical fellowship, the chairman proposed that we have a general discussion whether it is necessary to continue the ongoing discussions with the churches that hold to the Westminster Confession. The focus will be on the differences between these churches and the CanRC, what our purpose should be in having these ongoing discussions, and how such a mandate could be concluded. The meeting welcomed such a discussion.

Article 34

Closing Devotions and Adjournment

Brother Kuik led in closing devotions from Proverbs 1:1-7. After he led the meeting in closing prayer we sang Psalm 49:1. The chairman adjourned the meeting until Monday morning.

Day 4 — Morning Session

Monday, May 14, 2007

Article 35

Opening Devotions and Rollcall

The chairman called the meeting to order. He mentioned several things in regards to the ascension of Christ which will be the theme of the daily opening devotions this week. He read John 12:20-36 which marks the end of the public ministry of Christ. The meeting sang Psalm 24:1, 3 and 5 followed by prayer. Rollcall was held. All members of synod were present.

Article 36

Adoption of the Acts — Day 3

The proceedings of Day 3, as recorded in Articles 21-34, were reviewed and adopted as part of the Acts of Synod.

Article 37

Appeal from Owen Sound re Arts. 10 and 11 of Regional Synod East 2005

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took

back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 38

Appeal from Br. B. Van de Burgt

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 39

Appeal from Aldergrove re Art. 109 of Synod Chatham

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 40

General Discussion on Our Relationship with Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship

Before the close of the meeting last Friday the chairman had proposed that we have a general discussion whether it is necessary to continue the ongoing discussions with the churches that hold to the Westminster Confession. He gave these matters in discussion with a specific focus on the differences between these churches and the CanRC, what our purpose in having these ongoing discussions should be, and how such a mandate could be concluded.

Day 4 — Afternoon Session

Monday, May 14, 2007

Article 41

General discussion continued

After lunch the chairman called the meeting to order. He requested that we sing Psalm 24:2 and 4. All members were present and the meeting was reopened. The general discussion was resumed until every member of synod had the opportunity to speak on the matter.

Article 42

Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN)

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 43

Adjournment

Synod adjourned for committee work.

Day 4 — Evening Session

Monday, May 14, 2007

Article 44

Reopening

The meeting was reopened in plenary session. The chairman requested the meeting to sing Hymn 32:1 and 3. All the members of synod were present. The chairman extended a special welcome to Rev. Robert Needham as delegate of the OPC who had just arrived.

Article 45

Address by the Delegate of the ERQ

Rev. Feenstra introduced Rev. Paulin Bédard to the meeting who addressed synod on behalf of l'Église réformée du Québec. He stressed that the relations between the ERQ and the CanRC were growing and he

expressed deep appreciation for the financial and prayerful support the ERQ has been receiving. He also expressed the hope that ecclesiastical fellowship between the two church federations could become a reality. The chairman thanked Rev. Bédard for conveying the greetings of the ERQ. The text of the speech can be found in the appendices of these Acts.

Article 46

Address by the Fraternal Delegates of the GKN

Rev. Holtvlüwer introduced Rev. R.C. Janssen from the GKN who, together with his fellow delegate Rev. Johan Plug, had already spent the past week observing the workings of the committees and synod. Rev. Karlo Janssen passed on greetings on behalf of the sister churches in The Netherlands. In his address he touched upon several matters that are on the agenda of this synod and gave clarification on some of the decisions of the GKN. The chairman expressed his appreciation for the address which can be found in the appendices of these Acts.

Article 47

Address by the Fraternal Delegates of the OPC

Rev. Visscher introduced the Reverends Peter Wallace and Robert Needham who each addressed synod. Both brothers spoke about how we as federations need each other. They expressed their appreciation for the fact that in bygone years several differences have been addressed in a brotherly fashion. However, we should also move forward positively and deal together with new matters. The chairman thanked the brothers from the OPC for their encouraging words. The text of their combined address can be found in the appendices of these Acts.

Article 48

Address by the Observer of the RCNZ

Rev. Bouwman introduced Rev. Bruce Hoyt from the Reformed Churches of New Zealand. Rev. Hoyt brought greetings from the churches in New Zealand. He gave some detailed background to the RCNZ and expressed the hope that synod would reciprocate the offer of ecclesiastical fellowship. The chairman thanked Rev. Hoyt for his address to synod which can be found in the appendices of these Acts.

Article 49

Closing Devotions and Adjournment

The chairman spoke a word of welcome to Rev. Kees Kleijn from the churches in South Africa. He also wished God-speed to the delegates from the GKN and the ERQ who were to return home the next day. After these remarks br. Nobels led in closing devotions from Psalm 19:1-4 and Psalm 87. After he led the meeting in closing prayer we sang Psalm 87:1, 4 and 5. The chairman adjourned the meeting.

Day 5 — Morning Session

Tuesday, May 15, 2007

Article 50

Opening Devotions and Rollcall

The chairman called the meeting to order. He extended a welcome to everyone, especially to the students of the Ebenezer Canadian Reformed School who came to observe the plenary session of synod. The chairman explained some of the workings of synod to the students.

In keeping with the theme for this week about the ascension of Christ, the chairman read John 13:1-17 about the Lord's preparation for his arrest and suffering. He highlighted the element of ascension and service in humility, and reminded the meeting that we are here to serve the churches. After he led in prayer the meeting sang Psalm 68:1 and 2. Rollcall was held. All members were present.

Article 51

Adoption of the Acts — Day 4

The proceedings of Day 4, as recorded in Articles 35-49, were reviewed and adopted as part of the Acts of Synod.

Article 52

Report on the ERQ

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 53

Board of Governors of the Theological College

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 54

Appeal from Attercliffe re Art. 86 of Synod Chatham

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 55

Appeal from Lincoln re five appeals by other churches to Synod Chatham

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a round of discussion it was moved and seconded to delete the following:

Observation 2.3: Lincoln's letter expresses a sense of alienation between the work and decisions of synod on the one hand with respect to interchurch relations, and the thoughts and cares in the local church on this topic on the other hand.

Consideration 3.4: Synods and deputies should work towards preventing or perhaps removing any alienation churches may perceive between themselves and the work of interchurch relations.

Recommendation 4.2: To encourage deputies to find ways to bring the discussions beyond committee levels to the level of the local churches.

The amendment **carried**.

Br. DeVries abstained from voting according to Art. 32 CO.

The amended proposal was **adopted** as follows:

1. Material

1.1 Letter from Lincoln

2. Observations

2.1 Lincoln "requests a reconsideration of appeals addressed to General Synod Chatham 2004 from the following churches: Attercliffe, Abbotsford, Grand Rapids, Owen Sound and Blue Bell." Lincoln feels that the divergencies mentioned in these appeals "need to be dealt with since they remain in violation of our scriptural principles."

2.2 Lincoln also states that "the process to affect positive change is flawed at Synod," so that "Synods' failure to give clear answers on these matters... contribute to a suppression of Reformed thinking."

3. Considerations

3.1 Though Lincoln requests reconsideration of appeals on grounds that "these divergencies need

to be dealt with since they remain in violation of our scriptural principles,” Lincoln does not demonstrate how they violate the principles of Scripture.

- 3.2 In its consideration of our contacts with the OPC, Synod Chatham (Art. 88) said:

With a view to the concerns expressed by the churches, the following matters remain crucial and should receive priority in the discussions with the OPC:

4.4.1 The two points of the joint agreement, namely, the supervision of the Lord’s Table and confessional membership, as amended by Synod Fergus 1998.

4.4.2 The way in which the doctrine regarding covenant and church relate to these matters.

With this decision Synod Chatham has directed the deputies to work in the very direction Lincoln requests.

- 3.3 Though Lincoln states that the “process to affect positive change is flawed at Synod,” Lincoln does not demonstrate its case.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To deny Lincoln’s request to reconsider the five appeals.

ADOPTED

Br. DeVries abstained from voting according to Art. 32 CO.

Article 56

Financial Report of the General Fund

The advisory committee presented its report:

1. Material

- 1.1 Financial Report for the General Fund from Dec. 11, 2003 to February 6, 2007

2. Observations

- 2.1 The report included as an appendix to these Acts serves as observations.
2.2 The church at Carman East was appointed by Synod Chatham to administer the General Fund and to collect funds as required from the churches.
2.3 Carman East reports that the books were audited on Feb. 6, 2007 and found to be in good order.
2.4 The churches were assessed \$2 per communicant member for each of the three years since Synod Chatham’s appointment.

3. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 3.1 To receive with thankfulness the report from the church at Carman East.
3.2 To express gratitude to the office-bearers who audited the books and to br. G. Vandersluis for functioning as treasurer.
3.3 To authorize Carman East to collect funds from the churches as required.
3.4 To discharge Carman East for the duties completed during the period of Dec. 11, 2003 to Feb. 6, 2007 and to reappoint Carman East for the General Fund.

ADOPTED

Article 57

Lunch and Committee Work

Synod adjourned for lunch. During lunch hour the members of synod learned that Rev. James Folkerts, a fraternal delegate from the URC in Telkwa, became the proud father of a healthy baby girl. This made br. Pol, a member of synod, a great-grandfather. Both brothers were congratulated on this happy event. After lunch synod adjourned for committee work.

**Day 5 — Evening Session
Tuesday, May 15, 2007**

Article 58

Reopening

The meeting was reopened in plenary session. The chairman requested everyone to sing Psalm 68:8. All the members of synod were present.

Article 59

Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 60

Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK)

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 61

Closing Devotions and Adjournment

Rev. Peter Wallace of the OPC led in closing devotions from 2 Kings 2:1-13. After we sang Psalm 42:1, 2 and 3 he led in closing prayer. The chairman adjourned the meeting.

**Day 6 — Morning Session
Wednesday, May 16, 2007**

Article 62

Opening Devotions and Rollcall

The chairman called the meeting to order. He read John 14:1-14 and stressed that the theme of this passage is ascension and the program of building the house of God. Christ ascended to be at work preparing the house where he and his church will one day dwell together. After prayer the meeting sang Psalm 110:1, 2 and 3. Rollcall was held. All members were present.

Article 63

Adoption of the Acts — Day 5

The proceedings of Day 5, as recorded in Articles 50-61, were reviewed and adopted as part of the Acts of Synod.

Article 64

Appeal from Owen Sound re Arts. 10 and 11 of Regional Synod East 2005

The advisory committee presented its second draft proposal which, after some discussion, was taken back by the committee for further consideration.

Article 65

Appeal from Br. B. Van de Burgt

The advisory committee presented its second proposal. After a round of discussion it was moved and seconded to change Consideration 3.2 to read:

- 3.2 Synod agrees with the line of Regional Synod West 2002: Since Scripture does not prescribe the number of cups at the Lord's Supper, no one may insist on usage of communal cups only. The point of the statement "Do this in remembrance of me" is that the outward symbols of bread and wine point to Christ. The form for the celebration of the Lord's Supper tells us to "lift our

hearts on high in heaven, where Christ, our advocate, is, at the right hand of His heavenly Father.”

The amendment **carried**.

The amended proposal was **adopted** as follows:

1. Material

- 1.1 Appeal of Br. B. Van de Burgt, including appendices 1, 2, 3

2. Observations

- 2.1 Br. Van de Burgt asks synod to judge that Regional Synod West 2002:
- 2.1.1 Is incorrect and unjust in its judgement that “the possible interpretation of Luke 22:17 is not in conflict with Scripture.”
 - 2.1.2 Is dishonest in its judgement that “the possible interpretation of Luke 22:17 is not in conflict with historical testimony and use.”
 - 2.1.3 Is incorrect in its judgement that “the use of individual cups is not in conflict with Scripture.”
- 2.2 He asks synod to decide, on the solid basis of God’s Word, that the use of the communal cup (cups) be the norm in the churches.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The main point in the appeal is the question whether the Bible prescribes the use of a communal cup for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Br. Van de Burgt says the Bible does. Synod is not convinced that we can read in the texts a rejection of the individual cups. If we would take it literally when the Lord Jesus says: ‘The cup’ (Luke 22:17) and see it as prescriptive for the use of the common cup, then in the same vein we should also take literally the words ‘this cup’ in Luke 22:20. Since we don’t have that specific cup anymore, it would then be impossible for us to celebrate the Lord’s Supper. Br. Van de Burgt focuses too much on the cup and not on what the Lord Jesus says about the new covenant in his blood.
- 3.2 Synod agrees with the line of Regional Synod West 2002: Since Scripture does not prescribe the number of cups at the Lord’s Supper, no one may insist on usage of communal cups only. The point of the statement “Do this in remembrance of me” is that the outward symbols of bread and wine point to Christ. The form for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper tells us to “lift our hearts on high in heaven, where Christ, our advocate, is, at the right hand of His heavenly Father.”
- 3.3 Although the interpretation of Luke 22:17, that the one cup was poured out into individual cups which the disciples would have had before them, is questionable, classis only used this to show that the use of the one cup by our Lord Jesus would not necessarily mean that we must use only one cup at the Lord’s Supper celebration.
- 3.4 The use of historical testimony can not be a basis for a decision regarding the use of the communal cup. In the past some churches have used only a communal cup, others have used individual cups. Also the quoted decision of Synod Leeuwarden does not clearly state that the use of individual cups is not allowed.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To deny the appeal of Br. Van de Burgt.

ADOPTED

Article 66

Reformed Churches of New Zealand (RCNZ)

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After some discussion it was moved and seconded to delete from Consideration 4.2:

He explained that with respect to the matter of women in office in the CRCAus, this involves women being ordained as deacons only. At this point, the CRCAus limits women in the office of deacon. It has specified that churches that have women deacons should not allow them to be part of the ruling body of the church.

The amendment was **defeated**.

It was moved and seconded to delete from Consideration 4.4:

The RCNZ have adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith beside the Three Forms of Unity. The observer from the RCNZ stated that the latter are more prominent in usage. The polity is continental.

This amendment was also **defeated**.

1. Material

1.1 CRCA Report 9

1.2-17 Letters from the following sixteen churches:

Willoughby Heights, Spring Creek, Surrey, Owen Sound, Chilliwack, Ottawa, London, Coaldale, Chatham, Grand Rapids, Edmonton Immanuel, Lincoln, Fergus North, Lynden, Carman East, Burlington Ebenezer

2. Admissibility

2.1 All submissions are admissible.

3. Observations

3.1 Section 9 of the CRCA Report re the RCNZ serves as observation.

3.2 The CRCA recommends in 9.5:

3.2.1 [9.5.1] That Synod recognize that the RCNZ is a faithful church of God and accept the invitation of the RCNZ to enter into sister church relations according to the established rules.

3.2.2 [9.5.2] That Synod mandate the CRCA to:

3.2.2.1 [9.5.2.1] Communicate to the RCNZ Synod's decision under 9.5.1.

3.2.2.2 [9.5.2.2] Visit the next Synod of the RCNZ in order to formalize relations and visit the churches.

3.3 Willoughby Heights states: "If it becomes the CanRC position to acquiesce with the desires of its CRCA to merely apprise ourselves of differences in other federations but not to encourage them in Scriptural obedience as we have learned it by God's grace over our history, then we ought not to enter into EF with the RCNZ with the promise to do as our sister churches in Australia (FRCA) ask of us."

3.4 Spring Creek overtures not to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCNZ because they cannot see how this would be a "meaningful relationship." Should synod decide to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship, they overture synod to include in the mandate of the CRCA that the CRCA "encourage the RCNZ to take seriously and act upon the FRCA's concerns and objections about... the RCNZ's relationship with the Christian Reformed Church in Australia."

3.5 Surrey wonders whether it is meaningful to establish a relationship with the RCNZ given the limited resources we have.

3.6 Owen Sound wonders whether it is premature to enter into Ecclesiastical Fellowship because the relationship with the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia has not been clarified.

3.7 Chilliwack implies the CRCA is inconsistent in recommending that we do not enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with the PCEA because the FRCA do not recognize them, yet

- recommending to recognize the RCNZ while the FRCA also does not recognize them.
- 3.8 Ottawa agrees with the CRCA, but thinks the point of contact with the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia should be emphasized.
 - 3.9 London, Coaldale, Grand Rapids, Carman East and Lincoln think it is premature to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCNZ. They should first terminate their contact with the CRC of Australia. This approach would be consistent with the way the OPC was treated.
 - 3.10 Chatham asks synod not to proceed with ecclesiastical fellowship till the FRCA have achieved that relationship with the RCNZ.
 - 3.11 Edmonton Immanuel request that synod not enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCNZ based on the “good principle that we allow the sister churches in various parts of the world to do their work as it pertains to the churches in their region.” Since the FRCA has not come to ecclesiastical fellowship, the CanRC should wait for them. The church at Fergus North has a similar sentiment.
 - 3.12 Lynden cautions entering into ecclesiastical Fellowship with the RCNZ because “it is not clear how... ecclesiastical fellowship with the Reformed Churches of New Zealand is necessary or how it would benefit us.”
 - 3.13 Burlington Ebenezer draws attention to the fact the CRCAus allows women in office and suggests we follow the example of the FRCA and see how the RCNZ deals with the matter.
 - 3.14 According to Rule 3 for Ecclesiastical Fellowship, the advisory committee consulted with the delegates from the GKN and the OPC, both of whom have ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCNZ, and the observer from the RCNZ. According to Rule 7 for Ecclesiastical Fellowship, delegates have the privilege of participating in the deliberations of synod.

4. Considerations

- 4.1 There is evidence that the CRCA contacted the FRCA but there is no evidence they consulted with the BBK of the GKN nor the CEIR of the OPC (Rule 3). This is regrettable. The delegates from the GKN and the OPC testify to the good relationship they have with the RCNZ and can endorse the recommendation of the CRCA.
- 4.2 With respect to the concern that the FRCA have not been able to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCNZ because the RCNZ still have contact with the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia, it should be noted that the FRCA did not see this as a problem. They spelled out that this prevented them from entering into ecclesiastical fellowship because it “presents a problem of triangular relations within Australia” (Report 9.4). The FRCA specifically stated: “we don’t believe we can extend that beyond one’s own country.” They simply request that upon entering ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCNZ, synod “encourage the RCNZ to take seriously and act upon the FRCA’s concerns and objections about the deformation in the CRCAus.” In his address to synod, the Rev. Bruce Hoyt, the observer from the RCNZ, offered the assurance that they do take seriously the concerns about the CRCAus and work with the concerns expressed by sister churches. He explained that with respect to the matter of women in office in the CRCAus, this involves women being ordained as deacons only. At this point, the CRCAus limits women to the office of deacon. It has specified that churches that have women deacons should not allow them to be part of the ruling body of the church. As an indication of their concern about the developments in the CRCAus, the synod of the RCNZ has put the relationship “under strain.”
- 4.3 To enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with the attitude that we must “encourage [the RCNZ] in Scriptural obedience as we have learned it by God’s grace over our history” (Obs. 3.3) could imply that the RCNZ is not faithful and that the Lord’s working in our history is the measure for evaluating other churches. The CRCA reports and the FRCA, the GKN, and the OPC confirm that the RCNZ is a faithful Reformed Church. Ecclesiastical fellowship is a relationship of equals before the Lord.
- 4.4 With respect to the meaningfulness of the relationship, it should be considered that Canadian

Reformed Churches have vested interest in the region of South East Asia. The Church at Toronto is involved in mission work in Papua New Guinea, with the cooperation of the RCNZ. Further, the RCNZ already has had contact with churches in West Timor, where the church at Smithville is involved in mission work. Contact will enhance the opportunities for cooperation in mission. Further, it should be kept in mind that the RCNZ is rooted in the same historic continental tradition as the CanRC. The RCNZ have adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith beside the Three Forms of Unity. The observer from the RCNZ stated that the latter are more prominent in usage. The polity is continental. The OPC delegates testified that the relationship between the OPC and the RCNZ has been mutually beneficial.

5. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 5.1 To recognize that the RCNZ is a faithful church of God and accept the invitation of the RCNZ to enter into a Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship according to the established rules.
- 5.2 To write a letter addressed to the next synod of the RCNZ communicating this decision and including the request that the RCNZ take note of and take seriously the concerns of the FRCA regarding the CRCAustralia.
- 5.3 To send a delegate (delegation) to the next synod of the RCNZ in order to present this letter to formalize relations and visit the churches.

ADOPTED

The chairman addressed Rev. Hoyt and expressed thankfulness that we could enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCNZ. The meeting sang Hymn 40:1 and Rev. Nederveen led in a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord.

Article 67

Submission from Fergus North re Art. 115 of Synod Chatham

The advisory committee presented its second proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 Submission from Fergus North re Subscription Form

2. Admissibility

- 2.1 This submission is admissible as it interacts with a decision of a previous synod.

3. Observations

- 3.1 Fergus North expresses concern about consideration 4.2.2.3 of Article 115 of Synod Chatham. This consideration states: "When Synod adopts a Form of Subscription it is to be considered binding upon the churches."
- 3.2 Fergus North states that "it is one thing to recommend a Form of Subscription for use in the churches but it is something a great deal more to bind the churches to such a form." This church sees the subscription to the confessions as "in the first place a local matter," and thus "such a binding is unnecessary."
- 3.3 Fergus North further states that "all the churches in Canada have used subscription forms for more than 50 years without being bound to one."

4. Considerations

- 4.1 Fergus North does not appeal a decision of synod, but expresses concern about a consideration.
- 4.2 Synod Neerlandia 2001 dealt extensively with the issue of the use of a standardized Form of Subscription by the churches and agreed with the considerations of Regional Synod East and Regional Synod West for drafting and using standardized forms (Art. 72). Since the churches

via regional synods had expressed a desire for such standardization, all the churches should use the standardized form. The word “binding” used by Synod Chatham indeed indicates that a standardized form shall be used by all the churches. The use of a standardized form will serve to guard confessional integrity, both locally and federatively.

- 4.3 Simply because the churches have done without a standardized form in the past does not mean the churches may not, with good reason, introduce it at this time.

5. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 5.1 To give these considerations as response to the concerns of Fergus North.

ADOPTED

Article 68

Lunch and committee work

Synod adjourned for lunch and committee work. It turned out that due to a major power failure, which was expected to last well into the next day, synod could not meet in plenary session. The committees kept busy until closing time.

Article 69

Closing Devotions and Adjournment

Rev. Souman led in closing devotions from Ephesians 4:1-24. After we sang Psalm 133:1 and 2, he led in closing prayer. The chairman adjourned the meeting.

Day 7 — Morning Session Thursday, May 17, 2007

Article 70

Opening Devotions and Rollcall

The chairman called the meeting to order. He read John 16:1-15 where the ascension of Christ is connected with judgment. After he led in prayer the meeting sang Psalm 2:1 and 4. Rollcall was held. All members were present.

Article 71

Adoption of the Acts — Day 6

The proceedings of Day 6 were not available due to the power failure which was expected to last well into the day.

Article 72

The Free Reformed Churches of South Africa (FRCSA)

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 73

Submission from Hamilton re Women Voting

The advisory committee presented its second proposal. After a round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 74

Committee for the Official Website

The revised advisory committee report was given into discussion. It was moved and seconded to replace in Consideration 3.5 and in Recommendation 4.1.3.3 the word ‘consistories’ with ‘churches’.

The amendment was **defeated**.

It was moved and seconded to add in Recommendation 4.1.3.3 the words:

These restriction should be lifted after synod has dealt with them.

This amendment was **adopted**.

The amended proposal was **adopted** as follows:

1. Material

1.1 Report from the Committee for the Official Website

1.2-6 Letters from the following five churches:

Guelph, Hamilton, Burlington Ebenezer, Fergus Maranatha, Fergus North

2. Observations

2.1 The report included as an appendix to these Acts serves as observations.

2.2 The committee recommends that synod give the committee the following mandate:

2.2.1 To maintain the existing website and associated technical functions.

2.2.2 To revise the content of the website whenever necessary, in particular ensuring that the text of the *Book of Praise* is the same as that most recently adopted and revised by general synod.

2.2.3 To provide web services and email services to the churches and serve the churches with advice with regard to the possibilities of setting up their own websites.

2.2.4 To contact the website committee of the URC to see if cooperation between the committees is possible and to discuss the impact of future church unity between our federations on the work of the website committees.

2.2.5 To serve Synod 2010 with a report to be sent to the churches at least six months prior to the beginning of synod, including a financial statement and a proposed budget, and any recommendations regarding new content to be added to the website.

2.3 The committee also recommends that General Synod Smithers 2007 decide:

2.3.1 To approve the annual budget of \$750.00.

2.3.2 To agree with the committee that members should usually be reappointed for only one more term of three years unless there are special circumstances which make an appointment for another term of three years necessary or desirable. The committee recommends this due to workload and other commitments.

2.3.3 To appoint two new members to the committee.

2.4 The committee further recommends that:

2.4.1 No new content be added to the website.

2.4.2 Synod recommend to the local churches to make use of the website to present the churches and the message of salvation on the internet.

2.4.3 The current composition of the committee (3 members with advanced technical abilities, the librarian of the Theological College, 1 minister) be maintained.

2.5 Guelph recommends that synod decide:

2.5.1 To include more information about each local church, including physical mailing addresses and bulletin addresses, and remove items for a local church only when directed by that church.

2.5.2 To include contact information for committees and address churches once appointments are made at general synod.

2.6 Guelph, Hamilton, and Fergus North all recommend timely publication of official reports to general synod on the official website for general access.

2.7 Burlington Ebenezer also requests timely publication of official reports to general synod on the official website, but also requests security measures to restrict access to these reports.

2.8 With respect to cooperating with the URC website committee, the church at Guelph

recommends that no joint information is published until official decisions are made by both federations regarding that information. Fergus Maranatha recommends cooperating with the URC website committee only after coming closer to federative unity.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The website has proven to be a valuable tool for many to find information about the Canadian Reformed Churches, and to present the federation to others.
- 3.2 It is important for the churches to maintain the website and keep it up to date.
- 3.3 The suggestions of Guelph in Observations 2.5 are beneficial. It would be good to have contact information of each local church on the web. For those churches that do not maintain their own website the committee should provide this information on the official website, with the concurrence of the local church involved.
- 3.4 The committee continues to provide useful web services and email services to the churches. It is beneficial that the committee be available for those churches without websites with advice regarding the possibilities of setting up their own web sites.
- 3.5 Timely publication of the official reports of the synodical committees on the website would be beneficial for the churches to review these reports as they become available. The reports of the synodical committees, however, ought to be dealt with by the consistories and synod first before being made publicly available on the website.
- 3.6 Regarding cooperating with the United Reformed Churches on an official website, the committee offers no clear benefits that would result from this. In fact this could be premature as suggested by the church at Fergus Maranatha.
- 3.7 The committee has shown good stewardship and the churches receive good value for the cost associated with the website services.
- 3.8 While most synodical committees have terms of nine years, reducing the term for members of this committee to six years should not reduce the effectiveness of the committee.

4. Recommendations

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To mandate the committee:
 - 4.1.1 To maintain existing website and associated technical functions.
 - 4.1.2 To revise the content of the website whenever necessary, in particular ensuring that the text of the *Book of Praise* is the same as that most recently adopted and revised by general synod.
 - 4.1.3 To include on the website:
 - 4.1.3.1 Contact material about each local church, either via links or directly on the website, subject to concurrence of the local church.
 - 4.1.3.2 Contact information for committees and churches appointed by general synod for specific mandates.
 - 4.1.3.3 Publication of the official reports of the synodical committees in a standardized format (e.g., pdf) with security measures restricting access only to consistories. These restrictions should be lifted after synod has dealt with them.
 - 4.1.4 To provide web and email services to the churches, and be available upon request to serve the churches with advice with regard to the possibilities of setting up their own websites.
 - 4.1.5 To serve Synod 2010 with a report to be sent to the churches at least six months prior to the beginning of this synod, including a financial statement and a proposed budget, and any recommendations regarding new content to be added to the website.
- 4.2 Synod decide:
 - 4.2.1 To thank the committee for the work done.
 - 4.2.2 That synod recommend to the local churches to make use of the website to present the

churches and the message of salvation on the internet.

- 4.2.3 To approve the annual budget of \$ 750.00.
- 4.2.4 That members as a rule do not serve more than two three-year terms.
- 4.2.5 To replace two members of the committee.

ADOPTED

Article 75

l'Église réformée du Québec (ERQ)

The advisory committee presented its second proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CCCA Report 1
- 1.2 CCCA Supplementary Report
- 1.3-11 Letters from the following nine churches:
Chatham, Coaldale, Dunnville/Wainfleet, Elora, Grand Rapids, Guelph, Lincoln, Ottawa, Yarrow

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Chatham gave the CCCA the mandate initially given by Synod Neerlandia:
 - 2.1.1 To discuss the differences between the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards as found in the "Evaluation of Divergencies" received by Synod 1986. Considering the limited resources of the ERQ priority should be placed on discussion and clarification of pulpit supervision, fencing of the Lord's table, and confessional accountability.
 - 2.1.2 To work towards formalizing a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship under the adopted rules.
 - 2.1.3 To encourage the churches to continue supporting the ERQ financially, when needed.
 - 2.1.4 To respond if specific requests for assistance and advice are made on matters of confession, church polity, liturgy, and mission.
- 2.2 The CCCA has had a number of meetings with their counterparts in the ERQ. The brothers have used the opportunity to discuss confessional membership, supervision of the pulpit and fencing of the Lord's table. They have also taken the opportunity to write to the ERQ about these subjects.
- 2.3 On the three points needing further clarification and discussion, CCCA advise us that:
 - 2.3.1 *Confessional Membership*: confessional subscription is explicitly required of the office bearers. Members in the local churches have the duty to receive this doctrine and be willing to be instructed in it.
 - 2.3.2 *Supervision of the Lord's Supper*: the elders have the duty to supervise admission to the Lord's Supper, and to exclude unbelievers.
 - 2.3.3 *Supervision of the pulpit*: local consistories exercise supervision of the preaching. The churches together at synod examine candidates for the ministry.
- 2.4 In their report, the CCCA has included a letter from the ERQ Interchurch Committee, responding to the CCCA's explanation of the Canadian Reformed position on the three points still in discussion. In reply, the Interchurch Committee writes:
 - 2.4.1 *On admittance to the celebration of the Lord's Supper*: "the present practice of the ERQ congregations involves celebrating monthly communion during which the pastor addresses a clear verbal invitation and warning to all those who are present.... With respect to visitors, the same verbal invitation and warning are addressed without requiring a written attestation."
 - 2.4.2 *On confessional membership*: "at present, we do not require professing members to be bound to or to adhere to the Reformed doctrine articulated in our confessions."

- 2.4.3 *On supervision of the pulpit:* “Most of the councils have restricted themselves to ordained ERQ pastors and approved candidates, while a limited number of councils have permitted non-ERQ pastors to fill their pulpits.”
- 2.5 The committee reports that the ERQ has forwarded to them a draft version of a proposed liturgical form for Profession of Faith, and solicited their feedback, which the CCCA has supplied. The ERQ’s fraternal delegate to synod, Rev P. Bédard, has meanwhile informed synod that the ERQ has recently adopted “Vows for Public Profession of Faith.” The first question asked is, “Do you believe whole-heartedly that the Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the Word of God, the only infallible rule for your faith and your life, and that its doctrine of salvation is taught faithfully in this Church?”
- 2.6 The ERQ is working on a Form for the Baptism of Infants, a Form for the Baptism of Adults, a Form for the Ordination of Office Bearers, and a Subscription Form. Our CCCA will be asked to supply feedback on these forms.
- 2.7 The CCCA concludes that “it has become clear from our discussions that although the practices in the ERQ and the Canadian Reformed Churches are not identical, their position mirrors what the Canadian Reformed Churches have agreed to in discussions with the OPC, and that in this respect there is an agreement on the same principles.” Later on they state: “As such ongoing discussions should occur in the context of ecclesiastical fellowship” (Report, p. 128).
- 2.8 The CCCA recommends that synod decide:
- 2.8.1 To express gratitude for the work of the Lord in the ERQ, for their commitment to the Reformed faith, and for their efforts to come to a consensus about some of the outstanding issues, as this is evident in their efforts to adopt liturgical forms.
- 2.8.2 To enter into a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the ERQ under the adopted rules.
- 2.8.3 To mandate the CCCA:
- 2.8.3.1 To convey this decision to the next ERQ Synode, via the Interchurch Committee.
- 2.8.3.2 To actively engage in the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the ERQ under the adopted rules.
- 2.8.3.3 To express to the Interchurch Committee a willingness to provide encouragement and assistance in the adoption of liturgical forms, and in other such matters, and to provide this assistance where possible.
- 2.8.3.4 To respond if specific requests for assistance and advice are made on matters of confession, church polity, liturgy, and mission.
- 2.8.3.5 To continue discussion on existing differences in confession and practice with a particular focus on admission to the Lord’s Supper and confessional accountability.
- 2.8.3.6 To meet and have contact with the Interchurch Committee as often as is feasible for this purpose, but bearing in mind the limited manpower of the ERQ.
- 2.8.3.7 To encourage the churches to continue supporting the ERQ financially, when needed, and prayerfully.
- 2.9 Guelph expresses concern that the committee may be a little hasty in their evaluation and acceptance of the ERQ’s method of supervision. They explain that “with the OPC it should be noted that ecclesiastical fellowship was established after it was agreed that the Lord’s Supper ‘supervision is to be applied to the members of the local church as well as to its guests. The eldership has a responsibility in supervising the admission to the Lord’s Supper’” (Synod Neerlandia, Art. 45:4.11, 5.5). Guelph would favour the establishment of ecclesiastical fellowship, and recommends that synod “mandate the committee to continue to work diligently with the Interchurch Committee of the ERQ on the matter of fencing the Lord’s Table.”
- 2.10 Grand Rapids advises synod not to establish ecclesiastical fellowship because “the ERQ itself acknowledges that it needs more time to study and discuss the three points” that the CCCA was

mandated to discuss with them.

- 2.11 Chatham asks synod not to establish sister relations at this time on grounds that “the issues that need to be resolved have not been resolved at this time, but are set aside to be discussed at a later date.” Chatham mentions the supervision of the pulpit (i.e., ministers from churches with whom they have no formal relations) as one of these issues.
- 2.12 Coaldale “would argue that to continue to help the ERQ develop in a right direction, it would be most helpful to not yet enter into ecclesiastical fellowship.” Too much diversity remains in the ERQ, and “the ERQ does not have a clearly articulated and formalized official position on every issue.” Coaldale mentions that “it seems that once we enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with a federation of churches the impetus for discussing differences is undermined.”
- 2.13 Dunnville/Wainfleet recommends that synod decide not to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with the ERQ at this time. They write: “It appears from the report that the ERQ is still in the process of formulating a unified position on some very important matters. Before creating a sister church relationship it would be helpful and wise to have a more firmly established position from these churches. Although the committee wishes to mirror the position the Canadian Reformed Churches have taken with the OPC, we believe it would be much more beneficial for both the ERQ and the Canadian Reformed Churches, to resolve these matters in a clear and precise manner before coming to full unity.”
- 2.14 Elora agrees with the CCCA’s recommendations to synod and encourages synod to pay particular attention to the ERQ practice of admission to Lord’s Supper and confessional accountability. Elora offers no grounds.
- 2.15 Lincoln urges synod not to seek ecclesiastical fellowship with this church at this time. Instead, Lincoln recommends that “we as churches continue to discuss with them the differences between our churches, and continue to keep contact with them.” Lincoln’s grounds for recommending this is that we can learn from the past. “We have entered into Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the OPC and we are still discussing the differences that were present 30 years ago. Would it not be wise to first work out these differences before we enter into Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the ERQ?”
- 2.16 Ottawa notes that the diversity with the ERQ is largely due to the relative youth of this federation, and states that “extending Ecclesiastical Fellowship to these churches would be a great blessing to them at this time in their history and help them as they strive to put Reformed principles into practice.”
- 2.17 Yarrow submits that “the outstanding issues namely confessional membership, supervision of the Lord’s Supper and supervision of the pulpit should be concluded before we enter into Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the ERQ. It is our observation that after we entered into Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the OPC and the FCS, the will to discuss and resolve the differences seems to have waned.” Yarrow urges that the way we recognized the OPC should not become the new litmus test or benchmark for entering into a new relationship with the ERQ.
- 2.18 There is evidence that the contacts the St Georges and Owen Sound congregations have had with each other for some years have been mutually beneficial.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Synod notes with gratitude that the ERQ, under God’s blessing, is growing in the Lord and his service.
- 3.2 Synod notes with gratitude the newly adopted “Vows for Public Profession of Faith.” The questions asked in this form demonstrate a scriptural understanding of confessional accountability. This addresses Synod Chatham’s mandate on this matter.
- 3.3 The CCCA is to be commended for their ongoing work with the ERQ. Much work has been done, and much work remains to be done. That the ERQ seeks CanRC input as they develop more liturgical forms demonstrates that there is much opportunity for more mutually productive work to be done, also on matters beyond the outstanding issues mentioned by previous synod.

- 3.4 The CCCA recommends that synod decide to enter into a Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the ERQ on grounds that its practices mirror “what the Canadian Reformed Churches have agreed to in discussions with the OPC.” The church at Guelph, though, correctly reminds synod that “with the OPC it should be noted that Ecclesiastical Fellowship was established after it was agreed that the Lord’s Supper ‘supervision is to be applied to the members of the local church as well as to its guests. The eldership has a responsibility in supervising the admission to the Lord’s Supper.’” From the way the ERQ Interchurch Committee writes (see Obs. 4a), it is evident that the elders do not address visitors beyond the “invitation and warning” from the pulpit. This allows visitors to attend the table ultimately at their own discretion.
- 3.5 Already the CCCA and some of the churches are interacting with the ERQ in a way consistent with the rules that belong to ecclesiastical fellowship. Given the openings there are to stand beside one another in the struggles of faith in our common nation, it is fitting to formalize ecclesiastical fellowship at this time, and continue to assist one another under the Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship.
- 3.6 In his providence the Lord God has given to the Canadian Reformed Churches and to l’Église réformée du Quebec their own particular history and character. Given our proximity and place within one country, increased contact between the churches of these two federations would be mutually beneficial.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To thank the committee for its work in the contact with the ERQ, with the prayer that the Lord may bless the continued study and discussions.
- 4.2 To enter into a Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the ERQ under the adopted rules.
- 4.3 To give the CCCA the following mandate:
 - 4.3.1 To convey this decision to the next ERQ Synode, via the Interchurch Committee.
 - 4.3.2 To actively engage in the Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the ERQ under the adopted rules.
 - 4.3.3 To express to the Interchurch Committee a willingness to provide encouragement and assistance in the adoption of the liturgical forms, and in other such matters, and to provide this assistance where possible.
 - 4.3.4 To respond if specific requests for assistance and advice are made on further matters of confession, church polity, liturgy, and mission, as per the Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship.
 - 4.3.5 To continue discussion when appropriate on existing differences in confession and practice with a particular focus on admission to the Lord’s Supper and the supervision of the pulpit.
 - 4.3.6 To meet and have contact with the ERQ Interchurch Committee and synods if and when invited.
 - 4.3.7 To encourage the churches to continue supporting the ERQ prayerfully, and financially when needed.
- 4.4 To encourage the churches to seek out ways and means to develop contacts with individual ERQ churches as is done between Owen Sound and St. Georges.

ADOPTED

The chairman spoke about this historic decision in that we have now entered into ecclesiastical fellowship with a church federation entirely within Canada. The meeting sang 87:1 and 4 and Rev. Schouten led in a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord.

Article 76

Report of the Address Church for the Canadian Reformed Churches.

The advisory committee reported:

1. Material

1.1 Report from Burlington Ebenezer

2. Observation:

2.1 The report, which is added as an appendix to the Acts, serves as Observations.

3. Consideration

3.1 From the report it is clear that Burlington Ebenezer has fulfilled its mandate.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

4.1 To thank Burlington Ebenezer for the work done as address church.

4.2 To reappoint Burlington Ebenezer as Address Church for the Canadian Reformed Churches.

ADOPTED

Article 77

Archives of General Synod

The advisory committee reported:

1. Material

1.1-2 Letters from Burlington-Waterdown and Burlington Ebenezer

2. Observations

2.1 Burlington-Waterdown reports that it has inspected the archives of Synod Chatham 2004 and found them in good order.

2.2 Burlington-Waterdown recommends the purchase of fire-proof cabinets for storing the archives.

2.3 Burlington Ebenezer (the church for the Archives), states that from a storage, shelving and space perspective the benefits of a building a fire-proof room is greater than acquiring fire-proof cabinets. The cost of a fire-proof room would be approximately \$4500 to \$5000.00.

3. Consideration

3.1 It is important to ensure the safety of the archives by following the advice of the Ebenezer church.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

4.1 To thank Burlington Waterdown for examining the archives and reporting to synod.

4.2 To thank Burlington Ebenezer for its work as the archive-retention church.

4.3 To thank br. G. Denbok for his work as archivist.

4.4 To accede to the request for building a fire-proof room for the archives at a cost of up to \$5,000.00.

ADOPTED

Rev. Nederveen and br. Nordeman abstained according to Art. 32 CO.

Article 78

Board of Governors of the Theological College

The advisory committee presented its second proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 The report of the Board of Governors of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches dated October 1, 2006
- 1.2 From Regional Synod East, November 8 and December 7, 2006, a letter including nominations for the Board of Governors of the Theological College for the Academic Committee
- 1.3 From Regional Synod West, November 14, 2006, a letter including nominations for the Board of Governors of the Theological College for the Academic Committee
- 1.4 By-Law Number 12, relating generally to the affairs of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches
- 1.5-9 Letters from the following five churches:
Chatham, Langley, Surrey, Flamborough, Burlington Ebenezer
- 1.11-12 Overture from Cloverdale and Guelph

2. Observations

- 2.1 The Board of governors recommends:
 - 2.1.1 To receive this report and all its appendices.
 - 2.1.2 To acknowledge the expiration of the term of office of brs. J. Moesker, W. Oostdyk and W. Smouter as Governors and to express gratitude for their work. Further to express gratitude for the contributions of Rev. Cl. Stam who had to resign for health reasons.
 - 2.1.3 Pursuant to Section 5(2) of the Act and By-Law 12:3.04 to:
 - 2.1.3.1 Appoint, elect or reappoint six active ministers to hold office until the next General Synod and to appoint at least three substitutes from each Regional Synod area.
 - 2.1.3.2 Reappoint brs. L. Jagt and K.J. Veldkamp as Governors for a term lasting from the date of reappointment until the second subsequent General Synod.
 - 2.1.3.3 Reappoint br. G.J. Nordeman for a term lasting from the date of reappointment until the next subsequent General Synod.
 - 2.1.3.4 Appoint two new non-ministerial Governors for a term lasting from the date of appointment until the third subsequent General Synod.
 - 2.1.4 To appoint Prof. G.H. Visscher as Principal for the years 2008-2011.
 - 2.1.5 In regard to the Pastoral Training Program to decide the following:
 - 2.1.5.1 That the Pastoral Training Program be kept separate from the College curriculum.
 - 2.1.5.2 That the Pastoral Training Program become mandatory for all students aspiring to the ministry of the Word among the Canadian and American Reformed Churches in accordance with the document entitled "Guidelines for the Pastoral Proficiency Program."
 - 2.1.5.3 That funding for student internships is the responsibility of the churches and not of the College.
 - 2.1.6 To approve all decisions and actions of the Board and of its committees for the years 2004, 2005 and 2006 until the date of this Report.
 - 2.1.7 To express thankfulness for the support from the Free Reformed Churches in Australia.
 - 2.1.8 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; to reappoint br. H. Solomons as Auditor until the next General Synod.
 - 2.1.9 To reappoint sr. Margaret Van der Velde to the Committee for the Official Website.

- 2.2 The Board of Governors nominates the following brothers for the property and finance committee: br. H.C. Kampen, br. A.J. Bax, br. H. Harsevoort, br. B. Hordyk.
- 2.3 Chatham requests that the financial statements of the Theological College be published in the Acts as it will show to the members where the financial contributions are being spent.
- 2.4 Langley recommends that Synod 2007 appoint a committee called something like “The Pastoral Training Fund Committee” with the mandate:
 - 2.4.1 To determine the annual financial costs, associated with the funding of summer student internships.
 - 2.4.2 To develop guidelines relating to proper student wages and the reimbursement of all legitimate expenses.
 - 2.4.3 To cover the cost by assessing the churches annually.
- 2.5 With respect to the Pastoral Training Program, Guelph overtures that synod decide:
 - 2.5.1 To reiterate what Synod Fergus already considered, namely that remuneration of an intern must be left to the discretion of the church in which he conducted his internship.
 - 2.5.2 To recommend to these churches that remuneration of interns be kept at a modest level.
 - 2.5.3 That remuneration for interns shall not come out of the budget of the Theological College.
 - 2.5.4 To remind theological students who face financial hardship because of the internship requirements to seek assistance from the classis in which they resided prior to beginning their studies at the College.
- 2.6 Surrey requests synod to clarify who is responsible for the welfare of the student during his pastoral training.
- 2.7 Flamborough supports the recommendation to make the PTP mandatory and also to keep the funding for the student interns outside of the budget of the Theological College. However, the church at Flamborough is of opinion that the recommendation to leave the financial support for the internships up to the churches is too general, too vague, too open-ended. Flamborough recommends that Synod Smithers 2007 appoint a small committee with the following mandate:
 - 2.7.1 To look after all internship-related funding matters.
 - 2.7.2 To determine a reasonable compensation for an internship, based on what a student needs to enable him to complete the requirements for becoming a minister of the Word.
 - 2.7.3 To assess the churches each year based on the anticipated funding required for a particular summer.
 - 2.7.4 To report about their activities to the next General Synod, which report shall be sent to all the churches.

Flamborough also suggests that such a committee not include a member from the Academic Committee, nor a member from the Finance & Property Committee. The best way to ensure proper communication between those involved would be to appoint the PTP Coordinator as a liaison between the College and this financial committee.
- 2.8 Burlington Ebenezer is in agreement with the recommendations made by the Board of Governors. This church overtures synod to appoint a standing committee that will have the responsibility to establish a fund and to assess the churches for this purpose.
- 2.9 Cloverdale overtures synod that “if it is not addressed in the ‘Guidelines for the Pastoral Proficiency Program’ (a copy of which was not attached to the Report), to include in such Guidelines a stipulation with respect to the remuneration of the participants in the program. Specifically, to require that the church in which a student is placed remunerate that student in accordance with a pay schedule prepared by the Theological College for the current year.”
- 2.10 Surrey recommends that the Theological College adopt the generally accepted practice of recommending changes to a set of By-Laws via documentation that is recorded as “change history # 12” as an appendage to the current “By-Laws of the College.” This is intended to allow a person to see the history of the by-laws from their beginnings to now.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Synod thankfully notes that the Theological College could continue its work.
- 3.2 Synod acknowledges that the nominations for the replacements of Rev. J. Moesker and one of the nominations for substitute from Regional Synod West as well as one from Regional Synod East are not acceptable, because of a conflict of interest (the brothers nominated are related to faculty and staff members of the College).
- 3.3 Including the Pastoral Training Program in the curriculum would give rise to difficulties for foreign students who might not have sufficient command of the English language to complete the Pastoral Training Program or for those students who are not members of one of the Canadian Reformed Churches or one of the sister churches and for those who are seeking an M.Div. degree but do not aspire to the ministry of the Word.
- 3.4 The Pastoral Training Program has proven itself to be beneficial for both students aspiring to the ministry and for the churches. From the beginning the churches have been very supportive of this program (see, e.g., section II.B of Art. 107, Acts of Synod Fergus, 1998).
- 3.5 Although Synod 2004 was of the opinion that the funds required for the Pastoral Training Program should be included in the regular operating budget of the College, the Board feels that from a tax and liability point of view, it would be complicated for the College to pay wages to a student doing an internship in one of the Canadian or American Reformed churches. The complicating question is: from a tax and liability point of view would the student intern be a temporary employee of the College or of the local church? The Board believes it is appropriate to leave the financial support up to the churches.
- 3.6 Synod is of the opinion that the costs of this program should be carried by all the churches together, through an assessment for this program. This can best be done by appointing a committee.
- 3.7 Synod takes note of the recommendation to appoint Prof. G.H. Visscher as Principal for the years 2008-2011. It is to be noted, in reference to By-law 12:10.01, that it is the responsibility of the Board of Governors to appoint the principal and they shall ask synod for advice.
- 3.8 Synod is grateful to the sponsoring churches and ministers who have participated in the Pastoral Training Program.
- 3.9 Synod thankfully takes note of the work done by the Board and its committees during the last three years.
- 3.10 Synod expresses its heartfelt appreciation to the Free Reformed Churches in Australia for their active involvement, as well as their ongoing financial and prayerful support.
- 3.11 Chatham raises a valid point regarding the publication of the financial statements in the Acts. The last time that the financial statements were included was in the Acts of Lincoln 1992. Thereafter they were left out without a reason being mentioned in the Acts. The church at Chatham states that inclusion of the financial statements will show to the members of the churches where the financial contributions are being spent. Synod agrees with this request.
- 3.12 By-law Number 12 is a replacement of the By-laws 1, 3-11 and contains nothing new. It was approved by the Board of Governors at the meeting of September 7, 2006 and does not need any further action. It would have been beneficial to the churches if the Board of Governors had added a cover letter with explanation, while sending this bylaw to the churches.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To receive this report and all its appendices and to thank the Board of Governors for its work.
- 4.2 To express its gratitude for the work done by the brothers J. Moesker, W. Oostdyk, W. Smouter and Cl. Stam.
- 4.3 To reappoint brs. L. Jagt and K.J. Veldkamp as Governors for a term lasting from the date of reappointment until the second subsequent general synod.
- 4.4 To reappoint br. G.J. Nordeman for a term lasting from the date of reappointment until the next

- subsequent general synod.
- 4.5 To reappoint from the West: Rev. R.A. Schouten and Rev. W.B. Slomp and to appoint Rev. A.J. Pol. (Substitutes in the following order: Rev. R. Aasman, Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar, Rev. J.D. Louwerse).
 - 4.6 To reappoint from the East: Rev. G. Nederveen, Rev. G.Ph. van Popta and Rev. J. VanWoudenberg. (Substitutes in the following order: Rev. E. Kampen, Rev. D.G.J. Agema and Rev. W. den Hollander).
 - 4.7 To appoint on the basis of the recommendation of the Board of Governors, br. H.C. Kampen and br. A.J. Bax.
 - 4.8 To agree with the appointment of Prof. G.H. Visscher as Principal for the years 2008-2011.
 - 4.9 That the Pastoral Training Program be kept separate from the College curriculum.
 - 4.10 That the Pastoral Training Program become mandatory for all students aspiring to the ministry of the Word among the Canadian Reformed Churches in accordance with the document entitled “Guidelines for the Pastoral Proficiency Program.”
 - 4.11 Appointments
 - 4.11.1 To appoint a committee with the following mandate:
 - 4.11.1.1 To look after all internship-related funding matters.
 - 4.11.1.2 To determine a reasonable compensation for an internship, and to develop guidelines for such a compensation.
 - 4.11.1.3 To assess the churches each year based on the anticipated funding required for a particular summer.
 - 4.11.1.4 To report about their activities to the next general synod, which report shall be sent to all the churches.
 - 4.11.2 To appoint as liaison between the College and this committee the PTP Coordinator.
 - 4.12 To approve all decisions and actions of the Board and of its committees as mentioned in its report to General Synod Smithers 2007.
 - 4.13 To express thankfulness for the support from the Free Reformed Churches in Australia.
 - 4.14 To reappoint br. H. Solomons as auditor until the next general synod.
 - 4.15 To reappoint sr. Margaret Van der Velde to the Committee for the Official Website.
 - 4.16 To take note of the reviewed financial statements and the report of the chartered accountant for the previous fiscal periods, and to relieve the Treasurer of the Board of all responsibilities for these fiscal periods.
 - 4.17 To include the financial statements of the Theological College in the Acts of Synod.
 - 4.18 To adopt By-law Number 12.

ADOPTED

The brothers Nederveen, Nordeman, Schouten and VanWoudenberg abstained from voting because they are Governors of the Theological College.

Day 7 — Afternoon Session Thursday, May 17, 2007

Article 79

Reopening

After lunch the meeting was reopened with singing of Hymn 32:1.

Article 80

Free Church of Scotland (FCS) & Free Church of Scotland – Continuing (FCC)

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After some discussion it was moved and seconded to delete from Consideration 4.2 to following:

According to the report, the FCC themselves state that “we still firmly believe that we have no

scriptural warrant for separation in perpetuity.” This demonstrates that the action of the FCC is not scripturally valid according to Belgic Confession Article 28 where we confess that “all therefore who draw away from the church or fail to join it act contrary to the ordinance of God.”

The amendment was **defeated**.

1. Material

1.1 CRCA Report 1 re FCS and FCC

1.2-14 Letters from the following thirteen churches:

Willoughby Heights, Owen Sound, Edmonton Immanuel, Chilliwack. Elora. Yarrow, Guelph, Burlington Ebenezer, London, Brampton, Fergus Maranatha, Glanbrook, Winnipeg Redeemer

2. Admissibility

2.1 The report and letters from the churches are admissible.

3. Observations

3.1 The report of the CRCA, which is included as an appendix to the Acts, serve as Observations.

3.2 The CRCA recommends that Synod Smithers 2007 decide:

3.2.1 [1.10.1] To acknowledge that Synod Chatham 2004 inadvertently entered into a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the FCC, which in effect also compromised our adherence to rule #3 of the rules for ecclesiastical fellowship.

3.2.2 [1.10.2] To nevertheless continue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with both the FCS and the FCC under the adopted rules.

3.2.3 [1.10.3] To acknowledge that we have sufficient clarity to know how to proceed with both the FCS and the FCC, while acknowledging that further clarity on the causes of the division between them is not crucial and might very well remain elusive.

3.2.4 [1.10.4] To express thankfulness for the earnest efforts which have been made by both the FCS and the FCC towards reconciliation; to exhort the FCS and the FCC to continue to make such earnest efforts towards reconciliation, for the honour of Christ the one Head of the Church; and to urge the FCS and the FCC not to be discouraged by the difficulties on the path towards that goal.

3.2.5 [1.10.5] To mandate the CRCA:

3.2.5.1 [1.10.5.1] To convey the decisions under Recommendations 1, 2, and 4 to both the FCS and FCC, assuring them of our continued prayerful support.

3.2.5.2 [1.10.5.2] To continue to monitor the situation in the sister churches in Scotland and report any important developments to the next Synod.

3.3 The committee reports that it was able to discuss the existing differences in confession and church polity with the FCS. This was done in face-to-face discussions with representatives from both federations. The matters of the fencing of the Lord’s Supper, confessional membership, and the view of the covenant were discussed and each other’s beliefs and practices on these points clarified. The committee “would like Synod to consider that its mandate re discussion of differences has been satisfactorily concluded.”

3.3.1 The committee asks that if synod decides to renew the mandate for continued discussion that synod “be very specific about what needs to be discussed and what the precise goal of these discussions would be.” They further state that it “is a blessed goal to grow together in the unity of the true faith” but that the “Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship are sufficient in providing a broad context for that to happen.”

3.4 Chilliwack expresses concern about an apparently different standard in the FCS compared to the Canadian Reformed Churches for admitting children to the Lord’s Supper table and wonders how it would function in real-life terms. They reference the report where it is mentioned that children as young as 8 years old may become communicant members in the FCS. Chilliwack asks: “If they were to visit us, are we expected to invite these kids to our Lord’s Supper when

we don't allow our own kids until they have completed Catechism instruction and Profession of Faith class and shown that they know our doctrine?"

- 3.5 Yarrow supports Recommendations 1.10.1 – 1.10.4 of the committee. They request synod to add to Recommendation 1.10.5 the following “mandate 1.10.5.3 ‘to continue the discussion on the existing differences in confession and church polity.’” Winnipeg Redeemer requests the same and urges synod “not to rank them as of lesser importance but to encourage the FCS and FCC to study these issues in light of the Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship Article 1.” Elora expresses similar thoughts and mentions such divergences as confessional membership and the FCS’s “view of the invisible Church.”
- 3.6 Guelph requests synod to:
- 3.6.1 Ask the committee to request documented discussions on reconciliation between FCS and FCC.
- 3.6.2 To ask the committee to offer assistance in reconciliation when requested.
- 3.6.3 To review the progress at the next synod.
- The basic reason for these requests is to “lessen the load of this committee in the involvement of negotiations with the FCS and the FCC.”
- 3.7 Burlington Ebenezer recommends that Synod Smithers acknowledge to the “FCC that a mistake was made and to express sincere regret for any hurt this may have caused.” To support this they mention that the CRCA does not provide any grounds to continue ecclesiastical fellowship; that Synod Chatham did not have the intention to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with the FCC; that we should not establish relationships by mistake; that no other federation other than the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland have entered into ecclesiastical fellowship with the FCC; and that by discontinuing ecclesiastical fellowship with the FCC we will resolve the concern expressed by the committee regarding Rule #3 for Ecclesiastical Fellowship. The churches at Glanbrook, Brampton and Owen Sound express the same sentiments. Owen Sound points to the CRCA’s report that “the split is because of a sharp disagreement on a church polity matter in a specific instance, and not because of any doctrinal matter.” Owen Sound then asks: “if there is no good basis for one group to leave a federation, is it proper to establish Ecclesiastical Fellowship with them?”
- 3.8 London questions “whether it is accurate to speak – as the committee does – about the differences in confession and church polity being ‘satisfactorily concluded.’” They suggest that we should be “quite frank” about the fact that such differences still exist.
- 3.9 Fergus Maranatha disagrees with the CRCA’s request to consider its mandate “regarding differences in confession and church polity to be concluded.” Fergus points to the FCS practice of admitting a guest to the Lord’s Supper based on their ‘oral attest’ and suggests this conflicts with passages such as John 5:31, 8:17, and Deut 19:15. They also state that the “FCS does not bind its members to the confessions the way we do” and that both such practices need further discussion.

4. Considerations

- 4.1 From the report it is clear that the CRCA has fulfilled the mandate given to it by Synod Chatham with respect to the FCS & the FCC.
- 4.2 The committee clearly shows that Synod Chatham erred in deciding to “continue” a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the FCC, a relationship which, in fact, did not exist. The committee makes clear that the FCC seceded from the FCS because of a “sharp disagreement in the application of church law or practice in a specific instance” and not for any doctrinal reason. According to the report, the FCC themselves state that “we still firmly believe that we have no Scriptural warrant for separation in perpetuity.” This demonstrates that the action of the FCC is not scripturally valid according to Belgic Confession Article 28 where we confess that “all therefore who draw away from the church or fail to join it act contrary to the ordinance of God.” To now admit our error and discontinue ecclesiastical fellowship with the FCC would

show the FCC that we take this matter very seriously and so would help urge them to make things right again.

- 4.3 We can be thankful that the Lord has led the FCC to see that separation “in perpetuity” is scripturally unwarranted. In the context of ecclesiastical contact we can continue to exhort them to work sincerely toward reconciliation with the FCS for the glory of Christ our Head.
- 4.4 We can be thankful that the Lord has led the FCS to pursue restoration of unity with the FCC. In the context of ecclesiastical fellowship we may and we must (according to Rule #1) continue to urge the FCS to do whatever it can to facilitate such reconciliation of unity for the glory of Christ our Head.
- 4.5 The committee reports that the “admission of children to communicant membership is still relatively infrequent” and that the “FCS requires a credible profession of faith for children.” From this it is clear that the FCS does not endorse paedocommunion and, with respect to the qualifications for participants in the Lord’s Supper, stays within the bounds of Scripture as summarized in Q/A 81 of the Heidelberg Catechism.
- 4.6 The committee correctly observes that the goal of growing together in the unity of faith can be pursued under the Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship. Existing differences in confession and polity have not proven to be impediments for ecclesiastical fellowship. Thus, within the context of ecclesiastical fellowship, the one can learn from the other about varying legitimate ways to summarize God’s Word and how to put into practice its principles, understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each. We can also learn from each other about other matters of common concern which develop from time to time in the life of the churches. From such interaction, as opportunities arise, each federation can sharpen the other as iron sharpens iron.

5 Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 5.1 To thank the committee for the work done re the FCS and the FCC.
- 5.2 To continue the Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the FCS under the adopted rules.
- 5.3 To acknowledge that Synod Chatham 2004 erred by “continuing” a Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the FCC which, in fact, did not exist.
- 5.4 To discontinue the Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the FCC and express regret for the error and any hurt we may have caused them with this error.
- 5.5 To express thankfulness for the efforts which have been made by both the FCS and the FCC towards reconciliation.
- 5.6 To exhort the FCS and the FCC to continue their efforts toward reconciliation for the glory of Christ our Head and not to be discouraged by the difficulties on the path towards that goal.
- 5.7 To mandate the CRCA:
 - 5.7.1 To convey the decisions under Recommendations 5.1-5.6 to both the FCS and FCC, assuring them of our continued prayerful support.
 - 5.7.2 To continue to monitor the situation between the FCS and FCC and report any important developments to the next synod.

ADOPTED

Article 81

Appeal from Aldergrove re Art. 109 of Synod Chatham

The advisory committee presented its second proposal. After some discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 82

Appeal from Coaldale and Guelph re Art. 89 of Synod Chatham

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 83

Appeal from Attercliffe re Art. 86 of Synod Chatham

The advisory committee presented its second proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 Letter from Attercliffe

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Chatham 2004 (Art. 86) answered a number of appeals against the decision of Synod Neerlandia (Art. 45) to establish ecclesiastical fellowship with the OPC.
- 2.2 Attercliffe appeals to Synod Smithers 2007 to reverse Chatham's decision to uphold the Synod Neerlandia's decision. Attercliffe is convinced that Synod Neerlandia did indeed err in making its decision about the OPC, and asks that Neerlandia's decision to remove the words Synod Fergus (Art. 130) inserted in the agreed statements for the OPC should be reinstated.
- 2.3 Attercliffe bases its appeal on the ground that our practices (re Lord's Supper) are based on the Church Order, which is in turn based on the Word of God.
- 2.4 In Consideration 4.3 of Article 86, Synod Chatham quoted with approval a sentence lifted from the report of the CCOPC: "the amendment inserted by Synod Fergus goes beyond the wording found in the Reformed Confessions." Attercliffe terms this quotation "a false assumption."

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Attercliffe bases this appeal on its conviction that the *how* of supervising guests at the Lord's table must be a condition for ecclesiastical fellowship. The churches, however, have said years ago that the *how* of supervising guests at the Lord's table "cannot in the end be made a condition for Ecclesiastical Fellowship" (Abbotsford, 1995, Art. 106, V.B.3). Appeals against this decision have been disallowed, and Attercliffe now brings up no new grounds to revisit this decision.
- 3.2 Synod Chatham correctly notes that a Church Order expresses how churches have agreed to carry out biblical principles in practical church life (Art. 86, 4.5). That the Canadian Reformed Churches have bound themselves to a specific Church Order (and hence a certain practice re supervising guests at the Lord's table) does not mean that the practices described in this Church Order are the only way any church of God could ever supervise the table.
- 3.3 Attercliffe does not prove that the statement, "the amendment inserted by Synod Fergus goes beyond the wording found in the Reformed Confessions" is, in fact, a false assumption.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 Not to grant Attercliffe's appeal.

ADOPTED

Article 84

Board of Governors re Fifth Professor

The committee proposal received a preliminary round of discussion. The committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 85

Appeal from Owen Sound re Arts. 10 and 11 of Regional Synod East 2005

The advisory committee presented its third draft on this appeal:

1. Material

- 1.1 Appeal from Owen Sound

2. Observations

- 2.1 Owen Sound appeals decisions in Articles 10 and 11 of Regional Synod East, November 9, 2005 regarding two appeals against decisions of Classis Ontario North, December 17, 2004/January 21, 2005.
- 2.2 Owen Sound states that “from what is recorded in the Acts [of Regional Synod East] there is no interaction with the considerations that brought Classis December 17, 2004 to its decision.” Further, it is stated: “There is no indication from the Acts of Regional Synod East that the appellants proved that the decision of Classis was in conflict with the Word of God or the Church Order, nor did Regional Synod indicate how it was in conflict with the Word of God or the Church Order.”
- 2.3 Owen Sound requests synod to judge that Regional Synod East erred in its judgment, “since it was not proven that the decision of Classis Northern Ontario, December 17, 2004 was in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order. (Art. 31, Church Order).”

3. Consideration

- 3.1 Regional Synod East 2005 erred in not supplying sufficient evidence for its conclusion.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To sustain the appeal of Owen Sound.

The proposal was put to a vote and was **defeated**. It was sent back to the committee.

The brothers Nordeman, Souman and VanWoudenberg abstained as they had been previously involved in matter. Rev. Feenstra abstained from voting according to Art. 32 CO.

Article 86

Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK)

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CRCA Report 4
- 1.2-5 Letters from the following four churches:
Burlington-Fellowship, Ottawa, Yarrow, Fergus North (2)

2. Observations

- 2.1 The contact between the CRCA and the PCK remains sporadic. Several letters have been sent to the PCK and a letter and an email were received. A report was received on the decisions of one general assembly but no report was received on three other assemblies. In addition, some limited discussions took place with delegates from the PCK in both Pretoria (2005) and Armadale (2006).
- 2.2 The CRCA was charged to discuss existing differences in confession and polity with the PCK and was able to have some discussions on these matters. The CRCA received the impression that the PCK is of the opinion that no further discussions are required on these matters.
- 2.3 Differences relating to distance and language continue to hamper the work of the CRCA.
- 2.4 While our sister churches in South Africa have terminated their relationship with the PCK, the sister churches in Australia report that personal visitations to Korea have improved communication.
- 2.5 The CRCA wants synod to decide whether or not the relationship is functioning positively; whether or not the discussions on differences are complete; and whether or not specific matters need further attention. It also wants a mandate to monitor the PCK’s commitment to improved

relations, as well as a decision for the next synod to end the relationship with the PCK if no improvement is forthcoming.

- 2.6 Ottawa supports the CRCA's report on the PCK but takes exception to 4.6.4 about the next synod ending relations. They report their positive experience with a member from the PCK who joined their church.
- 2.7 Yarrow urges synod to continue the CRCA's mandate to discuss the differences, which they call "divergencies."
- 2.8 Fergus North agrees with giving the CRCA a mandate to monitor the commitment of the PCK to improved relations and to report on this to the next synod. The same church believes that Recommendation 4.6.4 should not be adopted seeing that Synod 2007 can not make a decision for Synod 2010 and thus instruct that synod to end relations.
- 2.9 Synod received three delegates and one observer from the PCK. One of these delegates addressed synod and apologized for the poor communications. He also stated that it was a strong desire of the PCK to continue to have and to build on the relationship that exists between our churches. In addition, the three delegates and the observer met with the officers of synod introducing their churches and repeated much of what can be found in 4.3 of the Report of the CRCA.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 This report shows that communication between our churches and the PCK remains a challenge. There are times when it improves and times when it does not. Much of this appears to depend on PCK committee members changing often, as well as on language, distance, and cultural problems. Still, there has been progress again of late and this needs to be monitored. In addition, the CRCA should follow the example of the FRCA and consider sending a member of the committee more often to Korea for face to face meetings. It may also be possible and fruitful to share the visitation load with other sister churches.
- 3.2 Fergus North is correct that it is not within the power of this synod to instruct the next synod as to what to do with relations with the PCK.
- 3.3 The presence of three delegates and one observer at Synod Smithers at considerable time and expense indicates that the PCK does take our relations seriously and wishes to maintain and promote them.
- 3.4 Previous synods have instructed the committee to deal with certain confessional and church polity differences between our respective churches without having reached resolution. Seeing that Synod Fergus 1998 (Acts, Art. 130, pp.157-8) reached agreement between the OPC and our churches on these differences (fencing the Lord's Supper and confessional membership), it would be helpful to send the text of this agreement to the PCK for their consideration and reaction.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To continue the Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Presbyterian Church in Korea according to the adopted rules.
- 4.2 To express thankfulness to the PCK for sending such a large delegation to synod thereby indicating the value they place on our relations.
- 4.3 To charge the committee:
 - 4.3.1 To work diligently on improving our relations with the PCK by mail/email, by meeting with their delegates at the ICRC, and by sending a member of the CRCA to Korea on a more regular basis.
 - 4.3.2 To contact those sister churches who have relations with the PCK with the request that we alternate with them in visiting the General Assembly of the PCK.
 - 4.3.3 To send a copy of our agreement with the OPC to the PCK and ask for their reaction and

possible agreement.

4.3.4 To report on the state of communications to the next synod.

4.4 To thank the committee for the work done on its mandate.

ADOPTED

Article 87

Closing

The chairman spoke a few words of farewell to Rev. Needham who would be returning home early the next day. Since the Smithers congregation has an Ascension Day service this year, synod was adjourned until the morning. After the service Rev. Kees Kleijn from the Free Reformed Churches of South Africa addressed the congregation and the members of synod. The text of his address to synod can be found in the appendices of these Acts.

**Day 8 — Morning Session
Friday, May 18, 2007**

Article 88

Opening Devotions and Rollcall

The chairman called the meeting to order. He read John 16:16-28 which speaks about Christ interceding for us. After he led in prayer the meeting sang Psalm 47:1 and 2. Rollcall was held. All members were present.

Article 89

Adoptions of the Acts — Day 6 and Day 7

The proceedings of Day 6, as recorded in Articles 62-69, and those of Day 7, as recorded in Articles 70-78, were reviewed and adopted as part of the Acts of synod.

Article 90

Adjournment

Synod adjourned for committee work

**Day 8 — Afternoon Session
Friday, May 18, 2007**

Article 91

Reopening

The meeting was reopened in plenary session. The chairman requested that we sing Psalm 47:3. All the members of synod were present.

Article 92

Orthodox Presbyterian Church

The advisory committee presented its second draft which, after some discussion, was taken back by the committee.

Article 93

Reformed Churches in the Netherlands - Restored (GKH)

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 94

Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN)

The advisory committee presented its second draft which, after two rounds of discussion, was taken back by the committee.

Article 95

Appeal from Aldergrove re Art. 114 of Synod Chatham

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

1.1 Appeal from Aldergrove against the decision Art. 114 of Synod Chatham 2004

2. Observation

2.1 Aldergrove requests synod to decide that Synod Chatham wronged the consistory of Aldergrove by making an unsubstantiated and unproven judgment concerning its pastoral wisdom and care. (see Acts, Synod Chatham, Art. 114, 4.2)

2.2 Aldergrove requests synod to consider that Synod Chatham found fault with Aldergrove consistory for allegedly not providing the appellants with proof “concerning why it appeals the decision of classis.” However, the appellants were not contending that Aldergrove consistory has not shared with them their justification for appealing the decision of classis, but rather that the justification provided to them does not, as they see it, prove that the decision of classis went contrary to either the Word of God or the Church Order (i.e., the requirement of Art. 31 CO).

3. Consideration

3.1 Synod Chatham 2004 found fault with Aldergrove consistory in Consideration 4.2 of Art. 114 in the Acts, for something the appellants were not contending and therefore made an unsubstantiated and unproven judgement concerning the pastoral wisdom and care of the consistory of Aldergrove.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

4.1 To sustain the appeal of Aldergrove.

ADOPTED

Rev. Holtvlüwer and Rev. Schouten abstained according to Art. 32 CO.

Article 96

Overture from Regional Synod West 2006 re administration of Lord’s Supper to shut-ins.

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a round of discussion it was moved and seconded to amend the Consideration and Recommendation to read:

Consideration: The Church Order cannot cover every situation that arises and has never included a clause about Lord’s Supper to shut-ins,

Recommendation: Synod decide that there is no need to change the Church Order.

The amendment was **defeated**.

1. Material

1.1 Overture from Regional Synod West 2006 regarding the administration of Lord’s Supper to shut-ins.

2. Observations

2.1 Regional Synod West overtures general synod to consider Smithers’ overture and classis’ decision together with regional synod’s considerations regarding the administration of the Lord’s Supper to shut-ins.

2.2 Smithers requests a revision of the Church Order regarding the administration of the Lord’s Supper to shut-ins, because this issue is living in the churches, but is not clearly dealt with in the Church Order.

- 2.3 Smithers suggests that Articles 56, 60 and 61 of the Church Order be revised as follows:
- 2.3.1 Article 56: The sacraments shall be administered only under the authority of the consistory, in a public worship service, by a minister of the Word, with the use of the adopted forms. *When administering Lord's Supper to shut-ins, these guidelines shall be maintained as much as possible.*
- 2.3.2 Article 60: The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated at least once every three months. *The regulations concerning the administration of the Lord's Supper to shut-ins shall be decided upon locally.*
- 2.3.3 Article 61: The consistory shall admit to the Lord's Supper only those who have made public profession of the Reformed faith and lead a godly life. Members of sister churches shall be admitted on the ground of a good attestation concerning their doctrine and conduct. *This same care and caution must be exercised when administering Lord's Supper to shut-ins.*
- 2.4 Classis Pacific West (October 10-11, 2006) acceded to the request of Smithers and noted that attention should be paid to the first sentence of Article 33 of the Belgic Confession ("We believe that our gracious God, mindful of our insensitivity and weakness, has ordained sacraments to seal His promises to us and to be pledges of His good will and grace towards us") and the first sentence of the last paragraph of Art. 35 BC ("Finally, we receive this holy sacrament in the congregation of the people of God with humility and reverence as we together commemorate the death of Christ our Saviour.")
- 2.5 Regional Synod West (November 14, 2006) observed:
- 2.5.1 The churches have agreed in Art. 56 CO that "the sacraments shall be administered only... in a public worship service."
- 2.5.2 Smithers seeks an amendment to the Church Order to allow space for administering the Lord's Supper to shut-ins, on the assumption that the CO does not currently allow it.
- 2.5.3 Smithers has supplied valuable historical data that demonstrates the line of thinking in the past.
- 2.5.4 Already the churches recognize that the consistory can summon the congregation together in multiple places. This happens when a congregation is too big for one auditorium, or when part of the congregation lives too far away from the majority (so-called house congregations).
- 2.6 Regional Synod West (November 14, 2006) considered:
- 2.6.1 It is not the numbers of attendees nor the venue that constitutes a "public worship service," but the presence of office bearers together with congregation members (the 'form of the church').
- 2.6.2 The current recognition of the form of the church in multiple places can by extension be applied to extraordinary circumstances in the congregation, in the sense that the consistory could have a worship service for those who cannot come to the normal gathering. In principle this does not differ from a consistory calling the congregation together at two times (e.g., because the building is too small, necessitating two services back to back) or calling the congregation together at two locations (e.g., because members live too far apart).
- 2.6.3 Consistories are responsible for the pastoral care of the members. If in consistory's judgment a shut-in member requires the encouragement contained in the Lord's Supper, consistory ought to do what it can to provide that encouragement.
- 2.6.4 While the administration of the Lord's Supper does belong to the churches in common, it remains debatable whether or not a revision of certain Church Order articles is needed.
- 2.6.5 Even if an alteration to the Church Order is not deemed necessary, a decision on the topic by synod may be beneficial for the churches.

3. Consideration

- 3.1 Synod takes note of the observations of Regional Synod West 2006 and agrees with the first four considerations of Regional Synod West which means that there is no need for a revision of the Church Order to make the administration of the Lord's Supper to shut-ins possible.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 There is no need to make special provisions in the Church Order for the administration of the Lord's Supper to shut-ins.

ADOPTED

**Day 8 — Evening Session
Friday, May 18, 2007**

Article 97

Reopening

The chairman called the meeting to order and requested that we sing Hymn 2:1 and 2.

Article 98

The United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA)

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CPEU Report: 1) General; 2) Church Order Committee; 3) Common Songbook Committee; 4) Theological Education Committee; 5) all appendices
- 1.2-20 Letters from the following nineteen churches:
Surrey, Spring Creek (2), Guelph, Smithers, London, Coaldale, Carman West, Flamborough, Grand Rapids (2), Carman East, Chilliwack (2), Lincoln, Grand Valley, Edmonton Immanuel, Langley, Neerlandia, Orangeville, Fergus North (3) Winnipeg Redeemer

— GENERAL —

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Chatham gave the CPEU the following mandate:
- 2.1.1 To maintain the rules of Phase Two (Ecclesiastical Fellowship), so far as it concerns the churches in common (see *Acts of Synod Neerlandia 2001*, Article 73, Considerations 4.5 and 4.6).
- 2.1.2 To pursue continued fraternal dialogue with the URCNA with a view towards entering the final phase of federative unity.
- 2.1.3 To work closely with the sub-committees of the CPEU re church order, theological education and a common songbook, consulting with them concerning the progress made.
- 2.1.4 To present a single comprehensive report, that has been prepared jointly with the CERCU of the URCNA to the next Synod, including a recommendation for a definite time frame for federative unity.
- 2.1.5 To provide information to the churches at regular intervals.
- 2.1.6 To make themselves available upon request of Canadian Reformed Churches for advice on local developments with the URCNA.
- 2.1.7 To work closely with the CERCU of the URCNA.
- 2.1.8 To commence discussion concerning the "Framework Hypothesis" and the support this theory has within the URCNA, and serve the next synod with information concerning this matter.

- 2.2 The CPEU reports the following regarding its mandate:
- 2.2.1 In general the commitment to implement Phase 2 of the relationship with the URCNA, and the desire to work towards full federative unity remains strong in the Canadian Reformed Churches. Among the URCs—in particular the ones located in Canada—there is definitely much willingness to cooperate with local CanRC and to implement Phase 2 of the relationship. There are many local contacts throughout the country. Some members and churches are hesitant when it comes to a possible merger of the two federations in the near future. This difficulty is especially noticeable among URCNA in the United States. The CPEU further states that “despite possible roadblocks on the way and despite the fact that we may need many more years than we initially anticipated, your committee remains positive about the developments.”
 - 2.2.2 Since Synod Chatham there has been one combined meeting of the CPEU and the Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity (CERCU). The two committees committed to meeting together at least every two years. During the combined meeting, the URCNA presented a list of theological questions on matters like federal vision, justification, common grace, covenant of works, internal and external covenant, etc. and inquired after the position of the CanRC or its ministers on these matters. The CPEU wants to consider these questions seriously but has not determined a method of responding on behalf of the CanRC or ministers. (In his speech to synod, Rev. Bouwers, fraternal delegate from the URCNA, urged the CanRC to find a way to respond to these questions). In the same vein, the CPEU is anticipating a response from the CERCU on the Framework Hypothesis matter.
 - 2.2.3 The three sub-committees of the CPEU were “busy with work in progress and had a clear mandate. Therefore not much consultation was needed with the CPEU.”
 - 2.2.4 The mandate to produce a joint report has not been completed, since the CERCU does not have a similar instruction from the URCNA Synod. Both committees are convinced that at this point of time it would not be helpful to put time-pressure on the unity process.
 - 2.2.5 The mandate to provide information to the churches was done mainly through Press Releases of the various meetings, published in *Clarion* and *Christian Renewal*. Two brothers of the Common Songbook Committee have also published a series of articles for the edification of the members in both federations.
 - 2.2.6 The CPEU reports that some advice was given in particular matters of local contacts between the URCNA and the CanRC. The CPEU did not consider it within its mandate to stimulate and promote cooperation between URC and CanRC on the local level beyond the specific requests for advice.
 - 2.2.7 The CPEU and the CERCU have agreed to meet as a minimum every two years.
 - 2.2.8 In the matter of the Framework Hypothesis the CERCU reminded the CPEU of a decision by Synod Escondido 2001 regarding creation and evolution, and expressed as their conviction that almost all URCs hold to a literal six days of creation. They agreed to provide a written response to this query.
- 2.3 Surrey appreciates the attention being paid to the Framework Hypothesis, and encourages synod to ensure that this matter does not get swept aside.
- 2.4 Guelph recommends that synod give the sub-committees the mandate to report directly to General Synod 2010 rather than to the CPEU.
- 2.5 London recommends a cautious approach to theological questions raised by the URCNA about the position of CanRC and/or its ministers on matters like federal vision, justification, common grace, covenant of works, internal and external covenant, as well as the CanRC concern about the matter of the Framework Hypothesis.
- 2.6 Carman West cautions that the CPEU not delve into local situations to promote contacts between local CanRC and URCNA “without waiting for request for advice.” Carman West also

recommends that the mandate for the new CPEU should be clearly stated with details.

- 2.7 Carman East asks synod to consider whether merger is the only biblical option available in relating to our brethren in the URCNA, and whether ecclesiastical fellowship is not an acceptable biblical alternative.
- 2.8 Chilliwack sees evidence of difficulties in the discussions between the CERCU and CPEU and is not quite clear what more can be done at this point in time. Chilliwack is concerned that the Canadian Reformed Churches are “willing to compromise our beliefs and values for the goal of unity” and asks synod to affirm that “a move toward ecclesiastical fellowship would not necessitate an insistence upon federative and organic unity... but that the goal for the Canadian Reformed Churches at this time is to foster meaningful fraternal relations, rather than to become one federation.”
- 2.9 Orangeville wishes to express agreement with the committee that “deadlines for federative unity not be implemented or recommended, due to the difficulties in coming to agreement on the matters of Theological training and a Common Song Book.”

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Synod is satisfied with the reasons given by the committee for not providing a joint report as mandated.
- 3.2 In light of the fact that the CPEU has met infrequently with the CERCU and that the bulk of the work is being done by sub-committees, it seems wise to replace the CPEU with coordinators who oversee the work of the sub-committees. These coordinators will represent the sub-committees in meetings with CERCU and respond to invitations to major assemblies. The sub-committees would report directly to general synod.
- 3.3 In light of the appointment of a Liturgical Forms and Confessions Committee by Synod Calgary URCNA, it would be proper to appoint a fourth sub-committee to work with them on unified texts for creeds, confessions, liturgical forms, and prayers for the new Common Songbook.
- 3.4 Having taken note of the work of the three sub-committees and some of the obstacles they have encountered as well as the comments by the CPEU regarding reluctance in both federations for quick federative unity, synod considers it wise not to establish a definite time frame but to continue to work diligently towards federative unity.
- 3.5 Synod is grateful for the progress of the various sub-committees toward the goal of federative unity with the URCNA and is not convinced that impasses have been reached. Therefore the questions of Carman East and Chilliwack about ecclesiastical fellowship being a satisfactory goal are premature.
- 3.6 The matter of responding to questions of federal vision, justification, common grace, covenant of works, internal and external covenant, etc., is complicated by the fact that synod does not wish to make extra-confessional statements and that there is no other means to answer on behalf of the churches. Synod considers the possibility of the coordinators to request capable men to write personal articles about these topics or organize conferences to discuss these matters.
- 3.7 Synod is grateful for the commitment of CERCU to provide written response to the CanRC inquiry regarding the Framework Hypothesis.
- 3.8 Regarding the CPEU’s mandate to be involved in local contacts, synod commends the committee for not imposing itself in situations where its advice was not requested.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To acknowledge with gratitude to the Lord the progress of the CPEU and the CERCU and their sub-committees in the work towards federative unity.
- 4.2 To thank the members of the CPEU for their work over the years and to consider their mandate concluded.
- 4.3 To appoint two ecclesiastical unity (EU) coordinators to facilitate contact with CERCU of the

URCNA, and mandate these EU coordinators:

- 4.3.1 To represent the four committees in meetings with CERCU and to respond to invitations to major assemblies.
- 4.3.2 To coordinate responses to questions from the URCNA, and to receive their response to the Framework Hypothesis question.
- 4.3.3 To make themselves available upon request for local assistance.
- 4.4 To reappoint the Church Order Committee, the Theological Education Committee and the Common Songbook Committee and to appoint a Liturgical Forms and Confessions Committee, which will all report directly to general synod.
- 4.5 To recognize the difficulty of establishing a definite time frame for federative unity, but encourage the committees to work diligently toward that goal.

ADOPTED

Article 99

The United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA)

The advisory committee presented Part 2 its proposal:

— CHURCH ORDER COMMITTEE —

1. Material

- 1.1 See Art. 98

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Chatham gave the following mandate to the Church Order Committee:
 - 2.1.1 To continue to work closely with the committee re church order appointed by the URCNA synod.
 - 2.1.2 To continue in the evaluation of the differences between the current church orders of the federations, in the light of the scriptural and confessional principles and patterns of church government of the Church Order of Dort.
 - 2.1.3 To propose a common church order in the line of the Church Order of Dort.
 - 2.1.4 To formulate a draft proposal of regulations for General Synod.
 - 2.1.5 To keep the CPEU updated on the progress.
 - 2.1.6 To provide the CPEU with a report in sufficient time for them to produce the comprehensive report for Synod in a timely fashion.
- 2.2 The Church Order Committee reports the following concerning its mandate:
 - 2.2.1 The committee met seven times. each time these meetings lasted three days. A single set of minutes was kept, and common press releases were published.
 - 2.2.2 The committee continued to evaluate the differences between the current church orders in light of the scriptural and confessional principles and patterns of church government of the Church Order of Dort. The committee received input from four churches and two individuals.
 - 2.2.3 The committee has provided a Proposed Church Order (PCO), and attached it to their report, as well as a four-column document for comparing the PCO to the Church Order of Dort (1914/1920), the Church Order of the CanRC (1986), and the Church Order of the URCNA (2004).
 - 2.2.4 The committee could not fulfill its mandate to include Regulations for General Synod along with the Proposed Church Order, since the URC committee did not have this as part of their mandate. The upcoming URCNA synod will receive a proposal to allow its committee to proceed with our committee to produce such regulations.
 - 2.2.5 The CPEU and the churches were kept informed and updated on the progress of the committee via the press releases that were published in *Clarion, Reformed Polemics* and

Christian Renewal.

Further, the committee reports:

- 2.2.6 The committee includes a URCNA Protocol Procedure Proposal, to be submitted to the 2007 URCNA Synod, which details the proposed schedule of events regarding the Proposed Church Order in the United Reformed Churches.
- 2.2.7 The report of the committee includes a minority report regarding Proposed Church Order Article 35. This report recommends to synod that congregations sing psalms and hymns in the worship services that are approved by the consistory in accord with the synodically adopted standard, while the Proposed Church Order requires the psalms and hymns to be approved by synod.
- 2.3 The committee recommends that synod:
 - 2.3.1 Receives the PCO and the 4 column comparison document.
 - 2.3.2 Gives the PCO and the 4 column comparison document to the churches for discussion and evaluation, with a view to final adoption by Synod 2010.
 - 2.3.3 Re-appoints, for the sake of continuity, the current committee members.
 - 2.3.4 Mandates the committee to work closely with the committee re church order appointed by the URCNA synod.
 - 2.3.5 Mandates the committee to receive, collate, and evaluate all official communications regarding the PCO, and on that basis to recommend a revised PCO to Synod 2010.
 - 2.3.6 Requests that all official communications regarding the PCO proceed only from consistories to the committee.
 - 2.3.7 Requests that all communications from individual church members regarding the PCO be processed through their consistories.
 - 2.3.8 Requests that all communications regarding the PCO be received by the committee by no later than March 1, 2009.
 - 2.3.9 Mandates the committee to compile a list of all communications received together with a summary of the content of each communication and a statement of committee action relating to the communication.
 - 2.3.10 Authorizes the committee, in conjunction with the URCNA synod appointed Church Order Committee, to hold no more than eight (8) regional information and review conferences throughout the federations.
 - 2.3.11 Mandates the committee to formulate a draft proposal of Regulations for General Synod.
 - 2.3.12 Mandates the committee to keep the CPEU updated on the progress.
 - 2.3.13 Mandates the committee to provide the CPEU with a report in sufficient time for them to produce the comprehensive report for Synod 2010 in a timely fashion.
- 2.4 London supports the committee's recommendation regarding the time frame for the churches to evaluate the Proposed Church Order.
- 2.5 Coaldale, Fergus North, Grand Valley, Spring Creek all provide synod with some detailed comments regarding the content of the Proposed Church Order.
- 2.6 Carman West agrees with the thirteen recommendations listed by the committee.
- 2.7 Carman East agrees with the recommendation of the committee to allow time for this important document to be evaluated and agreed to by both federations.
- 2.8 Winnipeg Redeemer recommends that synod not decide at this time on the Proposed Church Order as presented by the Church Order sub-committee.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Having received the Proposed Church Order and the four-column document of comparison, as well as the minority report, synod agrees that these documents should now be sent to the churches for discussion and evaluation with a view to the eventual adoption of a Church Order by Synod 2010. The churches should be requested to send responses directly to the committee by March 1, 2009, for the committee to receive, collate, and evaluate, in order to recommend

a revised Proposed Church Order to Synod 2010. The submissions from Coaldale, Fergus North, Grand Valley, Spring Creek, should be forwarded to the committee. Regarding the minority report on Article 35 of the Proposed Church Order, synod expresses its strong preference for Article 35 as it is proposed in the Proposed Church Order.

- 3.2 Synod appreciates the need to wait for Regulations for General Synod while the URCNA committee is still seeking such a mandate from the next URCNA synod.
- 3.3 Synod takes grateful note of the URCNA Protocol Procedure Proposal and is hopeful that the time frames expressed therein—including the recommendation of the proposal that the URCNA adopt the Proposed Church Order by 2010—can be met.
- 3.4 For the sake of continuity synod should reappoint the present committee members to work closely with the URCNA committee.
- 3.5 Synod appreciates and supports the committee’s recommendation for regional information and review conferences throughout the federations.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To express gratitude to the committee for completing its mandate.
- 4.2 To receive the Proposed Church Order and the four-column document, as well as the minority report, and to recommend them for discussion and evaluation by the churches. The churches are requested to send responses directly to the committee before March 1, 2009. Individual church members are requested to send their submissions through their consistories.
- 4.3 To forward the submissions from Coaldale, Fergus North, Grand Valley, and Spring Creek to the committee.
- 4.4 To reappoint the present committee members and mandate the committee:
 - 4.4.1 To work closely with the committee re church order appointed by the URCNA synod.
 - 4.4.2 To receive, collate, and evaluate all official communications regarding the Proposed Church Order.
 - 4.4.3 To propose Regulations for General Synod should the URCNA committee receive such a mandate from the next URCNA synod.
 - 4.4.4 To prepare a revised Proposed Church Order for Synod 2010, including proposed Regulations for General Synod, sending it to the churches six months prior to synod.
 - 4.4.5 To arrange for regional information and review conferences throughout the federations as time and opportunity permits.

ADOPTED

Article 100

The United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA)

The advisory committee presented Part 3 of its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back this section of its proposal for further consideration.

Article 101

Closing Devotion and Adjournment

Brother Nordeman led in closing devotions from Psalm 145. After the meeting sang Psalm 145:1, 3 and 5 he led in closing prayer. The chairman adjourned the meeting.

Day 9 — Morning Session

Saturday, May 19, 2007

Article 102

Opening Devotions and Rollcall

The chairman called the meeting to order. He read John 17 which is an example of the intercession of the

Lord Jesus Christ. After he led in prayer the meeting sang Hymn 31:1, 3 and 5. Rollcall was held. All members were present.

Article 103

The United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA)

Synod continued the discussion on the URCNA report. The advisory committee presented a revised draft of Part 3 of its proposal regarding the Theological Education component.

— THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE —

1. Material

- 1.1 See Art. 98
- 1.2 Theol. Ed. Com. – Notes and Minutes of Meetings to General Synod 2007

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Chatham gave the Theological Education Committee the following mandate:
 - 2.1.1 To continue working closely with the committee re theological education appointed by the URCNA synods.
 - 2.1.2 To continue the evaluation of the current situation as to theological education within the CanRC and the URCNA.
 - 2.1.3 To develop a proposal concerning theological education within the new federation keeping in mind that:
 - 2.1.3.1 The new federation should retain at least one federational theological school at which the board of governors, the professors and teaching staff are appointed by synod.
 - 2.1.3.2 Attention should be given as to what to do in the case of an aspiring candidate to the ministry who does not have adequate instruction in significant courses in Reformed Doctrine, in Reformed Church Polity, or in Reformed Church History, as well as Reformed Homiletics.
 - 2.1.4 To keep the CPEU updated on the progress.
 - 2.1.5 To provide the CPEU with a report in sufficient time for them to produce the comprehensive report for Synod in a timely fashion.
- 2.2 The committee includes in its report the URCNA committee's mandate "that this committee work together with the Canadian Reformed Committee to draft proposals for theological education to our respective synods in preparation for an eventual plan of union."
- 2.3 The committee reports the following regarding its mandate:
 - 2.3.1 Due to reasons of health, Rev. Cl. Stam was not able to accept his re-appointment. The committee appointed Rev. R. Schouten.
 - 2.3.2 The committee met three times by itself and two times as a joint committee with the URCNA counterparts.
 - 2.3.3 In the combined meeting of November 7 and 8, 2005, it became apparent that an impasse had been reached. The members of the URCNA committee unanimously agreed that "we as a committee are not prepared to entertain any proposal for theological education that mandates at least one federational seminary." The committee notes that "for our part we were not at liberty to ignore this condition seeing our mandate specifically states 'the new federation should retain at least one federational theological school.'"
 - 2.3.4 Because of the impasse that has been reached, the committee did not see any benefit in having further joint committee meetings.
 - 2.3.5 The committee requests synod to give serious consideration to continuing its mandate so that the committee will be able to serve the next general synod with a finalized report.

- 2.4 Surrey is of the understanding that there were Statements of Agreement between the URCNA and the CanRC that “the resulting united churches will retain at least one federational theological school and that the synod recommend the schools professors and teaching staff for appointment.” They ask synod to approach the URCNA with the request for more clarity seeing the impasse that has arisen between the two sub-committees.
- 2.5 Spring Creek overtures synod to be reluctant in surrendering too easily the practice of having a seminary of the federation. They submit 2 Timothy 2:2 as being a scriptural direction towards such a seminary and further provide seven additional grounds.
- 2.6 London is convinced that we not surrender the principle that theological training is both the task and the responsibility of the churches.
- 2.7 Carman West agrees with the committee about the principle that we should not give up that “theological training is both the task and the responsibility of the churches.”
- 2.8 Flamborough supports the preference for a theological training by the churches for the churches. In case that theological education would become the only stumbling block, Flamborough urges synod to consider whether holding on to the demand of a federational Theological College or Seminary is a biblical requirement.
- 2.9 Grand Rapids agrees with the conclusion of the committee that the failure to recognize the need for at least one federational seminary in a new federation will call “into question... the future of the entire merger project.”
- 2.10 Carman East considers an impasse regarding a federational theological seminary to be a deal-breaker.
- 2.11 Grand Valley agrees that we as churches must maintain at least one federational seminary and support the principle “that theological training is both the task and the responsibility of the churches.”
- 2.12 Langley proposes that synod not appoint or reappoint any of the professors from our Theological College and that synod overture URCNA Synod Schererville 2007 to likewise not appoint or reappoint any professors from the independent seminaries to their committee.
- 2.13 Fergus North supports the need for federational theological training.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Synod appreciates the number of meetings held by the joint committee and recognizes that an impasse occurred due to the committees having received apparent incompatible instructions in their mandates as it relates to a federational seminary.
- 3.2 The church at Surrey is correct to point out that in 2001 the Statements of Agreement show that the unity committees (CPEU and CERCU) agreed that “the mandates for the proposed theological study committees of both federations contain provisions... for at least one federational theological school” (pp.152-3, Acts, Synod Neerlandia). This is likely the backdrop for the mandate which Synod Chatham gave to the committee. However, Surrey does not indicate what status the Statements of Agreement have in the URCNA. The report of the Theological Education Committee also gives no elucidation on this. In fact, Synod 2001 of the URCNA decided that the Statements of Agreement hold no official status in the URCNA. This means that we cannot simply hold the URCNA to the statement “at least one federational theological school” in the Statements of Agreement.
- 3.3 The mandate for the theological education committee must be based on 2 Timothy 2.2, which directs us to the principle that the churches are responsible for the theological training of their students for the ministry. In this connection, it should be noted and appreciated that the two theological education committees have already come to agreement on the following six statements, as reported to Synod Chatham 2004:
 - It is the task of the churches to train ministers.
 - Ministers of the churches must receive sound reformed theological training.
 - As a principle, the training of ministers should be done by ministers.

- Such training is best accomplished in the context of institutional theological education.
- It is acknowledged that active involvement of the churches is required for the training of ministers and to protect the confessional integrity of such training.
- The churches, i.e., the URCNA and CanRC, should work towards theological education that is properly accountable to the churches. (p. 236, Acts of Synod Chatham)

These agreements indicate that the two committees are solidly united in the biblical principle of theological education being the full responsibility of the churches.

- 3.4 The principle of 2 Timothy 2.2, which points in the direction of the churches being responsible for the training for the ministry, does not necessitate the conclusion of a ‘federational’ seminary. Article 19 of the Church Order of the CanRC also does not necessitate a federational seminary as “an institution for the training for the ministry” is not the same as federational seminary. Already it is possible under Article 19 for the churches to maintain an institution apart from that institution having to belong to the federation. Therefore, it would be best, for clarity’s sake, to realize that ‘federational’ seminary is terminology that has arisen (in the Statements of Agreement and in the mandate of Synod Chatham) out of current practice and is not itself the Reformed theological education principle. The principle remains: the churches are responsible for the training for the ministry.
- 3.5 It is not acceptable in the course of discussions and agreements leading to federative unity that the committees, or, rather, the way to unity, should reach an impasse on a matter of practice only. There is a way forward: the mandate for the committee should leave sufficient room for a broad range of possibilities to be considered and explored based on the scriptural principle and in accordance with the agreements the committees have already made (see Cons. 3.3 above).
- 3.6 The practice of having a federational seminary (of the churches for the churches), has a long history in the Reformed churches, and has served the CanRC well over many years. A seminary at which the board and faculty are appointed by the synods of the churches is one of the fullest ways to express the principle that the churches take responsibility for the training for the ministry. Therefore a federational seminary cannot and must not be quickly removed from the discussion of the theological education committees. Indeed, synod expresses the strong preference for the historic practice of maintaining a federational seminary. Synod appreciates the submissions of the churches at Carman East, Carman West, Fergus North, Flamborough, Grand Rapids, Grand Valley, and Spring Creek expressing preference for a federational seminary, while acknowledging the position of Flamborough that a federational seminary is not a biblical requirement. Synod expresses the desire that the next URCNA synod would mandate the URCNA theological education committee to engage the CanRC committee on all options, including the possibility of at least one federational seminary.
- 3.7 Synod agrees with the committee’s request to continue discussions about theological education with an eye to federative unity with the URCNA.
- 3.8 Synod sees the wisdom of Langley’s proposal to not appoint or reappoint any of the professors from our Theological College in Hamilton to the Theological Education Committee.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To thank the Theological Education Committee for its work.
- 4.2 To express appreciation for the work that Rev. Cl. Stam was able to do in his term on the committee and thank him for his work, and to approve of the appointment of Rev. R. Schouten.
- 4.3 To reappoint the Theological Education Committee and to replace the two members of the committee who work at the Theological College in Hamilton.
- 4.4 To mandate the committee:
- 4.4.1 To seek agreement with the URCNA committee about theological education for the new

united federation:

- 4.4.1.1 On the principle of 2 Timothy 2.2
- 4.4.1.2 Taking into consideration the joint statements made by the theological education committees (see Consideration 3)
- 4.4.1.3 While expressing the strong preference for at least one federational seminary
- 4.4.2 To convey this decision, with the observations and considerations, to the theological education committee of the URCNA in time for the next URCNA synod.

ADOPTED

Article 104

The United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA)

The advisory committee presented Part 4 of its proposal.

— COMMON SONGBOOK COMMITTEE —

After a round of discussion it was moved and seconded to delete from Consideration 5 the words:
“it agrees that this may not be a defining obstacle to federative unity.”

This amendment was **defeated**.

It was moved and seconded to add to Consideration 5:

Synod agrees with the comments of the church at Grand Rapids (see Obs. 8).

This amendment was **defeated**.

It was moved and seconded to add to Considerations 5 the following:

Synod also expresses appreciation for a suggestion by some of the churches including Grand Rapids (see Obs. 2.8), namely the possibility that “for every one of the 150 Psalms in the *Book of Praise*, one selection be made from the most loved and well-known psalms in the URC repertoire.” Other possibilities which include the 150 Psalms in the *Book of Praise* can also be considered.

This amendment was **adopted**.

The amended proposal was **adopted** as follows:

1. Material

- 1.1 See Art. 98

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Chatham gave the Common Songbook Committee the following mandate:
 - 2.1.1 To continue working closely with the committee re songbook appointed by the URCNA synods.
 - 2.1.2 To continue to produce a songbook that contains the complete Anglo-Genevan Psalter and other suitable metrical versions of the Psalms, including hymns that also meet the standard of faithfulness to the Scriptures and the Reformed Confessions.
 - 2.1.3 To keep the CPEU updated on the progress.
 - 2.1.4 To provide the CPEU with a report in sufficient time for them to produce the comprehensive report for Synod in a timely fashion.
- 2.2 The committee includes in its report the URCNA committee’s mandate. (Reference: Minutes Synod Escondido).
 - That the present ‘Psalter Hymnal Committee’ work together with the Canadian Reformed ‘Book of Praise Committee’ to consider for inclusion in this song book the 150 Psalms in metrical settings (one note for each syllable) from an English translation of the Genevan Psalter, as well as other non-Genevan settings for the

Psalms, and also hymns that meet the standard of faithfulness to the Scriptures and to the Reformed Confessions. The two song books primarily in use need not be included in their totality. (Minutes, Article XLV, B, 2, c).

- To report annually to the Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity, which, in turn will make full annual reports to the churches concerning this work. (Minutes, Article XLV, B, 4).

2.3 The Common Songbook Committee reports the following regarding its mandate:

2.3.1 The Joint Committee met five times since the last synod, while the individual committees also met regularly. Efforts are being made to publicize awareness of the work done, particularly on the Principles and Guidelines, with a series of articles in *Christian Renewal* and *Clarion*.

2.3.2 As a result of the input from Synod Calgary of the URCNA, two Guidelines were changed slightly, adopted by the Joint Committee, and now read as follows:

- Guideline 7 now reads: “In content and form, the songs of the Church must be free from artificiality, sentimentality, *and individualism.*” (italics constitutes the change)
- Guideline 9 originally read as follows: “The music of the Church should be expressive of the Reformed tradition. Where possible, use is to be made of music developed in the tradition of this rich heritage (e.g., the Genevan psalm tunes and the Scottish Psalter).” Synod Calgary changed the wording to: “*The music of the Church should be expressive of the Reformed tradition. Use is to be made of the music developed in the tradition of this rich heritage.*”

2.3.3 The URCNA Synod of Calgary has appointed a separate committee to deal with the revised prose section for a new URCNA hymnal, with the additional mandate to consult with the CanRC. The Joint Committee will approach Synod Smithers to appoint a committee to this task.

2.3.4 The Joint Committee reports as follows on activity regarding the songbook:

2.3.4.1 The Joint Committee has reviewed hymns from various sources in accordance with the adopted Principles and Guidelines in order to produce a gross list from which final selections for the Common Songbook will be chosen.

2.3.4.2 It has been agreed upon that the structure of the hymnary will follow the division of the Apostolic Creed.

2.3.4.3 The Joint Committee has reached agreement on the following:

- The Joint Committee has agreed that at least one of each Psalm rendition must be a complete Psalm. Additional selections of the same Psalm may be partial.
- Whether complete or partial, the renditions ought to be accurate translations or paraphrases of the Hebrew text of the Psalms.
- The Joint Committee has agreed that all 150 Psalms are to be represented in the Psalter section.
- The tunes should support the words.
- The Psalter should be expressive of the Reformed tradition.
- The Psalms will have the principal place in the singing of the congregation, and therefore, in the churches’ Song Book.
- In principle there is agreement to publish in 4-part harmony.

2.3.4.4 The Joint Committee reports disagreement regarding the inclusion of the complete Anglo-Genevan Psalter in the Common Songbook. Discussion papers revealed that it was not that far-fetched that this issue could become an obstacle to real unity. The committee expresses the sentiment that “if everyone keeps the unity of the federation-to-be fully in view, considerations for a compromise that is God pleasing must be made possible.”

- 2.3.4.5 The Joint Committee notes that currently the Songbook appears to be a condition for federative unity (see Art. 73, 4.7 Neerlandia) and suggests that this may need to be changed in order to move forward.
- 2.3.5 The Joint Committee makes the following recommendations to Synod Smithers:
 - 2.3.5.1 Synod decide to continue the mandate as given by Synod Chatham, Art. 77, par. 5 except modified as listed under 2.3.5.4 (see below).
 - 2.3.5.2 Synod appoint a (new) sub-committee to the SCBP to work together with URCNA “Liturgical forms and confessions committee (URCNA)” to come to a unified text for creeds, confessions and liturgical forms and prayers.
 - 2.3.5.3 Synod maintain the goal for production and use of a Common Songbook but establish that the Common Songbook is not a condition for federative unity.
 - 2.3.5.4 Synod reconsider the decision recorded in Art. 77, par. 5.2.2. of Synod Chatham: “To continue to produce a song book that contains the complete Anglo-Genevan Psalter” and allow the SCBP to delete some Genevan Psalms provided suitable complete replacements can be found.
 - 2.3.5.5 Synod approve the changes to Guidelines 7 and 9.
 - 2.3.5.6 Synod state its commitment that the Common Songbook shall be the exclusively used Songbook of the united federation.
- 2.4 Surrey does not see sufficient grounds in the report of the committee to replace Genevan melodies in the Common Songbook. They wish to maintain the original plan of 150 Genevan Psalms and suggest the possibility of additional versions of the psalms.
- 2.5 Smithers concurs with the recommendation of the CSB (9.6) to have a Common Songbook that shall be exclusively used in the worship services of a united federation. And the Common Songbook should not be a condition for federative unity. Smithers also suggests that as a norm, the Common Songbook should include songs that are approved by general synod, with the recognition that exceptions can be made in the case of cultural or language barriers. Finally, Smithers suggests to change the mandate of the SCBP so that they are no longer bound to include the complete Anglo-Genevan Psalter.
- 2.6 London supports that the committee’s mandate be changed to produce a songbook that contains the Anglo-Genevan Psalter while allowing the SCBP to delete some Genevan Psalms provided suitable complete replacements can be found. London includes a proviso that a majority of the Genevan tunes be retained. London does not feel that the Common Songbook needs to be a condition for federative unity, but does recommend that the draft texts of the Creeds, Confessions, Liturgical Forms, and Prayers should be agreed upon prior to federative unity.
- 2.7 Carman West does not agree with the idea of postponing discussion of the Common Songbook until after federative unity has been achieved, nor do they agree with the idea of deleting some Anglo-Genevan Psalms, but are of the opinion that the SCBP should be given the freedom to look for alternative melodies from the Anglo-Genevan tradition and present their findings to the churches for evaluation. Carman West agrees that the work of the SCBP be divided so that there can be a committee for the song section and another for the prose section.
- 2.8 Grand Rapids does not agree with the recommendation of the committee that synod “establish that the Common Song Book is not a condition for federative unity.” In this regard Grand Rapids also notes that there is no need to operate within a time frame. Grand Rapids suggests the possibility that “for every one of the 150 Psalms in the Book of Praise, one selection be made from the most loved and well-known psalms in the URC repertoire—provided, of course, that the words are true to the actual biblical text.”
- 2.9 Spring Creek overtures synod that the Common Songbook not be considered a condition for federative unity and that all of the 150 Psalms shall be included in the Common Songbook, but that synod does not insist that all of the 150 Psalms are to be set to the music of the Genevan tunes, provided suitable replacements can be found.
- 2.10 Lincoln is deeply concerned with recommendations 9.3 and 9.4 of the committee’s report, and

therefore urges synod to uphold the mandate to the committee (SCBP) given at Synod Chatham 2004.

- 2.11 In addition to some comments about proposed hymns in a new Common Songbook, Grand Valley requests that synod decide that the adoption of a Common Songbook must remain a condition for federative unity. Grand Valley also requests that synod maintain the decision not to allow the SCBP to delete some Genevan Psalms.
- 2.12 Edmonton Immanuel requests that synod not accede to Recommendation 9.3 (establishing that the Common Songbook is not a condition for federative unity); they ask synod to approve a draft Common Songbook before proceeding with merger.
- 2.13 Neerlandia agrees with the committee that the Common Songbook ought not to be a condition for federative unity, and would like to see the committee continue to promote the inclusion of the entire Anglo-Genevan Psalter.
- 2.14 Orangeville disagrees with the committee when it recommends that a Common Songbook not be a condition for federative unity. Orangeville opposes the removal of the part of the committee's mandate which requires that the complete Anglo-Genevan Psalter be included in the Common Songbook. Finally, Orangeville expresses that it is desirable that within one federation there may be the unity of local congregations singing from one Songbook.
- 2.15 Fergus North disagrees with the committee's recommendation to not make the Songbook a condition of unity.
- 2.16 Carman East requests synod to instruct the committee to continue the present course and make completion of the Common Songbook a condition for merger.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Synod appreciates the frequency with which the Joint Committee has met, and the publication of the Principles and Guidelines they used, as well as a series of articles in *Christian Renewal* and *Clarion*.
- 3.2 Synod takes note of the revised Guidelines 7 and 9 adopted by Synod Calgary of the URCNA and finds them acceptable.
- 3.3 Synod agrees with the committee to appoint a sub-committee to deal with the revised prose section for the Common Songbook.
- 3.4 Synod supports the committee's agreement that the structure of the hymnary will follow the division of the Apostolic Creed. Further, synod confirms agreement with all of the items listed in Observation 2.3.4.3.
- 3.5 Although synod continues to express a strong preference for a complete Anglo-Genevan Psalter in the Common Songbook, it agrees that this may not be a defining obstacle to federative unity. Synod also expresses appreciation for a suggestion by some of the churches including Grand Rapids (see Obs. 2.8), namely the possibility that "for every one of the 150 Psalms in the Book of Praise, one selection be made from the most loved and well-known psalms in the URC repertoire." Other possibilities which include the 150 Psalms in the Book of Praise can also be considered.
- 3.6 Synod agrees that the Common Songbook should be the exclusively used songbook of the united federation. Synod acknowledges, however, that such a rule does not exclude exceptions, which would be regulated by a proposed church order.
- 3.7 Although a completed Common Songbook before federative unity is most desirable, a clear commitment to an eventual Common Songbook by both federations is sufficient to enter into federative unity. It should be remembered that at present churches in both federations are worshipping with accepted collections of psalms and hymns, and it is feasible to continue in this way in a united federation until a Common Songbook is attained.
- 3.8 With the foregoing considerations, synod sufficiently deals with the letters from the churches.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To thank the Common Songbook Committee / Joint Committee for its report and the work done with regard to the mandate given by Synod Chatham and acknowledges receipt of the URCNA committee's mandate.
- 4.2 To approve of the agreements of the Joint Committee (Obs. 2.3.4.3).
- 4.3 To approve the revised Guidelines 7 and 9 adopted by Synod Calgary of the URCNA.
- 4.4 To appoint a Liturgical Forms and Confessions Committee to meet with their counterparts in the URCNA to come with a unified text for creeds, confessions, and liturgical forms and prayers, for the proposed prose section for the Common Songbook.
- 4.5 To reappoint the Committee for a Common Songbook with the mandate to prepare the Psalms and Hymns section for the Common Songbook, in accordance with
 - 4.5.1 the agreements of the Joint Committee.
 - 4.5.2 the mandate received from Synod Chatham, taking into account
 - 4.5.2.1 synod's strong preference for a complete Anglo-Genevan Psalter within the Common Songbook, while acknowledging that this may not be a defining obstacle to federative unity.
 - 4.5.2.2 to work as much as possible towards a completed Common Songbook before federative unity is achieved.
- 4.6 To make a clear commitment for an eventual Common Songbook before federative unity is achieved, and requests the committee to obtain the same commitment from the URCNA.
- 4.7 To make the commitment that the Common Songbook shall be the exclusively used songbook in the worship services of the united federation, recognizing the possibility of exceptions as noted in Consideration 3.6.

ADOPTED

It was noted that all the decisions regarding the URCNA were unanimous.

Article 105

Free Reformed Churches of North America (FRCNA)

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CPEU Report - see the appendices
- 1.2-7 Letters from the following six churches:
Carman West, Edmonton Immanuel, Elora, Grand Valley, Guelph, London

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Chatham mandated the CPEU:
 - 2.1.1 To continue meeting with the FRCNA with a view to promoting federative unity, discussing whatever obstacles there may be on this path.
 - 2.1.2 To specifically address with the FRCNA whether it shares the mutual goal of federative unity with the CanRC.
 - 2.1.3 To encourage that the FRCNA be invited to meetings of Canadian Reformed classes and regional synods and to send copies of the Acts of Synod to each other with the purpose of pursuing meaningful interactions and discussions with the churches at the local level.
- 2.2 The CPEU recommends that synod renew the mandate they received from Synod Chatham 2004.
- 2.3 Delegates of the CPEU visited FRCNA Synods of June 2004 and June 2005. Reports of these visits are attached as appendices to the report of the CPEU.
- 2.4 The respective committees met in Langley on January 10, 2005; minutes of the meeting are

included in the report as appendix 5.

- 2.5 At the meeting of January 10, 2005, it was decided to meet again on January 16, 2006, however, a letter was received from the External Relations Committee of the FRCNA, dated November 10, 2005, explaining that “at this point there is not much motivation for the scheduled meeting.” The reasons given are 1) “the ongoing discussions and movement of the Canadian Reformed Churches towards union with the United Reformed Churches in North America” and 2) “our meetings are too much from the top down.”
- 2.6 Guelph recommends that synod mandate the CPEU to express (a) thankfulness to the FRCNA for their strong commitment to the Reformed faith, and (b) that the CanRC desire to work towards federative unity, but this does not appear to be reciprocated by the FRCNA. As such, the CanRC should not actively pursue contact with the FRCNA unless it expresses this to be their desire.
- 2.7 London shares the committee’s confusion as to what the FRCNA mean with comments such as “not union of federations primarily but union of hearts in and under the gospel,” and “not a desire for federative unity but for spiritual unity.”
- 2.8 Edmonton Immanuel requests synod to instruct the CPEU to (a) discontinue meeting with the FRCNA, (b) inform the FRCNA of that decision.
- 2.9 Carman West expresses the wish that future meetings will be longer than one day.
- 2.10 Grand Valley states that the committee’s mandate regarding the FRCNA should be discontinued.
- 2.11 Elora would like to see contact with the FRCNA continued, especially because they have contact with the local FRCNA.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 In view of the lack of contact and discussions, and the disappointing letter of November 10, 2005, it seems doubtful that there would be benefit in providing the CPEU with a renewed mandate regarding contact with the FRCNA. Synod is not convinced by the recommendation of the CPEU for a renewed mandate in the line of Synod Chatham 2004.
- 3.2 As the church at Elora has ongoing contact with the local FRCNA, they should be encouraged to continue discussions in the hope that one day discussions can resume at the federative level.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To cease from pursuing discussions with the FRCNA.
- 4.2 To ask the CPEU to send a letter to the FRCNA informing it of this decision and expressing the desire to resume contact when there is interest from their side.

ADOPTED

Article 106

Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches (OCRC)

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After some discussion it was moved and seconded to add to the synod decision:

to mandate the CPEU to as yet fulfill the mandate of Synod 2004.

The amendment was **defeated**.

1. Material

- 1.1 CPEU Report - see the appendices
- 1.2-4 Letters from the following three churches:
Elora, Grand Valley, London

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Chatham gave the CPEU the following mandate re the OCRC:
 - 2.1.1 To represent the Canadian Reformed Churches (when invited) at meetings of the OCRC, with a view to promoting greater understanding and exploring the possibility of federative unity.
 - 2.1.2 To develop a more concrete proposal toward establishing talks with the OCRC.
 - 2.1.3 To specifically address with the OCRC whether it shares the mutual desire for federative unity with the CanRC.
 - 2.1.4 To make themselves available upon request of Canadian Reformed Churches for advice on local developments.
- 2.2 The committee reports that since Synod Chatham 2004, no correspondence took place, and the committee did not receive any invitation to attend a synod of the OCRC.
- 2.3 The CPEU recommends that the mandate to pursue contacts with the goal to explore the possibilities for federative unity with the OCRC not be renewed.
- 2.4 London recommends that synod sends a letter to the OCRC to specifically determine from them whether they share the mutual desire for federative unity.
- 2.5 Grand Valley agrees with the proposal of the committee to discontinue the committee's mandate regarding the OCRC.
- 2.6 Elora would like synod to encourage further contact with this federation.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Synod regrets the lack of contact with the OCRC as reported by the CPEU. There is no indication that the CPEU developed a more concrete proposal towards establishing talks with the OCRC as the CPEU had been mandated.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To instruct the CPEU to send a letter to the OCRC asking if there is interest in further discussions.

ADOPTED

Article 107

Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS)

The advisory committee submitted its proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CCCA Report 4
- 1.2-6 Letters from the following five churches:
 - Carman East, Elora, Fergus Maranatha, London, Yarrow
- 1.7 Letter from the Interchurch Relations Committee of the RCUS

2. Observations

- 2.1 In a letter to General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches dated May 9, 2007, the Interchurch Relations Committee of the RCUS expresses regret that no delegate from the RCUS can be present at this synod. The ICR expresses gratitude "for the way that our relationship has developed, and trust that we will continue to seek out ways that we may further engage in working together." The RCUS extend their "hearty and warm greetings in the name of our Saviour Christ!"
- 2.2 Synod Chatham had continued ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCUS, and mandated the CCCA to speak with their RCUS counterparts on the topics of
 - Lord's Day observance

- Fencing of the Lord's table
 - Lord's Supper to shut-ins
 - RCUS Church Unity Paper
 - Promotion of our Theological College
 - Promotion of contact between classes
 - Promotion of contact between churches in our respective federations
- 2.3 The CCCA reports that CanRC delegates have attended the last three RCUS synods.
- 2.4 The CCCA has studied and discussed the seven points mentioned in their mandate:
- 2.4.1 *Lord's Day observance*: Though there remain differences in history and practice, the RCUS honours the Lord's Day. "The committee is of the opinion that the matter of Lord's Day observance has been addressed sufficiently. It takes note of positive developments and sees no reason to pursue specific issues further."
- 2.4.2 *Fencing of the Lord's table*: "It is clear that the practice of the RCUS in regard to admission to the Lord's Supper is not identical to ours. The brothers are aware of the need to maintain the sanctity of the celebration with regard to their own members and guests from outside their church and are endeavouring to do this. The committee has voiced its position and notes that the brothers are also open to reflection on our input in regard to this matter." The CCCA recommends that synod consider this topic to be sufficiently discussed.
- 2.4.3 *Lord's Supper to shut-ins*: after supplying a lengthy discussion as to what Scripture, history and Church Order may teach on the subject, the CCCA concludes, "Given the fact that the RCUS maintains that the sacrament is indeed a sacrament of the church and that they ensure that even in a 'home' setting the character of this sacrament is preserved, our committee does not see the need to pursue this further."
- 2.4.4 *RCUS Church Unity Paper*: CCCA members have spoken with their counterparts on the topic, and report positive direction in regard to the Church Unity Paper.
- 2.4.5 *Theological College*: the CCCA has taken up contact with the proper authorities at the Theological College to advertise our College in RCUS circles. "The committee considers that its mandate concerning the Theological College has been fulfilled."
- 2.4.6 *Promotion of contact between classes*: the CCCA reports that this has been done.
- 2.4.7 *Promotion of contact between churches in our respective federations*: the CCCA reports that this has been done.
- 2.5 On other matters relevant to our relations with the RCUS, the CCCA reports that:
- 2.5.1 The RCUS now has fraternal relations with the URCNA (Phase 2), but without entering into extensive unity discussions at this time.
- 2.5.2 The RCUS has taken a firm stand rejecting the teachings of Rev. Norman Shepherd, and would like to know the CanRC position on this matter. The CCCA comments that we need simply to keep to the confessions and make no statements beyond them. The RCUS has also officially warned against the New Perspectives of Paul Theology.
- 2.6 The CCCA recommends that synod decide:
- 2.6.1 To express gratitude to the Lord for the positive developments within our contacts with the RCUS.
- 2.6.2 To conclude that the matter of Lord's Day observance has been addressed sufficiently.
- 2.6.3 To take note of the discussions concerning admission to the Lord's Supper and conclude that the matter has been addressed sufficiently.
- 2.6.4 To take note of the explanation given by the RCUS and the CCCA concerning the administration of the Lord's Supper to shut-ins and conclude that the matter has been addressed sufficiently.
- 2.6.5 To await a further report from the CCCA on the RCUS Church Unity Paper.
- 2.6.6 To consider the mandate in regard to the Theological College and the report on theological education fulfilled.

- 2.6.7 To thank the committee for its work in fulfilling its mandate re the RCUS.
- 2.6.8 To continue the Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the RCUS under the adopted rules.
- 2.7 Carman East writes a detailed submission interacting with the CCCA's material on Lord's Supper celebration for shut-ins. They request synod to instruct the committee "to further dialogue with the RCUS about their practice in light of the confession of having *both* sacraments administered within the congregation (Belgic Confession Art. 35 and Lord's Day 27, Q/A 74) as well as in light of the concern that the sacraments not be elevated above the preached Word (Lord's Day 25, Q/A 65)."
- 2.8 Elora recommends "continuing the discussions with RCUS on fencing the Lord's table and confession al membership, so that we might come to mutually agreed conclusions, especially since they are still open to our input into these matters."
- 2.9 Fergus Maranatha feels that we should continue to pursue the matter of the Lord's Day observance. Fergus argues that if we leave the matter as is, we "may give to our own churches the impression that having two worship services is not so important."
- 2.10 London is concerned that the topics Chatham mandated the CCCA to investigate (see Obs. 2.2) "do not disappear off the radar." Consequently, London recommends that the CCCA "be given the mandate to monitor these points."
- 2.11 Yarrow recommends that synod instruct the CCCA to continue to discuss and study the topics of Lord's Day observance and fencing of the Lord's table with the RCUS. Yarrow notes that under the Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship there is both room and need to continue to assist each other in understanding better the will of God in these matters.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The CCCA has addressed the topics mandated to them by Synod Chatham, and requests that synod consider their work complete in relation to each topic. The churches that wrote to synod about the RCUS request that the topics not yet be considered closed.
- 3.2 It is not necessary to state that discussion on particular topics is completed. In the dynamic of church life, opportunities to speak about differences between our federations will remain beneficial.
- 3.3 As churches in ecclesiastical fellowship, we are obliged to "assist each other in the maintenance, defence and promotion of the Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline, and liturgy, and to be watchful for deviation" (Rule 1). As the CCCA carries out the CanRC's responsibility towards the RCUS according to this rule, attention can continue to be given to the topics mentioned by the churches when necessary and appropriate.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To thank the CCCA for its work in our contact with the RCUS.
- 4.2 To continue the Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the RCUS under the adopted rules. As the CCCA fulfils its mandate according to these rules, matters of concern raised by the churches (see Obs. 2.7-2.11) may continue to be raised when appropriate.
- 4.3 To endeavour to meet with the RCUS Interchurch Relations Committee at least once a year.

ADOPTED

A letter of greeting from the Interchurch Relations Committee of the RCUS was read.

Article 108

Reopening

The chairman reopened synod after lunch. The meeting sang Hymn 31:2 and 4.

Article 109

Adoption of the Acts — Day 8

The proceedings of Day 8, as recorded in Articles 79-101, were reviewed and adopted as part of the Acts of Synod.

Article 110

SCBP – Apostles’ Creed in the Baptismal Form

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 SCBP Report 7
- 1.2-4 Letters from the following three churches:
Guelph, Carman West, Smithville

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Chatham mandated the Standing Committee for the Book of Praise to present a proposal with the inclusion of the Apostles’ Creed in the baptismal forms on the basis of the following grounds:
 - 2.1.1 A renewal of the catholic connection of baptism and the Apostles’ Creed.
 - 2.1.2 A return to the original Form of Baptism as found in the Church Order of Heidelberg 1563.
 - 2.1.3 A restoration of parallelism with the Form for the Lord’s Supper.
 - 2.1.4 The use of the Apostles’ Creed at baptism in the early Christian Church and in the Middle Ages is well known and generally documented.
- 2.2 The churches have given reasons questioning Synod Chatham’s decision to include the Apostles’ Creed in the baptismal forms.
 - 2.2.1 Guelph states the following:
 - 2.2.1.1 The Orders of Worship used in the churches have the Apostles’ Creed or the Nicene Creed included in the liturgy for the afternoon service.
 - 2.2.1.2 Should we have the Apostles’ Creed included in the baptismal forms the Nicene Creed would probably be read under “Profession of Faith” during a service when there is a baptism. It is not desirable to have the profession of faith twice in one service.
 - 2.2.1.3 Since the Profession of Faith takes place every Sunday it does not need to be emphasized more. There is adequate “connection of baptism and Apostles’ Creed” now.
 - 2.2.1.4 In order to maintain the principle that the preaching of the Word shall be central to the worship service, we should endeavour to shorten the forms rather than lengthen them.
 - 2.2.1.5 It has not been proven that the 1563 form is more scriptural than our present form. Neither did we hear arguments for removing the Apostles’ Creed from the form of 1563. Perhaps those arguments should be known before we reinstate the old form.
 - 2.2.1.6 The fact that the Apostles’ Creed is part of the Form for the Lord’s Supper does not make it necessarily advisable to include it in the baptismal forms.
 - 2.2.2 Carman West states the following: “We question the recommendation of the committee to insert the Apostles’ Creed in the Baptismal Forms. The rationale underlying this is not

very extensive.... Some explanation would also be warranted in regard to how the committee envisions working within the framework of our suggested orders of worship, especially if baptism is administered in the afternoon service.”

2.2.3 Smithville states the following:

2.2.3.1 In volume 2 of *Reports to General Synod Smithers 2007*, page 5, section 7.0, “the Committee recommends that Synod adopt the insertion of the Apostles’ Creed in the Baptismal forms as outlined in Par. 7.1 and 7.2.

2.2.3.2 The Consistory of the church at Smithville would like to point out that this recommendation has the potential of creating a redundancy, especially as it pertains to the afternoon service during which baptisms are often conducted.

2.2.3.3 The standard afternoon liturgy already calls for the inclusion of the Profession of Faith in both orders of worship A and B. Moreover, the Form for Baptism itself is a teaching of what we believe regarding this sacrament, including what it says about the work of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit with respect to the one to be baptized, which reminds us of the promise given to us all at our baptism. The congregation affirms that conviction in the song that is sung immediately following the baptism.

3. Considerations

3.1 The letters from the churches were all submitted as interaction with the report of the Standing Committee of the Book of Praise. However, the letter from Guelph interacts with a decision of Synod Chatham, Art. 115. The church at Carman West incorrectly assumes that the SCBP itself proposes to insert the Apostles’ Creed into the baptismal forms. Its objections, however, are in line with those of Guelph and ought to be considered with it. The church at Smithville objects to the proposal of the committee about where to insert the Apostles’ Creed in the baptismal forms. After giving its grounds it contends that the proposed addition does nothing to enhance the form. Hence its objections are also in line with those of the church at Guelph and ought to be considered with it.

3.2 The concerns raised by Guelph in Observations 2.2.1 and by Smithville in 2.2.3.2 merit consideration, particularly the following:

3.2.1 The orders of worship are not mandatory but suggested: therefore it should be left in the discretion of the churches where to place the profession of faith.

3.2.2 The profession of faith is already part of our liturgy, and as such there already is adequate “connection” between baptism and the congregational profession of faith in the Triune God.

3.2.3 Synod Chatham did not prove that the 1563 form is more scriptural than our present form. Therefore to depart from our current forms would be unwise.

3.2.4 The fact that the Apostles’ Creed is part of the Form for the Lord’s Supper does not necessarily mean that it should be included in the baptismal forms.

3.2.5 To incorporate the Apostles’ Creed in the baptismal forms would lead to undue repetition.

3.3 The Apostles’ Creed is not found in the baptismal forms of our sister churches. This element of catholicity should be kept in mind.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

4.1 To instruct the Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise not to include the Apostles’ Creed in the baptismal forms.

ADOPTED

Article 111

SCBP– Form of Subscription

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 SCBP Report 8
- 1.2-5 Letters from the following four churches:
Fergus Maranatha, Orangeville, Winnipeg Redeemer, Elora

2. Observations

- 2.1 The committee report (section 8.0) serves as observations.
- 2.2 Synod Chatham decided to mandate the Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise to present a final proposal for a Form of Subscription, one for the local congregations and one for classis, to the next general synod.
- 2.3 In completing its mandate the committee researched the history of the Form of Subscription and evaluated input submitted by two churches.
- 2.4 Fergus Maranatha recommends replacing the word “ministers” with “minister(s)” in the proposed Subscription Form for use in the local congregation since some churches have only one minister.
- 2.5 Orangeville points out that while the committee has agreed with a suggestion of the church at Abbotsford to use the wording “either publicly or privately; rather, we will first make...” (8.2.2.5 of the report), yet in the final draft of the form (8.3.1 and 8.3.2) the committee neglected to include the change.
- 2.6 Winnipeg Redeemer recommends the following changes in the proposed Subscription Forms:
 - 2.6.1 to change the word “major assemblies” in paragraph 3 of each form (8.3.1 and 8.3.2) to “broader assemblies.” Grounds: this is more consistent with the terminology used in the proposed church order. The term “broader” is better than “major” since some might interpret “major” as “higher authority.”
 - 2.6.2 to change the sentence “During the time of appeal we will acquiesce in the decision of classis or regional synod” in paragraph 5 of the proposed form for use at classis (8.3.1 of the report) to “During the time of appeal we will acquiesce in the decision of consistory or classis or regional synod.” Grounds: Consistory is involved in the process and therefore the appellant should also acquiesce in the decision of consistory.
- 2.7 Elora expresses agreement with including the subscription form for office-bearers in the *Book of Praise*.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Regarding Observation 2.4, the church at Fergus Maranatha did not consider that the one form, through time, is signed by successive ministers.
- 3.2 Regarding Observation 2.5, the church at Orangeville is correct.
- 3.3 Observation 2.6.1 and 2.6.2 have merit.
- 3.4 Since the subscription form for office-bearers is not a liturgical form it should be placed after the Church Order in our *Book of Praise*.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To instruct the committee to as yet include the proper formulation as pointed out by the church at Orangeville (see Obs. 2.5).
- 4.2 To instruct the committee to use the term “broader assemblies” in place of “major assemblies.”
- 4.3 To instruct the committee to change the sentence “During the time of appeal we will acquiesce in the decision of classis or regional synod” in paragraph 5 of the proposed form for use at

classis (8.3.1 of the report) to “During the time of appeal we will acquiesce in the decision of consistory or classis or regional synod.”

- 4.4 To adopt the proposed subscription form for office-bearers as amended for inclusion in the *Book of Praise* after the Church Order.

ADOPTED

Article 112

Appeal from Aldergrove re Art. 109 of Synod Chatham

The advisory committee presented its third proposal for discussion. It was moved and seconded to delete from Consideration 4.2 the words:

Synod Chatham also highlights why, namely its celebratory character (Acts of Synod Chatham, Art. 109, 4.2).

The amendment was **defeated**.

1. Material

- 1.1 Appeal from Aldergrove re Art. 109 of Synod Chatham

2. Admissibility

- 2.1 The appeal is declared admissible.

3. Observations

- 3.1 Aldergrove claims that Synod Chatham erred in judging grape juice an acceptable substitute for wine when circumstances warrant it for individual members but not for the whole congregation.
- 3.2 Aldergrove, in a summarizing statement, says that “General Synod Chatham, in citing General Synod Neerlandia, has made the use of wine a ‘confessional norm,’ without demonstrating that either Scripture or the Confessions themselves set wine forth as the normative element in celebrating the Lord’s Supper. Neither the Bible nor the confessions establish wine as the absolute norm over against other elements.”
- 3.3 Aldergrove recommends that synod decide:
 - 3.3.1 That General Synod Chatham 2004 was inconsistent in allowing grape juice to be an acceptable substitute for individual members of the congregation, but not for the whole congregation when circumstances warrant it.
 - 3.3.2 That General Synod Chatham 2004 misapplied the references to wine in the Confessions as cited by General Synod Neerlandia 2001 by making wine, as the element to be used in the Lord’s Supper, a confessional norm.
 - 3.3.3 That General Synod Chatham 2004 wronged the church at Aldergrove when it upheld the appeal against Regional Synod West (Nov. 18, 2003) and made an unscriptural binding to the compulsory use of wine in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper without regard for local circumstances.
 - 3.3.4 To leave it in the freedom of the churches to decide whether circumstances warrant an individual or wholesale solution in using grape juice as an acceptable substitute for wine when required.
- 3.4 Synod Chatham considered that
 - 3.4.1 Synod Neerlandia judged that the clear and consistent language of our confessions indicates “that the norm is to use wine at the Lord’s Supper” (Acts, Art. 70). This judgment by Synod Neerlandia shows that it used the word “norm” in connection with the confessions. Since the confessions are normative in the churches, synod considers that wine should be used at the Lord’s Supper. “Wine makes an important contribution to the meaning of the Lord’s Supper. This alcoholic drink, therefore, should be maintained in the celebration of this sacrament.... This does not exclude the possibility of making an exception. Allowing for an exception demonstrates Christian love and

compassion for those with difficulties.”

- 3.4.2 Regional Synod West 2003 erred in judging that Classis Pacific East wronged the church at Aldergrove. Synod agrees with the appellants that the consistory of the church at Aldergrove should make wine available at its Lord’s Supper celebration.
- 3.4.3 Regional Synod West 2003 was correct in its judgment that it belongs to the local consistory to determine what constitutes an individual exception.

4. Considerations

- 4.1 Aldergrove is incorrect in stating that Synod Chatham, in citing Synod Neerlandia, has made the use of wine a “confessional norm” (Obs. 3.3.2). The term “confessional norm” was not used by Synod Neerlandia or Synod Chatham: rather Synod Chatham (Art. 109, 4.2), in citing Synod Neerlandia (Art. 70), demonstrated that the confessions always mention wine as the element used.
- 4.2 While it is true that the confessions (e.g., BC Art. 35, Lord’s Day 29) do not set wine as the “absolute norm” (Obs. 3.2), Synod Neerlandia and Synod Chatham properly state that the confessions speak of wine as the element used. Synod Chatham also highlights why, namely its celebratory character (Acts of Synod Chatham, Art. 109, 4.2). Hence while exceptions can be allowed in certain circumstances, wine should normally be used.
- 4.3 Regarding Observation 3.3.3, Aldergrove is not accurate. While Synod Chatham indicated that wine should always be available it did have regard for local circumstances: it allowed for exceptions in cases of individuals.
- 4.4 It is true that “wholesale exceptions” get farther away from the normal usage of wine than individual exceptions, and thus should be contemplated only in extreme situations. Aldergrove, however, is correct in pointing out that it is arbitrary to allow for exceptions in cases of individuals, but to absolutely forbid this for the congregation as a whole.
- 4.5 As the broader assemblies have consistently stated, it is important that wine be the element normally used. Even Regional Synod West 2003, which upheld Aldergrove’s appeal, states that “it stands to reason that a change in local circumstances would necessitate a review of [the church at Aldergrove’s] current practice” (Art. 4, ground 4).

5. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 5.1 That the church at Aldergrove is correct in pointing out that it is arbitrary to allow for exceptions from the usage of wine in cases of individuals, but to absolutely forbid this for the congregation as a whole.
- 5.2 That it is important to maintain that wine be the element normally used.

ADOPTED

Rev. Holtvlüwer abstained from voting according to Art. 32 CO.

Article 113

Committee for Bible Translation

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 114

Appeal of Br. R. Bosman

The decision of synod will be conveyed to the churches via Confidential Acts.

Article 115

Appeal of Br. W. DeHaan

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

1.1 Letter from brother W. DeHaan

2. Admissibility

2.1 The submission of brother DeHaan is declared admissible since he appeals the decision of Regional Synod East 2006.

3. Observations

3.1 The appellant forwards material that he had submitted to council, classis, and regional synod.

3.2 In his letter to synod, the appellant appears to indicate that he has used the minor assemblies as stepping stones for his concerns to be addressed at general synod.

4. Considerations

4.1 The appellant fails to interact with the substantial response received from Regional Synod East 2006. It appears that the appellant has the impression that he can bring concerns to the major assemblies without actually appealing specific decisions.

4.2 The appellant fails to show that Regional Synod East erred (Art. 31 CO).

5. Recommendation

Synod decide:

5.1 To deny the appeal of brother DeHaan.

ADOPTED

The brothers who were involved in this matter at Regional Synod East 2006 abstained from voting.

Article 116

CRCA — General Mandate

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 117

Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Di Indonesia Propinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur (GGRI-NTT)

A letter of greeting from GGRI-NTT was read.

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 118

Closing Devotions and Adjournment

Brother Berends led in closing devotions from 1 Kings 8:54-61. After we sang Psalm 108:1 he led in closing prayer. Synod was adjourned until Monday morning at 9:00.

Day 10 — Morning Session

Monday, May 21, 2007

Article 119

Opening Devotions and Rollcall

The chairman called the meeting to order. He read Genesis 17:1-14 in light of the theme for this week: "I will be your God." After he led in prayer the meeting sang Psalm 105:3 and 4. Rollcall was held. All members were present.

Article 120

Adjournment

Synod adjourned for committee work.

Day 10 — Afternoon Session

Monday, May 21, 2007

Article 121

Reopening

Synod reopened in plenary session. The meeting sang Psalm 100:1 and 2. Rollcall was held and all members were present.

Article 122

Adoption of the Acts — Day 9

The proceedings of Day 9, as recorded in Articles 102-118, were reviewed and adopted as part of the Acts of Synod.

Article 123

The Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA)

A letter of greeting from the FRCA was read.

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 124

The Free Reformed Churches of South Africa (FRCSA)

The advisory committee presented its second proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CRCA Report 3
- 1.2 Letter from Elora

2. Observations

- 2.1 The report of the CRCA re the FRCSA, which is included in the appendix to the Acts, serves as Observations.
- 2.2 The CRCA recommends that Synod Smithers 2007 decide:
 - 2.2.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the FRCSA under the adopted rules.
 - 2.2.2 To recommend the FRCSA to the churches as worthy of continued and increased prayerful and financial assistance, to help them with their extensive mission work as well as the compassionate pursuits among the disadvantaged.
 - 2.2.3 To continue to invite the Board of Governors of our Theological College to encourage and aid the FRCSA in the quest to redesign their Theological Training by serving them with advice, and by extending academic backing through guest lectures, as well as assisting students who may enroll here with the necessary language and social support.
- 2.3 The church at Elora encourages prayerful and financial support for the churches of the FRCSA.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 From the report it is evident that the CRCA fulfilled its mandate with regard to the FRCSA.
- 3.2 The churches in our federation should indeed be alerted to the need for prayerful support for the FRCSA in their work of mission and Theological Training.
- 3.3 The phrasing “To invite the Board of Governors...” is somewhat unclear and would be better phrased “To mandate...”

- 3.4 From the report of the CRCA it is evident that the FRCSA continues to walk faithfully in the ways of the Lord.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To continue ecclesiastical fellowship with the FRCSA under the adopted rules.
- 4.2 To recommend the FRCSA to the churches as worthy of continued and increased prayerful and financial assistance, to help them with their extensive mission work as well as the compassionate pursuits among the disadvantaged.
- 4.3 To mandate the Board of Governors of our Theological College to encourage and aid the FRCSA in the quest to redesign their Theological Training by serving them with advice, and by extending academic backing through guest lectures, as well as assisting students who may enroll here with the necessary language and social support.

ADOPTED

Article 125

Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (PCEA)

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CRCA Report 8

2. Observations

- 2.1 The CRCA Report serves as observations.
- 2.2 The CRCA recommends that synod decide:
- 2.2.1 That the CanRC do not enter into relations with the PCEA.
- 2.2.2 To mandate the CRCA to inform the PCEA and the FRCA of this decision.

3. Consideration

There are no considerations to add to the Report of the CRCA.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 Not to enter into relations with the PCEA.
- 4.2 To mandate the CRCA to inform the PCEA and the FRCA of this decision.

ADOPTED

Article 126

United Reformed Churches in Myanmar (URCM)

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CRCA Report 10
- 1.2 Letter from Lynden

2. Observations

- 2.1 The CRCA Report serves as observations.
- 2.2 The CRCA recommends that synod decide:
- 2.2.1 [10.5.1] To deem the URCM worthy of our prayerful support.
- 2.2.2 [10.5.2] To monitor the Myanmar situation through the churches (GKN and RCNZ) which are presently involved with the contact and development of leadership training

of several churches in Myanmar.

- 2.2.3 [10.5.3] To decline the request for Ecclesiastical Fellowship, and thereby the request to sponsor the federation for membership of the ICRC.
- 2.2.4 [10.5.4] To authorize the CRCA to convey Synod's decisions to Rev. Moses Ngunhlei Thang.
- 2.3 Lynden urges synod to relieve the CRCA of further study re the United Reformed Churches in Myanmar, on the ground that there is no apparent benefit and it would only burden the CRCA to try to diligently/meaningfully maintain another relationship.

3. Consideration

- 3.1 The suggestion of the church at Lynden is in line with the suggestion of the CRCA. Considering the lack of familiarity, it would not seem useful to single out these particular churches for "prayerful support."

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To decline the request for ecclesiastical fellowship, and thereby the request to sponsor the federation for membership of the ICRC.
- 4.2 To authorize the CRCA to convey synod's decisions to Rev. Moses Ngunhlei Thang.

ADOPTED

Article 127

Independent Reformed Church in Korea (IRCK)

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CRCA Report 11
- 1.2 Letter from Lynden

2. Observations

- 2.1 The CRCA Report serves as observations.
- 2.2 The CRCA recommends that synod decide:
 - 2.2.1 Not to accept their request for sister church relations, but to wait until more information has become available.
 - 2.2.2 To ask the CRCA to relay this to the IRCK and to maintain contact with the denomination.
- 2.3 Lynden urges synod to relieve the CRCA of further study re the Independent Reformed Church of Korea on the ground that there is no apparent benefit and it would only burden the CRCA to try to diligently/meaningfully maintain another relationship.

3. Consideration

- 3.1 The suggestion of the church at Lynden is in line with the suggestion of the CRCA. At this point it would seem sufficient to leave the contacts with the IRCK to meeting at the ICRC.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 Not to accept their request for sister church relations.
- 4.2 To ask the CRCA to relay this to the IRCK.

ADOPTED

Article 128

Igreja Reformadas do Brasil (IRB)

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CCCA Report 5
- 1.2 Letter from London

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Chatham (Art. 28) mandated the CCCA:
 - 2.1.1 [4.3] To continue the relation of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the IRB under the adopted rules.
 - 2.1.2 [4.4] To mandate the CCCA to maintain contact with the IRB either directly or indirectly.
- 2.2 The CCCA notes that:
 - 2.2.1 There have been difficult times in the IRB which resulted in the restructuring of the IRB federation.
 - 2.2.2 Continued contact with the IRB happened exclusively via the Surrey Maranatha CanRC.
 - 2.2.3 Two delegates from Canada visited the Third National Synod of the IRB as representatives of the CCCA.
 - 2.2.4 The IRB as a young federation has “growing pains,” but this takes nothing away from the fact that the Lord’s church gathering work is continuing within the IRB.
 - 2.2.5 The IRB experiences the bond with our churches strongly and is most grateful for what they have received through the CanRC.
- 2.3 The CCCA recommends:
 - 2.3.1 To express gratitude to the Lord for the continued desire and effort within the IRB to serve him in sincerity and truth.
 - 2.3.2 To mandate the CCCA to continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the IRB under the adopted rules via the sending churches for mission in Brazil.
 - 2.3.3 To mandate the CCCA to make use of other opportunities for contact with the IRB as they may present themselves (e.g., visits from Canada to Brazil and vice versa by church members).
- 2.4 The church at London notes that the CCCA has had its contact with the IRB exclusively through the church at Surrey, and recommends that the CCCA use also the church at Hamilton as a contact channel.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 It is gratifying to note that, while a young federation invariably has many difficulties to overcome, the IRB gives evidence of striving to go in the way of the Lord.
- 3.2 It is fitting that, if contact with the IRB must go via an intermediary, it go via both churches in our federation involved in mission work in the midst of the IRB.
- 3.3 Given the cultural and language distance between the IRB and the CanRC, it is reasonable that the CCCA make use of other opportunities for contact with the IRB as they may present themselves (e.g., visits from Canada to Brazil and vice versa by church members).

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To express gratitude to the Lord for the continued desire and effort within the IRB to serve him in sincerity and truth.
- 4.3 To mandate the CCCA to continue the Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the IRB

under the adopted rules, either directly or via the sending churches for mission in Brazil.

ADOPTED

Article 129

Request from Hamilton re Igreja Presbyteriana do Brasil (IPB)

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 Letter from Hamilton

2. Observations

- 2.1 Hamilton requests Synod Smithers to mandate the CCCA to reconsider the Consideration 3.2 of Art. 28, Acts of Synod Chatham 2004. This consideration reads: "Synod agrees with the committee's opinion that, as an independent church federation, the IRB is entitled to solve issues that are primarily Brazilian, such as contact with the IPB."
- 2.2 Hamilton requests Synod Smithers "to charge the CCCA to study the Igreja Presbyteriana do Brasil with a view to possibly entering into an ecclesiastical fellowship with them and to submit a report to General Synod 2010."

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Hamilton offers no grounds why Consideration 3.2 should be reconsidered.
- 3.2 Synod 1977 (Art. 95) received a request from the church at Calgary that "the Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church receive... the mandate to seek contact with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, with a view to determining whether church correspondence can be established with this church federation." This request was turned down on the grounds that "minor assemblies when making a proposal for taking up contact with other churches should supply Synods with sufficient information as it appears from decisions made by General Synod Hamilton 1962, Acts, Article 82 and General Synod Edmonton 1965, Acts, Article 141, sub II (see General Synod Toronto, Acts, Art. 64)."
- 3.3 Synod 1983 (Art. 150) received detailed information from the church at Ottawa regarding the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, together with the request that synod "express its willingness to initiate contact with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America" and appoint a committee to this effect. Synod decided not to grant the overture of the church at Ottawa and added, "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."
- 3.4 Hamilton provides no reasons why the IPB should be investigated, and no background information about the IPB. Further, the request to investigate the IPB has not come via the channel of the minor assemblies.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 Not to reconsider Consideration 3.2 of Article 28 of Synod Chatham 2004.
- 4.2 Not to charge the CCCA to study the Igreja Presbyteriana do Brasil.

ADOPTED

Article 130

Board of Governors re a fifth professor

The advisory committee presented its second proposal. It was moved and seconded to replace in Consideration 4.3 the words:

It is even questionable if it is the task of a professor to publish and this should therefore not be an

argument to appoint a fifth professor.

with: It is even questionable if it is the task of a professor to publish and this should be substantiated first before basing a proposal on it.

The amendment was **defeated**.

It was moved and seconded to delete in Consideration 4.3 the words:

It is even questionable if it is the task of a professor to publish and this should therefore not be an argument to appoint a fifth professor.

The amendment was **defeated**.

It was moved and seconded to delete Consideration 4.3:

The report gives no clear indication that there will be a mechanism in place to supervise, let alone implement, the promotion of writing by the professors. This recommendation has the appearance of reinforcing the need for a fifth professor but in effect provides no benefit from that appointment.

It is even questionable if it is the task of a professor to publish and this should therefore not be an argument to appoint a fifth professor.

This amendment **carried**.

The brothers Nederveen, Nordeman, Schouten and VanWoudenberg abstained from voting because they are Governors of the Theological College.

The amended proposal was **adopted** as follows:

1. Material

1.1 Board of Governors' Report re a fifth professor at the Theological College

1.2-14 Letters from the following thirteen churches:

Hamilton, Smithers, Carman West, Chilliwack, Attercliffe, Carman East, Fergus Maranatha, Orangeville, Fergus North, Flamborough, Winnipeg Redeemer, Burlington-Waterdown, Burlington-South

2. Admissibility

2.1 Synod decides to declare this proposal admissible.

2.2 Although synod acknowledges with the church at Fergus North that this proposal was not submitted six months prior to the convening of synod, the reaction of so many churches to this proposal shows that it was possible to interact with this proposal.

3. Observations

3.1 The Board of Governors recommends in its report regarding a fifth professor at the Theological College:

3.1.1 To approve the establishment of a fifth professorate. This professor will function as a professor of Biblical and Theological Studies.

3.1.2 Charge the Board to submit a recommendation for an appointment to Synod 2010.

3.1.3 Mandate the Board to investigate the feasibility of starting a Master of Theology program.

3.1.4 Require the Board to include in its triennial report the current status of publications and writings by the professors.

3.2 Hamilton endorses the recommendation to appoint a fifth professor and asks synod to have the Board of Governors clarify the research and publication expectations for the faculty members.

3.3 Smithers endorses the recommendation to establish a fifth professor for the Theological College, on the condition that the professors will publish books and writings in their particular field of expertise on a regular basis. Smithers considers it desirable to begin a course on Apologetics.

- 3.4 Carman West is glad to see a proposal to increase the number of professors at the Theological College and would like the churches to receive more details regarding for instance what other seminaries expect of their professors in regard to matters as ecclesiastical responsibilities, research and publications next to their teaching load.
- 3.5 Chilliwack is in favour of hiring a fifth professor and suggests that it be financed by increasing the tuition fees. In that way the fees would be more consistent with other Theological Colleges.
- 3.6 Attercliffe would like to see more opportunity for input from the churches in the case of the appointment of a new professor.
- 3.7 Carman East finds the reason for a fifth professor quite weak. The professors were all appointed with the current workload in mind. Carman East finds a more meaningful argument in encouraging the professors to “research, write, and produce publications that will serve both the present and future generations.”
- 3.8 Fergus Maranatha is not opposed to the proposal if the workload of the professors makes it necessary, but the church has difficulties with the information given by the Board of Governors. This information does not give clear evidence that the workload needs the appointment of a fifth professor.
- 3.9 Orangeville is not averse to proceeding in the direction of a fifth professor, but draws the attention of synod to the fact that our College seems to be unique in that it has a four-year program for the Master of Divinity degree. Orangeville suggests that synod consider to reevaluate the program to see if matters could be streamlined.
- 3.10 Fergus North believes that synod should declare this report inadmissible, because it was not submitted six months before the convening of synod.
- 3.11 Flamborough requests synod not to adopt the recommendations of the Board of Governors regarding the establishment and future appointment of a fifth professor. The grounds of Flamborough for this are, that the churches did not have enough time to study this proposal within the wider context of the place and role of the Theological College in the future, and it would be premature to make far reaching decisions with implications for the future of the College, as long as it is not clear what the decisions of both the CanRC synod and the URCNA synod are going to be concerning Theological Education.
- 3.12 Winnipeg Redeemer asks synod to deny the request of the Board of Governors to add a fifth professor to the staff of the Theological College at this time. Winnipeg explains that there are no signs that the overall workload has increased or that the students do not receive proper training. Neither does the proposal mention any requests from the churches. The addition of a fifth professor also results in the loss of an active minister.
- 3.13 Burlington-Waterdown gives concerns and positives for a fifth professor and is in favour of this proposal. Concerns are the increase of vacancy rate, the possible redundancy of this position in case of unity with the URCNA, the question how the professor/student ratio compares to other colleges of comparable size and the question after how long a fifth professor would be offered tenure. The positive is that this would move towards the fulfilling of the opportunity to offer a Master of Theology program by the college.
- 3.14 Burlington-South expresses its preference to maintain the current complement of full time faculty and supplement this with lecturers as required. This, given the relatively small student body and the ongoing discussion with the URCNA.

4. Considerations

- 4.1 It would be better if the justification for an appointment were not recommended from within a department or school but from an external assessment. The recommendations from the Board of Governors do not have the required distance to give the sense of an objective recommendation.
- 4.2 The recommendation to investigate a possible M.Th. program is weak insofar as it seems to justify the recommendation for a fifth professor, but may not result in any real action or benefit

for the churches.

- 4.3 The point raised by some churches that the appointment of a fifth professor would mean an increase of the number of vacancies for ministers is also something that should be taken into account.
- 4.4 Attercliffe raises a valid point when it requests synod to consider input from the federation of churches when appointing a new professor.
- 4.5 Synod Smithers 2007 appreciates the work done by the professors.

5. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 5.1 Not to agree with the recommendation of the Board of Governors to add a fifth professor as suggested in their proposal.
- 5.2 To mandate the Board of Governors, for the future well being and benefit of the Theological College, to take note of the observations and considerations as listed above.
- 5.3 To mandate the Board of Governors to initiate a full and independent review that considers all aspects related to the work of the College and that this review and its recommendations be presented to General Synod 2010.
- 5.4 To mandate the Board of Governors to consider alternate options for the delivery of programs (for example appointment of part time lecturers) if the need arises.
- 5.5 To mandate the Board of Governors to initiate a full review of the expectations of faculty. This includes teaching assignments, service to the churches, and programs of research.
- 5.6 To mandate the Board of Governors to review the appointment procedure for faculty members to insure transparency within the generally accepted academic appointment process. This review should include the possibility of appointing an academic search committee and a short list of candidates to be presented to the churches.

ADOPTED

The brothers Nederveen, Nordeman, Schouten and VanWoudenberg abstained from voting because they are Governors of the Theological College.

Article 131

Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)

The advisory committee presented its third proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CCCA Report 3
- 1.2 CCCA supplementary report
- 1.3 Letter from Yarrow

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Chatham, Art. 88, mandated the CCCA to:
 - 2.1.1 Continue the Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the OPC under the adopted rules.
 - 2.1.2 Continue the discussions with the OPC on the existing differences.
 - 2.1.3 Endeavour to meet with the CEIR at least once per year.
 - 2.1.4 Publish a synopsis of the discussions and position papers of the last 20 years.
- 2.2 The reason for mandating a synopsis was that our churches receive the evidence that the discussions have occurred and what the outcome has been.
- 2.3 The CCCA resolved to give priority to compiling the requested synopsis so as to prevent repeating previous discussions with the OPC.
- 2.4 The CCCA has helpfully provided a plan of action with respect to the preparation and use of the

synopsis:

- 2.4.1 Stage 1: *Abridgement*. Complete the index and synopsis of discussions and positions of the OPC and CanRC on all topics discussed in the history of contacts with the OPC.
- 2.4.2 Stage 2: *Assessment*. Evaluate this synopsis internally as a sub-committee, to determine what has been agreed by both the OPC and CanRC on these topics.
- 2.4.3 Stage 3: *Agreement*. Meet with the CEIR to discuss this synopsis, to determine whether we can agree to its accuracy and that it reflects the current position of the CanRC and the OPC, and so enable future discussions to build upon what has already been agreed upon without rehashing previous discussion.
- 2.4.4 Stage 4: *Advancement*. Meet with the CEIR and progress in discussions beyond what has already been agreed upon and discussed previously.
- 2.5 The CCCA has completed writing the synopsis, and given copies to the CEIR members for review and discussion in a future meeting. This synopsis is also included in the CCCA's report for synod's consideration.
- 2.6 The committee recommends that synod decide "to consider the synopsis of previous discussions with the OPC as the completion of this part of their mandate, and to publish this with the Acts for the benefit of the churches."
- 2.7 Since receiving its present mandate, the CCCA has formally met twice with the CEIR and stayed abreast of the work of the OPC's General Assemblies. Limited discussions on outstanding differences occurred.
- 2.8 Yarrow recommends that Synod:
 - 2.8.1 Accept the synopsis as the CCCA's fair attempt to sketch the history and current status of the divergencies.
 - 2.8.2 Mandate the CCCA to meet more than once a year with their CEIR counterparts.
 - 2.8.3 Instruct the CCCA to use the Synopsis in further discussions with the CEIR.
 - 2.8.4 Mandate the CCCA to "as yet obtain from the CEIR a written statement of mutual agreement and understanding on those topics listed in the Synopsis that are considered to be concluded if this is not in General Synod archives. For those topics on which mutual agreement and understanding have not been reached, a written statement outlining the point of departure of the two federations should be provided to the next General Synod."

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The CCCA writes that limiting the synopsis to the last 20 years would defeat the reason why Synod Chatham wanted a synopsis in the first place. The committee is to be commended for drawing their information from more than the 20 years synod mentioned.
- 3.2 As the committee has finished compiling the synopsis, it is fitting that synod accept this synopsis as the completion of this part of the mandate.
- 3.3 The reason for mandating a synopsis was that "it would be beneficial for the churches to receive the evidence of these discussions and their outcome" (Acts 2004, Art. 88, 4.1). Consequently, it would be beneficial to include this synopsis in the Acts for the benefit of the churches.
- 3.4 The CCCA writes that it has completed compiling the relevant material, and now wishes to share it with the OPC counterparts to "determine whether we can agree with its accuracy and that it reflects the current position of the CanRC and the OPC." The CCCA is to be encouraged to use this synopsis as a tool in their further discussions with the OPC.
- 3.5 Synod Chatham had mandated the CCCA "to continue the discussions with the OPC on the existing differences." This mandate cannot be repeated because it does not take into account the decision of Synod Neerlandia to establish ecclesiastical fellowship with the OPC. The establishment of ecclesiastical fellowship means that unity of faith is recognized.
- 3.6 As churches in ecclesiastical fellowship, there are numerous issues with both the OPC and the CanRC that need each other's attention. For example, both federations are working on a new

Song Book or Psalter, both are in various stages of unity talks with the URCNA, both are working on revisions to their respective Church Orders. In an existing relation of ecclesiastical fellowship, these topics-of-the-day need attention as much as the outstanding matters of confessional membership and supervision of the Lord's table. As the CCCA carries out its work with the OPC according to the adopted Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship, it should pursue the outstanding matters where appropriate.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To thank the CCCA for its work in our contact with the OPC.
- 4.2 To consider the synopsis of previous discussions with the OPC as the completion of this part of the mandate, and to publish this with the Acts for the benefit of the churches.
- 4.3 To continue the Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the OPC under the adopted rules. As the CCCA fulfils its mandate according to these rules, the outstanding matters of confessional membership and supervision of the Lord's table are to be raised when appropriate.
- 4.4 To endeavour to meet with the CEIR at least once a year.

ADOPTED

Article 132

The International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC)

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CRCA Report 6
- 1.2-3 Letters from Smithers and Yarrow

2. Observations

- 2.1 Section 6 of the report of the CRCA, which is included in the Appendices of the Acts, serves as Observations.
- 2.2 The CRCA recommends in 6.5 that:
 - 2.2.1 [6.5.1] Synod reiterate the decision on the proposed change to Art. IV.1.a of the Constitution of the ICRC (Acts Chatham 2004, Art. 52, Recommendation 5.3.2, p. 48).
 - 2.2.2 [6.5.2] Synod decide to mandate the CRCA:
 - 2.2.2.1 [6.5.2.1] To continue the participation of the Canadian Reformed Churches in the ICRC and send a two-man delegation to New Zealand in 2009.
 - 2.2.2.2 [6.5.2.2] To convey Synod's decision on Art. IV.1.a. of the Constitution to the corresponding secretary of the ICRC.
 - 2.2.2.3 [6.5.2.3] To use the opportunities presented at the conference to interact with and gather information from delegates of other denominations and federations.
 - 2.2.2.4 [6.5.2.4] To submit a report of the 2009 ICRC to the next Synod with an evaluation and recommendations.
- 2.3 With respect to the size of the delegation to meetings of the ICRC, Smithers recommends "that the Canadian Reformed Churches send a proper amount of representatives to future meetings and that the costs associated with this be accepted."
- 2.4 Yarrow disagrees with the CRCA's comment that "the need to discuss these (divergent approach to certain matters) has become a moot point." Yarrow trusts "that Synod Smithers will decide otherwise."

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Smithers supports a suggestion by the committee to send a delegation of adequate representation. As members of the ICRC we have the obligation to send a proper delegation.

The CRCA should delegate representatives of the committee and not ask officers of the ICRC to do double duty.

- 3.2 The ICRC is a forum for mutual encouragement and may well provide opportunities to discuss divergent approaches to certain matters..

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To thank the committee for the work done.
- 4.2 To reiterate the decision on the proposed change to Art. IV.1.a of the Constitution of the ICRC (Acts Chatham 2004, Art. 52, Rec. 5.3.2, p. 48).
- 4.3 To mandate the CRCA:
- 4.3.1 To continue the participation of the Canadian Reformed Churches in the ICRC and send two voting members and two advisory members to New Zealand in 2009..
- 4.3.2 To convey synod's decision on Art. IV.1.a. of the Constitution to the corresponding secretary of the ICRC.
- 4.3.3 To use the opportunities presented at the conference to interact with and gather information from delegates of other churches.
- 4.3.4 To submit a report of the 2009 ICRC to the next synod with an evaluation and recommendations.

ADOPTED

Article 133

Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (GKN)

The advisory committee presented its third proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CRCA Report 5
- 1.2 Supplementary report of the CRCA re GKN
- 1.3-16 Letters from the following thirteen churches:
Ottawa, Elora, Willoughby Heights (2), Guelph, Smithers, London, Grand Rapids, Carman East, Smithville, Yarrow, Edmonton Immanuel, Fergus Maranatha, Winnipeg Redeemer
- 1.17 Letter of greeting from the Free Reformed Churches of Australia including an appendix Article 94 of Synod Kelmscott 2006 re GKN

2. Admissibility

- 2.1 All the submissions are admissible.

3. Observations

- 3.1 CRCA Report 5 re the GKN, which is included as appendices in the Acts, serve as Observations.
- 3.2 The CRCA recommends that Synod 2007 decide:
- 3.2.1 [5.5.1] To continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the GKN under the adopted rules.
- 3.2.2 [5.5.2] That Synod judge the CRCA to have concluded its mandate in conveying to the GKN Synod Chatham's concerns about the proportion of psalms and hymns in the Gereformeerde Kerkboek, and that in light of our better understanding of the decision of Synod Zuidhorn, the concerns are sufficiently alleviated.
- 3.2.3 [5.5.3] That Synod decide that the CRCA has fulfilled its mandate in continuing the discussion with the GKN regarding the new Marriage Form and in reporting to the churches about this.
- 3.2.4 [5.5.4] That Synod mandate the CRCA to convey to the GKN that Synod Smithers is satisfied as to the Dutch deputies' explanation of the phrase "when the Lord provides

- the possibility” in connection with having children and as to the explanation about why the new Marriage Form does not address the task of the wife in her family and household.
- 3.2.5 [5.5.5] That Synod declare that the CRCA has fulfilled its mandate with respect to studying the results of the deputyship “Fourth Commandment and Sunday” and reporting to the churches.
 - 3.2.6 [5.5.6] That Synod mandate the CRCA to convey to the GKN that the document “Sunday, glorious day of the Lord. A resource,” as well as the Dutch deputies’ analysis of the decisions of Synod Leusden 1999 and Synod Zuidhorn 2002 pertaining to the fourth commandment, put to rest the concerns that the CRCA reported to Synod Chatham 2004 about this matter.
 - 3.2.7 [5.5.7] That Synod express its thankfulness for the fact that the Dutch sister churches stress the Scriptural norm that marriage is an institution created by God and should not be broken. Furthermore, that Synod mandate the CRCA to express concern about the new approach to divorce and remarriage, specifically with respect to “the-style-of-the-kingdom” approach without reference to “grounds” for divorce, the analogy of Paul, and the suggested revision of the Church Order about discipline in cases of divorce and remarriage.
 - 3.2.8 [5.5.8] To take note of the manner in which the GKN has changed the way in which it deals with communications of the deputies of sister churches, expecting our deputies to enter into correspondence with their BBK when the opportunity presents itself.
 - 3.2.9 [5.5.9] To express appreciation for the way the GKN has sought to engage the GKH in unity talks by means of the appeal from Synod Amersfoort.
- 3.3 Ottawa supports the committee’s recommendations. They note concern “that our sister churches are ‘relaxing’ their supervision of the Lord’s Supper and giving way to individualism” and ask that synod relay this concern through the committee.
 - 3.4 Elora concurs with the committees’ recommendation regarding the GKN/GKH but would like to see the development between the two churches monitored more closely.
 - 3.5 Fergus Maranatha is of the opinion that the formulations in the new marriage form could and should be more concrete and specific “in light of the societies in which we live.” Winnipeg Redeemer states that this new form opens “the door to accepting change about the God-given role of husband and wife” and therefore asks synod to “warn our sister churches of this.”
 - 3.6 Willoughby Heights and Edmonton Immanuel feel that the concerns of Synod Chatham re proportion between psalms and hymns, hymn content as well as the issue of the fourth commandment have not been alleviated. These churches request synod to appoint a separate committee for contact with the Dutch churches and to mandate it to deal with outstanding issues of concern. They would like this committee to specifically examine the content of the new hymns in light of the concerns expressed by the GKH and also to convey to the GKN that our concerns regarding the proportion between psalms and hymns have not been alleviated. These churches further ask that this committee examine the decisions and appeals of Synod Leusden and Zuidhorn in regards to the fourth commandment and Sunday rest. Willoughby Heights gives the following reasons:
 - 3.6.1 Synod Zuidhorn expresses an “intention” rather than a decision that psalms will always have priority. This provides no guarantee that psalms will always have priority in the worship services.
 - 3.6.2 Synod Zuidhorn indicates the importance it gives to hymns by speaking about the how the Holy Spirit “must also lead the authors of the church songs in all truth of the Word.”
 - 3.6.3 With respect to the fourth commandment, they feel that “The CRCA did not study the decisions of the two Synods [Leusden & Zuidhorn] and appeals against these decisions” but only the Dutch deputies’ analysis of the decisions provided by the Dutch deputies. They feel the CRCA should undertake an independent study not only of the synod

decisions but also of the appeals concerning them.

- 3.7 Guelph requests the discussion over the marriage form to continue because in their view the new marriage form does not accurately reflect Scripture which “highlights the special task of the wife in her family and household” as can be found in 1 Tim 5:14 and Psalm 128. Guelph explains that even in Proverbs 31 the “diverse activities” of the wife revolve “around her household.” They feel that it is important to maintain this “unique role of a wife... especially in our day” where the special roles of husbands and wives are set aside.
- 3.8 Smithers disagrees with the committee’s recommendation 5.5.7 and requests synod not to adopt it without first removing the statement “without reference to the ‘grounds’ for divorce.” Smithers argues that the “CRCA recognizes that Synod Amersfoort has indeed made reference to the grounds for divorce when it writes: ‘While Synod Amersfoort stated that the intention of this approach is not to replace the commandments of God and specific words of Scripture.’”
- 3.9 London is concerned that the language of the phrase in the new marriage form, “when the Lord provides the possibility thereto” in connection with receiving children “remains open to misinterpretation.” London is also concerned that the language in the new form blurs the clear biblical distinction between the roles of husband and wife. London further requests clarification “about the view that Sunday as day of rest is based on a responsible choice of the Christian church.” London asks: “Is this view ‘opening the door for a dangerous hermeneutic where the command to rest no longer is seen as having any Biblical foundation?’”
- 3.10 Elora, London, Grand Rapids and Carman East concur with the committee’s Recommendation 5.5.7 regarding the concern over the new approach to divorce and remarriage.
- 3.11 Carman East requests synod:
 - 3.11.1 To continue the discussion concerning the proportion of hymns to psalms. They take issue with the committee’s agreement with the BBK that “increasing the total number of hymn selections in the songbook is not automatically or necessarily increasing the number of hymns selected for the worship service.” Carman East posits that “we are dealing here not with logical necessities or automatic outcomes but with probable outcomes, with risks and dangers and this is what neither the BBK nor the present CRCA seem to realize.” Carman East feels this risk is high in part because “hymns are often more ‘pleasant’ to sing (both in tune and in lyric) and many lack the stark antithesis of many Psalms.” Further, they state that a disproportionate number of hymns will, in time, lead to hymns overshadowing the psalms. Carman East states a practical way to minimize this risk is to reduce the number of hymns for “the less hymns which a church has available, the more it must choose from the Psalms.”
 - 3.11.2 That the terms “obey and submit” with respect to the wife’s role in marriage be restored to the marriage form. Carman argues that these terms are fully biblical (Eph 5:22; Col 3:18, 1 Peter 3:1,5) and feels that in our day, which despises authority, this should continue to be made explicit. Carman East further requests synod to express concern that “not making explicitly mention of the wife’s task in the Marriage Form is a serious weakening of the biblical teaching on this point.” They state that the “wife’s primary task is to take care of her family and household” as made clear in Psalm 113:9, Psalm 128:3, 1 Timothy 5:16, Titus 2:4-5 and Proverbs 31:15, 21, 27.
- 3.12 Smithville requests that the committee “study and determine what is truly the situation in the Dutch sister churches particularly as it pertains to how it does or does not demonstrate the three marks of the true church” and that this be shared with wider church community in Canada by way of articles in the press. Smithville “notes that there is a lot of ignorance amongst the members of the Canadian Reformed Churches about the issues that are at play in the Dutch sister churches.”
- 3.13 Yarrow touches on the role of the deputies, the psalms and hymns, the marriage form, the fourth commandment, divorce and remarriage, the fencing of the Lord’s table, and the interaction based solely on official documents. They feel that in all these matters the GKN does not take

into account sufficiently the sinfulness of the human heart. With reference to Deut 13:12^{ff} & Deut 17:2^{ff}, Yarrow is of the opinion that Rule 1 for Ecclesiastical Fellowship obliges the CanRC to investigate beyond what is written in the official Acts. They state that “Deputies would do well to make a point of reading the main church papers of any federation for whom they are mandated to maintain contact, simply so that they know what to expect in the Acts – and to note what is missing.” Further, they feel that “the matter of perception by the CanRC of the GKN is important. Deputies would do well to clearly inform the CanRC when there are wrong perceptions.” Based on the above, Yarrow asks synod to modify and add to the CRCA recommendations as follows:

- 3.13.1 To mandate the CRCA to discuss with the BBK deputies our concern about not having a grassroots involvement at Synod by screening overtures and appeals through the BBK before they come to Synod.
 - 3.13.2 To mandate the CRCA to convey to the GKN that decisions about the addition of a large number of hymns, use of the fourth commandment, new way of interpreting Scripture (with respect to divorce/remarriage) do not sufficiently take into account the sinfulness of the human heart.
 - 3.13.3 To mandate the CRCA to point out and discuss with the BBK deputies the GKN’s inconsistency in statements to the churches about remarriage.
 - 3.13.4 To mandate the CRCA to discuss with the BBK deputies the GKN’s wrong distinction between those with hardened hearts and those who are weak, when dealing with divorce and the use of discipline.
 - 3.13.5 To mandate the CRCA to address the GKN about the official change in the manner of fencing the Lord’s table.
 - 3.13.6 To appoint extra members to the CRCA and to instruct the CRCA to appoint a sub-committee to deal with the GKN and to mandate them to keep abreast of all important matters in the GKN so that, based on what is officially dealt with by the ecclesiastical bodies and by what is missed, a better picture of the GKN can be obtained.
- 3.14 The letter of greeting from the Free Reformed Churches of Australia touches on the GKN and states that they would have “loved to see [our] deputies more engaged so that we can support each other in our relations with our sister churches.” In his speech to Synod, Rev. Karlo Janssen encouraged the CanRC to scrutinize the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands but not hold them to a higher standard than the other sister churches.

4. Considerations

- 4.1 The CRCA Report gives evidence that the committee has paid careful attention to the situation in the GKN. They have reviewed the Acts. They have weighed the answers given in response to questions about issues like the Fourth Commandments and the Marriage Form, among others. They have also reviewed official publications from the GKH. Even though questions remain, it could be concluded that the GKN have not deviated from Scripture or the Confessions.
- 4.2 *Psalms and Hymns*. While some churches feel that the concerns about the proportion between psalms and hymns have not been alleviated, we do well to take to heart the remark of the committee that “pursuing the concern over the number of hymns... is not a fruitful avenue.” (pp. 46-47) This does not take away, however, the discomfort with the fact that a church known for its emphasis on psalm singing, as also reflected in the proportion of psalms and hymns in the past, has made a rapid shift to having a very large number of hymns available for worship. The concern remains that the vast multiplication of hymns does nothing to advance to the priority of psalm singing and places at risk this principle. While it will be good to express this concern once more, in the final analysis the issue is not only the number but also the content of the hymns. The committee would do well to review the hymns to see if there is reason for concern.
- 4.3 *Marriage Form*. The answers received to various questions about the Marriage Form have alleviated a number of concerns. Synod Chatham 2004 even noted that in some respects, the

Form strengthens the teaching concerning marriage (e.g., explaining what true Christ-like headship is, Acts, p. 41). While there continue to be questions on certain formulations, no unscriptural elements are found in the Form. Furthermore, it should be noted that by now, this Form has been in use in the GKN for about 11 years and therefore it is time to conclude this matter.

- 4.4 *Fourth Commandment.* With respect to the fourth commandment, Synod Amersfoort 2005 spoke clearly about Sunday as a day of rest and worship. The information received as spelled out in the Report puts to rest the specific concerns raised in the Report to Synod Chatham 2004. The CRCA would do well to continue to monitor developments to see how this decision works out in practice.
- 4.5 *Divorce and Remarriage.* While it is important to be careful not to jump to conclusions about the discussion concerning marriage and divorce, this does not take away the need to monitor developments. Rather than express concerns, which suggests a judgment has already been made, it is better to instruct the committee to discuss with the Deputies BBK the new approach to divorce and remarriage (and any underlying hermeneutical concerns) in order to get clarity on the concerns highlighted by the committee.
- 4.6 *Lord's Supper.* It is inaccurate to say the GKN is "relaxing" admission to the Lord's table. The Report makes clear that consistory approval is needed before attendance at the Lord's table, with stringent criteria for admittance.
- 4.7 The Recommendation "to take note of the manner in which the BBK has changed the way in which it deals with communications of the deputies of sister churches" (5.5.8) seems out of place. There is nothing in the Report as background for this. In fact, Synod Chatham 2004 dealt with this matter and concluded that this was based on a misunderstanding (Acts 2004, p. 41, 4.7).
- 4.8 To improve communication and to assist the GKN (cf. Rule 1), synod should encourage the committee to be proactive and interact with the BBK whenever possible. Our input is most valued and most helpful at the time the issues are discussed. Further, in this way, the churches can be well informed before issues have worked their way through general synods and become accomplished facts. For the sake of good communication, effort should be made to have face-to-face meetings at least every two years to discuss mutual concerns. It may be possible to coordinate these visits with meetings of the ICRC and visits to other churches.
- 4.9 In light of the above, there is reason to monitor the situation in The Netherlands. A church federation must be given time to work through the issues confronting it. If deviation is present, it will manifest itself eventually in the official decisions of churches. By carefully following the developments in the GKN in terms of the issues being dealt with by various deputies and in Reports, the committee should be able to keep a finger on the pulse of the GKN. While the committee can be encouraged to read more than just the official documents to get a sense of what is happening, judgments about situations must be based on the official documents (see Synod Chatham 2004, p. 42, Cons. 4.9).

5. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 5.1 To thank the committee for the work done with respect to the GKN.
- 5.2 To continue the Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the GKN under the adopted rules.
- 5.3. That the CRCA end the discussion about the proportion of psalms and hymns by expressing the concern that the vast multiplication of hymns does nothing to advance to the priority of psalm singing and places at risk this principle.
- 5.3.1 To instruct the CRCA to pay attention to the content of the hymns.
- 5.4 That the CRCA has fulfilled its mandate in continuing the discussion with the GKN regarding the new Marriage Form and in reporting to the churches about this and, though questions

- remain, this discussion is concluded.
- 5.5 That the CRCA has fulfilled its mandate with respect to studying the results of the deputyship “Fourth Commandment and Sunday” and reporting to the churches but should continue to monitor developments to see how the decisions about the fourth commandment work out in practice.
 - 5.6 To mandate the CRCA to discuss with the Deputies BBK the new approach to divorce in order to get answers to the hermeneutical concerns highlighted by the committee with respect to “the-style-of-the-kingdom” approach to divorce and remarriage. Attention should also be paid to the suggested revision of the Church Order about discipline in cases of divorce and remarriage.
 - 5.7 To encourage the committee to monitor the situation in the GKN, keeping in mind the concerns expressed by the churches about the situation in the GKN.
 - 5.8 To instruct the CRCA to hold joint meetings at least every two years with Deputies of the BBK to discuss pro-actively matters of mutual concern and interact with requests for advice or feedback about issues coming before synods as much as possible in keeping with Rule 1 of Ecclesiastical Fellowship.
 - 5.9 To express appreciation for the way the GKN has sought to engage the GKH in unity talks by means of the appeal from Synod Amersfoort and to encourage them to continue to reach out to GKH.

ADOPTED

Article 134

Committee for Bible Translation (CBT)

The advisory committee presented its second proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CBT Report
- 1.2-11 Letters from the following ten churches:
Guelph, Spring Creek, London, Brampton, Carman West, Carman East, Chilliwack, Yarrow, Willoughby Heights, Orangeville

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Chatham 2004 gave the CBT the mandate to do a preliminary investigation of the English Standard Version (ESV) and to provide Synod 2007 with a report on the ESV translation, using also the input solicited from the churches.
- 2.2 In the summer of 2004, the CBT sent out a request to the churches for input regarding the ESV.
- 2.3 Because the ESV is essentially a revision of the Revised Standard Version (RSV), the CBT undertook an independent study comparing the ESV with the RSV, making use of the data and criteria found in the 1995 Report of the CBT which, in turn, relies on two earlier evaluations of the RSV found in the 1974 and the 1977 CBT Reports.
- 2.4 On the positive side, the CBT notes the following:
 - 2.4.1 The ESV has moved words which had been inappropriately footnoted in the RSV to the main text, thus establishing the authentic Word of God more clearly to the reader.
 - 2.4.2 The ESV recognizes the personhood of the Holy Spirit where the RSV did not.
 - 2.4.3 The ESV has a much greater respect for the Masoretic Text than does the RSV.
 - 2.4.4 The ESV has a greater respect for the unity of Scripture than does the RSV.
 - 2.4.5 The ESV avoids the use of archaic terms such as “thee” and “thou” and thus avoids issues surrounding the deity of Christ (the RSV not always uses these pronouns in respect to the Lord Jesus).
 - 2.4.6 The ESV is aware of unscriptural influences in the RSV and in various places has taken away this influence, e.g., in regard to false ideas about the history of man and biblical authorship and certain biblical terms (e.g., the RSV replaced “expiation” with

- “propitiation” but the ESV goes back to the latter term).
- 2.4.7 In summary, the CBT states that the ESV seems to “show a much greater respect for the Bible as the Word of God than the RSV.”
- 2.5 On the negative side, the CBT notes the following:
- 2.5.1 Where the ESV changes the RSV it can be excessively literalistic and its wording is sometimes muddled and confusing (e.g., Ex 20:21-22).
- 2.5.2 At times the ESV seems unaware of weaknesses in the RSV and has adopted the RSV reading without any change (e.g., 1 Sam 13:1) where the ESV, like the RSV, leaves a “hole” in the text.
- 2.5.3 Out of the 26 suggestions given by the 1977 CBT for changes in the OT text of the RSV, only 12 have been followed by the ESV. Out of the eleven suggestions for changes to the NT text of the RSV, seven were followed. This raises the question of just how thorough the ESV’s revision of the RSV really is.
- 2.5.4 The ESV does not seem to fit with its own principles of translation. On the one hand, the preface to the ESV states that the ESV is an “essentially literal translation”; on the other hand, the ESV uses the RSV as its starting point and the RSV cannot be described as an “essentially literal translation.” In light of the ESV’s stated goals and claims, the underlying RSV seems to be a “soft underbelly.”
- 2.6 The CBT received responses to its request for input from five churches. The CBT report states that the “specific data presented to us in the various letters was covered by the committee’s own investigation via the old CBT reports.” One of the responding churches still uses the RSV and would be served by an investigation of the ESV. Two of the responding churches do not have strong opinions, one is for the ESV and one is against.
- 2.7 The CBT believes that the churches are well-served by the New International Version (NIV). It states that “after a decade of usage, our members are finally getting used to it and are making it their own.”
- 2.8 The CBT does not believe that it is healthy to frequently change the recommended translation of the Word of God for use in the churches.
- 2.9 The CBT believes that the ESV is, in many respects, a considerable improvement over the RSV, especially in key matters of theology and text. “A full investigation,” states the CBT, “may reveal further strengths and also weaknesses of this translation. However, given that Synod 1995 found that the RSV could no longer be recommended because there were “better translations available” and given that the ESV is built upon the RSV, the CBT wonders whether it is truly worth the time and effort to engage in a full investigation.
- 2.10 The CBT is not sure whether the mandate it received from Synod Chatham 2004 was to consider the ESV as a replacement for the NIV or to provide an alternative to the RSV or to give all the churches the possibility for another translation recommended for study purposes. The CBT seeks clarity from Synod 2007 on this point.
- 2.11 The CBT received a communication from Rev. W. VanOene with five areas of concern. The CBT states that three of his concerns have been dealt with by previous CBT reports and that his remaining concerns could find no consensus among the CBT members. The CBT has left it open to Rev. VanOene to give further elucidation of his points.
- 2.12 In regard to its mandate to monitor new developments, the CBT states that “there were no new developments in the field of Bible translation.”
- 2.13 The CBT makes the following recommendations to this synod:
- 2.13.1 To reappoint a CBT with the ongoing mandate as articulated by Synod 2001.
- 2.13.2 To weigh the CBT’s preliminary investigation along with the input received from the churches to determine if a full investigation of the ESV is warranted.
- 2.13.3 To make clear to the CBT the purpose of such an investigation (if mandated) and what the place of the ESV might be in the churches.
- 2.13.4 To give the CBT guidance re travel costs. The CBT feels that more in person meetings

- would be beneficial but were unsure about the funds allocated to cover such meetings.
- 2.13.5 To appoint a new CBT member to replace Rev. J. Ludwig whose term expires in 2007. They suggest appointing an expert in the English language.
- 2.14 Ten letters from the churches were received by synod in response to the CBT Report to Synod 2007. The highlights are as follows:
- 2.14.1 Guelph agrees that it is not healthy to frequently change the recommended Bible translation. Guelph also requests that in addition to the one recommended version a second category be termed “faithful translations of Scripture for study and comparison purposes” and that this category would include all versions which have been previously found faithful or not unscriptural, namely, the KJV, the NASB, the NKJV and the RSV. Furthermore, Guelph requests that if synod determines that insufficient study has been done of the ESV that it as yet be evaluated in greater detail to determine whether it is worthy to be included in the second category. In addition, Guelph requests synod to mandate the CBT to evaluate two newer translations to determine whether they are worthy to be included in this second category. Guelph is also concerned that church members might confuse the NIV with the TNIV. Finally, Guelph requests synod to mandate the CBT to ascertain whether the International Bible Society still stands behind its Press Release of May 27, 1997 to continue publishing a gender-accurate NIV.
- 2.14.2 Spring Creek overtures synod to not mandate the CBT to further investigate the ESV on the grounds that only a small number of churches responded to the CBT’s request for input. Spring Creek emphasizes that the work of the CBT must serve the federation of churches and not just a few churches.
- 2.14.3 London request a preliminary comparison between the ESV and the NIV. The church at Yarrow requests a full investigation of the ESV. The church at Orangeville requests a more thorough investigation of the ESV to determine whether it can be recommended for use in worship and/or as a translation for study purposes.
- 2.14.4 Willoughby Heights requests synod to mandate relevant synodical committees to approach the topic of Bible translations in the context of our ecumenical relationships with the goal of coming to a mutually agreed upon version to be adopted by all English speaking Reformed churches in ecclesiastical fellowship.
- 2.14.5 Brampton, Carman East, Carman West, Chilliwack, Spring Creek and Smithers request synod not to mandate a further study of the ESV.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The preliminary work of the CBT indicates that the ESV is a “considerable improvement” on the RSV.
- 3.2 Given that Synod 1995 found that the RSV could no longer be recommended because there are “better translations available” and given that the ESV is built upon the RSV text, it is not worthwhile at this time to engage in a full investigation of the ESV.
- 3.3 Since the last synod, the CBT has not received any communications from the churches in regard to problems with the NIV. This demonstrates that the vast majority of the churches in the federation are content with the NIV as the recommended translation for the churches.
- 3.4 Synod Fergus 1998 indicated that besides the NIV, other approved translations include the NKJV and the NASB. Because the ESV has been found superior to the RSV, it can be added to this list of approved translations. This list of recommended translations can function as a response to Guelph’s request for a category of translations recommended for study and comparison purposes. Pastors and consistories can also give guidance in this area.
- 3.5 The request of Willoughby Heights in 2.14.4 above has merit especially in regard to the work of the Common Songbook Committee. Working toward a common songbook for the CanRC and the URCNA will eventually require a common Bible translation for biblical passages cited in the confessions and liturgical forms.

- 3.6 Guelph is correct in stating that church members might be confused by the similarities in name between the TNIV and the NIV. However, this matter can be addressed in local congregations.
- 3.7 The suggestion of Guelph to have the CBT ascertain whether the IBS still stands behind its Press Release of May 27, 1997 has merit. The churches need to have confidence in the continued availability of the recommended translation.
- 3.8 One church has requested the CBT to investigate two particular Bible translations. However, this church did not do a preliminary study of these translations and therefore it is not warranted at this time to mandate any further investigation.
- 3.9 Because the work of studying Bible translations is detail-oriented, the CBT should be able to have face to face meetings of its members. To keep costs down, committee members should be geographically proximate to each other.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To continue to recommend the NIV for use within the churches but to leave it in the freedom of the churches should they feel compelled to use other translations that have received favourable reviews in the reports of the CBT, namely, the NKJV, the NASB or the ESV.
- 4.2 To thank the CBT for its work.
- 4.3 To appoint a CBT with members who live in the same general area so that in person meetings are affordably possible.
- 4.4 To give to the CBT the following mandate:
 - 4.4.1 To receive comments from the churches/members about passages in the NIV which are thought to need improvement.
 - 4.4.2 To evaluate these comments and pass on valid concerns to the NIV Translation Center.
 - 4.4.3 To monitor developments in case significant changes appear in the text of the NIV.
 - 4.4.4 To take up contact with the IBS to confirm that the IBS still stands behind its press release of May 27, 1997.
 - 4.4.5 To request the Liturgical Forms and Confessions Committee to initiate discussions with the URCNA in regard to promoting an agreed upon English translation for use in the liturgical forms and confessions of an eventual common songbook and to be available to assist the Liturgical Forms and Confessions Committee in this regard.
 - 4.4.6 To receive input from the churches regarding Bible translations which the churches through their own careful study have found to be worthy of recommendation for use among the churches.
 - 4.4.7 To serve the next general synod with a report to be sent to the churches at least six months prior to the next synod.

ADOPTED

Day 10 — Evening Session Monday, May 21, 2007

Article 135

Reopening

The meeting was called to order. The chairman requested that we sing Psalm 105:1 and 2. All members were present.

Article 136

Request from Hamilton re Women voting

The advisory committee presented its third draft for consideration:

1. Material

1.1 Letter from Hamilton

2. Admissibility

2.1 This item is not admissible.

3. Observations

- 3.1 Hamilton requests synod to appoint deputies “to resolve the outstanding matter of women’s voting rights.”
- 3.2 General Synod 1974 was asked by the church at Toronto to “recognize the rights of active participation of women in the life of the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to acknowledge their privilege to take part in the election of office-bearers.” Synod, however, decided to reject the recommendation to appoint a committee with the mandate to study the matter. It also declared that synod was not convinced by the material presented (see: Acts 1974, Art. 84).
- 3.3 General Synod 1977 in granting the request for a committee stated in one of its Considerations “By not ad Article 30 Church Order refusing to deal with women’s voting rights, Synod 1974 has in fact admitted that this is a matter of common concern” (Acts, Art. 27, Cons. 2). It then proceeded to state in Conclusion 1 that “the question as to whether women may vote involves biblical and church-political principles. Since unity of practice is desirable, the introduction of women’s voting rights by a particular church on its own would be regrettable” (Acts, Art. 27, Concl. 1).
- 3.4 General Synod 1980 in rejecting the report of the Study Committee, which denied sisters the right to vote, stated that “the Committee has not been able to convince [synod] of the validity of its conclusion and recommendation.” It also stated in one of its Considerations that “since Synod is unable to arrive at a well-founded decision in this matter, because of the inconclusive evidence presented, it is wise to retain the existing practice, but at the same time to continue working towards a warranted conclusion” (Art. 83, VI. B. 3).
- 3.5 General Synod 1983, which decided not to adopt the report of the Study Committee appointed by Synod 1980, declared that “there is an obvious lack of consensus on this matter” (Art. 160, C. 1) and decided “not to appoint a new Committee on this matter” (Art. 160, D. 3). Under its Observations, Synod 1983 refers to a brother who favoured the recommendation of the study committee giving as one of the reasons: “the recommendation leaves it to the wisdom of the local Churches whether or not the prohibition of voting be female members be lifted” (Art. 160, B. 5.2).
- 3.6 General Synod 1995 was approached to establish a new committee to study the matter of women’s voting. Synod declared these requests “inadmissible on the grounds: A. that according to Art. 33 CO 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 CO).”
- 3.7 General Synod 1998 received appeals from the Ebenezer church at Burlington, the Fellowship church at Burlington, as well as overtures from the church at Aldergrove and the Fellowship church at Burlington. The appeals challenged the decision of Synod 1995 and called for a new committee. The overtures go the route of arguing that this matter should not have been declared inadmissible on the ground of Art. 30 CO (see Acts 1998, Arts. 109, 110, 111, 112).
- 3.8 General Synod 2001 was again confronted with the issue. Regional Synod East requested synod to “revisit the matter of women’s voting rights and serve the churches with a complete report.” As one of the grounds for its request Regional Synod East states, “the matter of women’s voting rights has been dealt with as a matter of the churches in common (Synod 1980, 1983, 1986, 1995, 1998)” (see Acts, Art. 101, 3.2.1). Synod 2001 states in Consideration 4.2 that “this is true. However, this in itself does not constitute a ‘new ground.’ It only confirms that this request

is at the right address, namely, General Synod” (Acts, Art. 101).

4. Considerations

- 4.1 It is a foundational principle of Reformed church government that in the Church Order the churches voluntarily agree to bind themselves to certain principles and practices. They promise to uphold these principles and practices by implementing them in their church life.
- 4.2 When it comes to practices that are not in the Church Order, the churches are not bound.
- 4.3 With respect to women voting or not in the election of office-bearers, there is no article in the Church Order that deals with this matter.
- 4.4 Article 3 of the Church Order states that “the election to any office shall take place with the cooperation of the congregation, after preceding prayers, and according to the regulations adopted for that purpose by the consistory with the deacons.” This means that it is the task of the consistory with the deacons to formulate, adopt and implement local election regulations.
- 4.5 The past history of the Canadian Reformed Churches in this matter indicates that the question of whether or not this matter belonged to the local church or to the churches in common has never been addressed. Synod 1977, in appointing a committee, speaks of women’s voting as “a matter of common concern” and speaks about “unity of practice” but nowhere proves that what belongs to the consistory with the deacons also belongs to the “churches in common” (Art. 30 CO) and thus should be regulated by the general synod.
- 4.6 The request of Hamilton to appoint deputies to study the matter of women’s voting rights is inadmissible because it is not within the jurisdiction of the synod to appoint committees and to regulate matters that belong within the jurisdiction of the local church.

5. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 5.1 That the submission of Hamilton is inadmissible.

DEFEATED

A motion was presented and seconded as follows:

Women Voting

1. Observations

- 1.1 Hamilton requests synod to appoint a committee with the mandate to study various aspects of women’s participation in the election of office-bearers.

2. Considerations

- 2.1 Synod Fergus received overtures from two churches “regarding the matter of Women’s Participation in Election of Office Bearers.” Synod ruled that these overtures came “directly to General Synod and consequently it is inadmissible on the ground that ‘a new matter which has not previously been presented to that major assembly may be put on the agenda only when the minor assembly has dealt with it’” (Arts. 111, 112). The church at Hamilton, then, ought to have had their request brought to synod’s agenda via the minor assemblies.
- 2.2 There is no article in the Church Order that deals with this matter of women participating in the election of office-bearers. Nevertheless, many synods of the Canadian Reformed Churches have expressed categorically that the subject of whether the sisters of the congregation should cast a vote in the election of office bearers is not a subject for the local consistories to decide upon, but a matter that belongs to the churches in common (e.g., 1974, Art. 27, Cons. 2; 1977, Art. 27, Cons. 2; 1986, Art. 120, Cons. 2 & 3; 1995, Art. 51, II. B; 1998, Arts. 111, 112; 2001, Art. 101, Cons. 4.2). No church has appealed the position the churches held for many years, namely, that the subject belongs to the churches in common.

3. Recommendation

Synod decide to deny Hamilton's request.

This motion was **defeated**.

Another motion was moved and seconded. An amendment to this motion was moved and seconded to replace Recommendations 5.1 and 5.2 in such a way that the total decision of synod is:

- 5.1 To accede to the request of the Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church at Hamilton to appoint a committee to finish the mandate extended by Synod Smithville 1980.
- 5.2 Specifically, the committee should do the following:
 - 5.2.1 Examine the biblical teaching on headship and voting and also study the following questions:
 - 5.2.1.1 With regard to headship: What is the position of widows and single female communicant members?
 - 5.2.1.2 With regard to headship: What is the relationship between husband and wife when they discuss who to vote for - doesn't the husband therefore show and practice equality as joint heirs of the grace of God?
 - 5.2.1.3 With regard to voting: What do the Bible and our Church Order say about congregational participation in electing office bearers?
 - 5.2.1.4 With regard to voting: What is the relationship between congregational (a) nomination, (b) election process, (c) ratification/approbation, and (d) the final appointment by council?
 - 5.2.2 Present its conclusions on this matter to the churches six months before the next general synod.

The amendment **carried**.

The proposal as amended was **adopted** as follows:

1. Material:

- 1.1 Letter from Hamilton

2. Admissibility

- 2.1 This item is admissible because it comes from one of the churches and deals with a matter that has been perceived as one belonging to the churches in common.

3. Observations

- 3.1 The Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church at Hamilton is asking synod to appoint deputies to study the matter of women's voting in the churches. Specifically, they ask that deputies be appointed to finish the mandate extended by Synod 1980.
- 3.2 The Cornerstone Council asserts that Synod 1980 did not see voting as "governing" but had difficulty in the way in which the "role relationship" of man and woman was presented.
- 3.3 Synod 1980 gave this mandate to the deputies: "To re-examine the matter, including the study report presented to Synod in light of the criticism voiced in letters to Synod and in the report of the Advisory Committee; to give more consideration available in other study reports re the place and task of women in the church; to submit a report with recommendations to the next General Synod with a sufficient number of copies to the churches."
- 3.4 Synod 1983 did not accept the Report of the deputies appointed by Synod 1980 on the grounds that this report was based on a view already rejected by Synod 1980, namely, that voting is a matter of "prophesying."
- 3.5 Synod 1983 did not appoint further deputies to study the matter of women's voting in the churches.
- 3.6 Despite requests by various churches and also by Regional Synod East, subsequent Synods

(1986, 1995, 1998 and 2001) have decided not to appoint study committees on the basis that there were no “new grounds” that would warrant revisiting the decision of Synod 1983 to not appoint a study committee.

- 3.7 The Cornerstone Council is asking synod to appoint a committee with the mandate to examine biblical teaching on headship and to determine how this teaching impacts voting in the church.

4. Considerations

- 4.1 The Cornerstone Council is correct in stating that the matter of women’s voting rights has not been dealt with in a conclusive way by any general synod.
- 4.2 General Synod 1980 rejected certain arguments against women’s voting but did not take the further step of affirming women’s voting among the churches.
- 4.3 The Cornerstone Council has indeed brought forward new elements to this synod that could warrant the formation of new study committee. The agenda set by a previous synod (1980) has not been completed.

5. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 5.1 To accede to the request of the Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church at Hamilton to appoint a committee to finish the mandate extended by Synod Smithville 1980.
- 5.2 Specifically, the committee should do the following:
- 5.2.1 Examine the biblical teaching on headship and voting and also study the following questions:
- 5.2.1.1 With regard to headship: What is the position of widows and single female communicant members?
- 5.2.1.2 With regard to headship: What is the relationship between husband and wife when they discuss who to vote for - doesn’t the husband therefore show and practice equality as joint heirs of the grace of God?
- 5.2.1.3 With regard to voting: What do the Bible and our Church Order say about congregational participation in electing office bearers?
- 5.2.1.4 With regard to voting: What is the relationship between congregational (a) nomination, (b) election process, (c) ratification/approbation, and (d) the final appointment by council?
- 5.2.2 Present its conclusions on this matter to the churches six months before the next general synod.

ADOPTED

Br. DeBoer requested that his opposing vote be recorded.

Article 137

SCBP – Apostles’ Creed in the Baptismal Form

The advisory committee presented a supplementary proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 SCBP Report 7
- 1.2-5 Letters from the following four churches:
Carman West, Flamborough, Ottawa, Elora

2. Observations

- 2.1 The committee report, section 7, serves as observations.
- 2.2 Synod Chatham mandated the Standing Committee for the Book of Praise to present a proposal with the inclusion of the Apostles’ Creed in the baptismal forms.

- 2.3 The committee fulfilled its mandate.
 - 2.4 Ottawa and Elora express support for the committee proposal.
 - 2.5 Carman West, interacting with the proposal, asks why we should have the creed before baptism when baptizing infants, but after baptism if an adult is baptized?
 - 2.6 Flamborough and Ottawa suggest “in whose name” should be changed to “into whose name” in line with the baptism formula.
3. **Considerations** Synod Smithers (Art. 110) upheld the request to not include the Apostles’ Creed in the baptismal forms. As such the proposal of the committee and the input from the churches are no longer relevant.
4. **Recommendation**
Synod decide:
- 4.1 That no further action on this matter is necessary.

ADOPTED

Article 138

SCBP – Capitalization of Pronouns

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 139

Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America

The advisory committee presented its proposal. After a preliminary round of discussion the committee took back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 140

North American Reformed and Presbyterian Council (NAPARC)

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CCCA Report 7
- 1.2 Supplementary Report of CCCA
- 1.3-6 Letters from the following four churches:
Brampton, Burlington Fellowship, Carman East, Spring Creek.

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Neerlandia (Art. 74) summarized a request from the CCCA: “since the ERQ, the OPC and the RCUS are involved with NAPARC, and since the membership of the CRC has been suspended, the CCCA requests permission of Synod to send an observer to a future meeting of NAPARC to investigate its character and the usefulness of joining this organization.” Synod Neerlandia considered that sending an observer “is warranted because of our growing relationships with the ERQ, OPC and RCUS,” and so gave the CCCA permission “to send an observer, at its own discretion, to future meetings of NAPARC to investigate its usefulness and possible membership in this organization.”
- 2.2 Synod Chatham received a detailed report from the CCCA about NAPARC, including details about its basis, purpose, function, authority and membership (see *Acts*, pp. 264-6). Synod Chatham (Art. 30) summed up the CCCA’s evaluation regarding NAPARC: “the committee suggests that membership may be useful to provide support to our sister churches, the OPC and RCUS, which are member churches of NAPARC.” It also adds that it may “help to express greater unity with the ERQ, and to fulfil the Biblical calling to foster unity with other reformed

churches.” Hence synod gave the CCCA the mandate “to continue to send an observer to NAPARC.” The CCCA was also to consider whether potential membership in NAPARC was in fact a “significant duplication in the purposes, function and membership of... the ICRC,” and was also to explore whether NAPARC could possibly be “integrated into the ICRC.”

- 2.3 Members of the CCCA attended the NAPARC meetings of 2004 and 2006.
- 2.4 The churches with whom the CCCA was instructed to communicate have repeatedly and persistently encouraged the Canadian Reformed Churches to become members of NAPARC. They argue that this forum, concentrated as it is in North America, gives member churches periodic opportunity to speak together on issues of mutual concern or interest. NAPARC also gives extra accountability and cooperation among faithful Reformed churches on the same continent.
- 2.5 The CCCA has experienced that attendance at NAPARC has proven to be “very useful for providing a forum for meeting other Reformed churches.” A financial obligation of \$500 annually is attached to NAPARC membership. Attendance at the annual meeting is also expected.
- 2.6 The CCCA recommends that synod decide to give the CCCA the mandate to apply for membership within NAPARC.
- 2.7 Brampton encourages synod to apply for membership in NAPARC. Brampton lists a number of benefits, including getting to know other churches seriously committed to promoting the Reformed faith in North America, being able to share and discuss common issues, and possibilities for extra accountability and cooperation among faithful Reformed churches.
- 2.8 Burlington South “especially endorses involvement in NAPARC as a means of maintaining meaningful relations and exerting an influence at these meetings.”
- 2.9 Carman East says that “NAPARC would appear to be added-value over and above our membership in the ICRC and for that reason we support the Committee’s recommendation to join NAPARC.”
- 2.10 Spring Creek would like the CanRC to join NAPARC. “There are numerous advantages in joining this organization, one of them being that a closer personal contact can be established via this organization with the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches on this North American continent in their meetings.”

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Historically, the CanRC have declined to be involved with NAPARC because the Christian Reformed Church of North America was a member. In 2002 the expulsion of the CRCNA from NAPARC was confirmed. In 2002 and 2003 CanRC observers first attended NAPARC, and reported positively to Synod Chatham 2004 of their experiences.
- 3.2 The CCCA reported to Synod Chatham that this fellowship of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches is fully committed “to the Bible in its entirety as the Word of God written, without error in all its parts and to its teaching as set forth in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms” (see *Acts of Synod Chatham*, pp. 264-5). Similarly, “all actions and decisions taken are advisory in character and in no way curtail or restrict the autonomy of the member bodies.” The foundation and authority of NAPARC are not hindrances to membership.
- 3.3 The current membership of NAPARC consists of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, l’Église réformée du Québec, the Korean American Presbyterian Church, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church of America, the Reformed Church in the United States, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America and the United Reformed Churches of North America. The CanRC have close contacts with five of these eight churches.
- 3.4 The CCCA reports that their participation at the meetings of NAPARC has given them opportunity to interact meaningfully with the sister churches as well as with other churches with

whom contact has been established. Issues of joint concern, as well as matters wherein differences exist, have been and can continue to be discussed in this forum.

- 3.5 The churches that corresponded with synod about NAPARC all favour our seeking to join this organization.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To thank the CCCA for the work they have done in relation to NAPARC.
4.2 To instruct the CCCA to apply for membership in NAPARC.

ADOPTED

Article 141

SCBP – Prose Section with the NIV Bible References

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 SCBP Report 10
1.2-6 Letters from the following churches:
Smithers, Chatham, Carman West, Flamborough, Burlington Fellowship

2. Observations

- 2.1 The committee report serves as observations.
2.2 Synod Chatham mandated the committee to continue the mandate of Synod Fergus to prepare the prose section of the *Book of Praise* with the NIV Bible references.
2.3 The committee recommends that synod adopt the updated prose section of the *Book of Praise* with the NIV Bible references, as presented (10.1-10.3 of report).
2.4 The *Book of Praise* will include the following copyright statement: “Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. NIV®. Copyright© 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.”
2.5 Regarding the proposed prose section with the NIV Bible References (10.0 of report):
2.5.1 Smithers recommends that Synod Smithers consider the following points before adopting the committee’s recommendation:
2.5.1.1 The committee made some minor changes that appear to go beyond the mandate and are not explained:
2.5.1.1.1 BC Art. 5: Omission of the word “for” in the last sentence
2.5.1.1.2 BC Art. 14, second paragraph: the word “is” was changed to “was” in the sentence, “For whatever light is in us has changed into darkness.” The footnote reference to Eph 5:8 does not explain the difference.
2.5.1.1.3 BC Art. 37, third last sentence: the words “cause them to possess” have been changed to “grant them.”
2.5.1.2 In some places the switch to the NIV language was not made:
2.5.1.2.1 BC Art. 3, quotation of 2 Pet 1:21. The proposal maintains the RSV “no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man” and then switches to the NIV for the last part of the quotation “but that men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” If the RSV translation is kept because it is better, that should be mentioned in a note.
2.5.1.2.2 BC Art. 14, first sentence. The phrase “He made and formed him after His own image and likeness” should be “He made and formed

- him in His own image and likeness.”
- 2.5.1.2.3 Lord’s Day 26, QA 71. The word “regeneration” should be “rebirth” as per Titus 3:5.
- 2.5.1.2.4 Lord’s Day 52, QA 128. The word “art” should be “are.”
- 2.5.1.3 In Canons of Dort chapter 1, Article 18 the exact quotation of the NIV of Matthew 20:15 hinders clarity. Smithers suggests not keeping this as a direct quotation, and instead using the words of the RSV while referring to Matthew 20:15 in the side margin.
- 2.5.1.4 In some places there are typographical errors:
- 2.5.1.4.1 BC Art. 7: the italics should be removed from “be” in “Even if it be an angel from heaven” .
- 2.5.1.4.2 BC Art. 17: the quote from Gen 3:15 should be put in italics (as in the current version). The same applies to the quote from Gal 4:4.
- 2.5.1.4.3 BC Art. 21, second paragraph, second sentence: “Chris” should be “Christ” .
- 2.5.1.4.4 BC Art. 35, final paragraph: the reference of 1 Cor 10:28-29 should be 1 Cor 11:28-29. Although the committee reports that this correction has already been sent to the printers, the correction is not made in the updated prose section.
- 2.5.1.4.5 Canons of Dort 1,7: the italics needs to begin earlier in the quotation of Eph 1:14.
- 2.5.1.4.6 Prayers in various liturgical forms. Smithers recommends changing the words “We pray You” to “We pray to You” in the following liturgical forms:
- 2.5.1.4.6.1 Baptism of infants, closing prayer, first words of second paragraph
- 2.5.1.4.6.2 Adult baptism, closing prayer, first words of second paragraph.
- 2.5.1.4.6.3 Ordination of missionaries, closing prayer, first words of second paragraph.
- 2.5.1.4.6.4 Ordination of elders/deacons, closing prayer, first words of last paragraph.
- 2.5.2 Carman West and Chatham note that simply replacing Thee/Thy with You/Your is not always sufficient: sometimes an accompanying verb also has to be modified (e.g., the word “art” should be changed to “are” in the proposed version of Q&A 128 of the Heidelberg Catechism (Reports, Vol 2, p.80).
- 2.5.3 Chatham gives examples of “numerous errors” that should be corrected before the new version is published:
- 2.5.3.1 Canons of Dort 2 4: the proper text reference is Hebrews 4:15, not Hebrews 4:5.
- 2.5.3.2 Marriage Form: the phrase “the Lord God said” is repeated twice.
- 2.5.3.3 A prayer for all Christendom: the word “heathen” should be in plural.
- 2.5.4 Flamborough, commenting on the Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons, recommends consistency with the quotes from the NIV throughout the form, also when it is not a literal quotation but a reference. Hence the phrase “tending the flock of God that was (in) their charge” (RSV language of 1 Peter 5:2) should be modified.
- 2.5.5 Burlington Fellowship questions the wisdom of making a number of linguistic changes to the liturgical forms (other than the use of text quotation from the NIV) and suggests that it would be preferable to time the changes to the forms with the changes to the hymn section to minimize the need for members to purchase different versions of the *Book of Praise* over a relatively short period.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 re Obs. 2.5.1.1 – synod agrees with Smithers that the committee should not go beyond its mandate with changes to the text unless it is a direct or indirect quotation from scripture.
- 3.2 re Obs. 2.5.1.2 – the committee should consider this.
- 3.3 re Obs. 2.5.1.3 – the suggestion of Smithers is good.
- 3.4 re Obs. 2.5.1.4 – the committee should consider this.
- 3.5 The committee should note the letters of Carman West and Chatham (2.5.2 and 2.5.3).
- 3.6 re Obs. 2.5.4 – the committee should implement the recommendation of Flamborough as far as possible.
- 3.7 re Obs. 2.5.5 – it should be noted that linguistic changes other than direct and indirect quotations of the NIV is beyond the mandate of the committee.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To adopt the proposed updated prose section of the *Book of Praise* with the NIV Bible references, along with the necessary changes as noted in the above considerations.

ADOPTED**Article 142****CRCA — General Mandate**

The advisory committee presented its second proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CRCA Report 12
- 1.2-10 Letters from the following nine churches:
Willoughby Heights, Guelph, Spring Creek, Smithers, London, Surrey, Edmonton Immanuel, Abbotsford, Yarrow

2. Observations

- 2.1 With regard to its mandate, the CRCA writes: “It is the Committee’s request that Synod Smithers consider carefully the limits of what we can and should do as churches in the world, and that Synod not mandate something as general as ‘investigate diligently all requests.’”
- 2.2 In addition, “the Committee requests Synod to realize the limited resources of the Committee when it comes to investigating and evaluating issues and challenges in our present sister church relations. It has become clear that where there is strife and schism in sister churches abroad, the causes of the strife and schism are various different issues, each of which may warrant a book-size report or a whole separate study committee in the sister churches. We, however, are but one Committee charged with overseeing the whole state of affairs in all of the sister churches.”
- 2.3 Furthermore, the CRCA continues, “it is the Committee’s opinion that when there are various issues (church/court proceedings in Scotland, hymns in Holland, along with divorce-remarriage, Sabbath-Sunday) that Synod Smithers wants to consider more carefully in the relations with sister churches, Synod should not look to the CRCA to study such topics and issues. Some other solution ought to be sought for such in-depth studies.”
- 2.4 The CRCA also informs synod that it has been handicapped both by committee members who either left the country or moved to the other side of the country. As a result it asks synod to consider two aspects in determining appointments to the committee. The first is that synod should give priority to making the CRCA a regional committee with members living in close proximity to one another. The second is that continuity on the committee is important. To facilitate this, the CRCA informs Synod that it will send a letter with suggestions to accomplish these aspects.
- 2.5 The CRCA asks synod for guidance and direction in the matter of responding to requests to

- attend assemblies and synods. It suggests that there are occasions when the churches would be well served by sending a full delegation, such as in the case of the meetings of the ICRC. It also makes the suggestion that synod consider one of the habits of some sister churches who decided ahead of time where the churches would like to have the CRCA visit and attend.
- 2.6 The CRCA recommends that Synod Smithers give it the following charge:
- 2.6.1 To consider requests for ecclesiastical fellowship from churches abroad in direct consultation with, and deferring to the judgment of (in accordance with the rules for ecclesiastical fellowship re third party relationships), a sister church in the part of the world from which the requests originates.
- 2.6.2 To investigate diligently those requests which come from places which are in closer proximity to our churches than to sister churches abroad.
- 2.6.3 To respond, only if necessary, to specific requests made to attend Assemblies, Synods, or meetings of other churches outside the Americas, besides those visits specifically mandated by General Synod.
- 2.7 Willoughby Heights concurs with the concerns expressed by the CRCA. It urges synod to reflect on the path that took the CanRC to its present state of church relations. Historically, the CanRC have had sister church relationships with federations in other countries that maintain the same polity and confessions. More recently the CanRC have established Ecclesiastical Fellowship with more churches. Some of these churches maintain different confessions and hold to a different church polity. Willoughby Heights also states: “once this development had taken root the terms sister church and ecclesiastical fellowship were forced to become synonyms.” Willoughby Heights suggests that synod divide (or instigate investigation toward dividing) our present relations into two categories:
- 2.7.1 Sister Churches — being those that would join in federative unity should they be in geographical location to do so. The present rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship would apply to such a relationship.
- 2.7.2 Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship — being those that we have recognized as true churches of our Lord Jesus Christ, but who, as result of historical development have developed or adopted different practices, polity and confessions.
- Abbotsford presents a similar suggestion for synod’s consideration.
- 2.8 Edmonton Immanuel requests synod to mandate the CRCA and the CCCA to study the differences between the churches and resolve these divergences with the respective churches. If synod judges that we cannot resolve the existing divergences, then Edmonton Immanuel requests synod to consider dividing our ecumenical relationships into two sets of rules:
- 2.8.1 Ecclesiastical Fellowship with true churches which do not maintain the Three Forms of Unity and a similar church order.
- 2.8.2 Fraternal Relations with churches that do maintain the Three Forms of Unity and a similar Church order.
- 2.9 Guelph and Spring Creek agree with the CRCA’s first recommendation (12.7.1.1) mentioned above 2.6.1.
- 2.10 Smithers recommends that the following be added to the mandate of the CRCA:
- 2.10.1 The CRCA is to determine and describe what differences there are between the particular church being dealt with, (Name) and the Canadian Reformed Churches, and recommend to general synod whether
- 2.10.1.1 the differences are “minor” and therefore no longer need to be discussed, or
- 2.10.1.2 the differences are “major” and therefore either are
- 2.10.1.2.1 worthy of brotherly admonition (in the case of existing union) or
- 2.10.1.2.2 an impediment to coming to the level of unity being sought (in the case of seeking union).
- 2.11 London supports the recommendations of the CRCA 12.7.1.1 and 12.7.1.2
- 2.12 Surrey agrees with the recommendations of the CRCA.

- 2.13 Yarrow sends synod its comments on the CRCA recommendations but makes no specific recommendations of its own.
- 2.14 Smithers recommends that the CanRC send a proper amount of representatives to future meetings of the ICRC and that the costs associated with this be accepted.

3. Considerations

- 3.1. The recommendations of the CRCA have value in that they give greater clarity to the task and mandate of the committee. At the same time, what the CRCA recommends does need some modification. For example, it would be too much to say that we should “defer” in these matters to the judgment of a sister church. In addition, the second recommendation of the CRCA is questionable seeing that geography is an inadequate criterion when it comes to determining which requests to investigate. Also, Recommendation 2 of the CRCA is covered to some extent under its Recommendation 1.
- 3.2 Willoughby Heights implies that formerly we had sister church relations and when this was later changed to ecclesiastical fellowship the two terms were “forced to become synonyms.” A close study of decisions in previous Acts, however, reveals that the term “sister churches” has always been a popular term to describe our relations with foreign churches. Prior to 1992 relations with sister churches were governed by Rules of Correspondence and thereafter they were governed by Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship. Furthermore, the Acts of 1983 reveal that Synod Cloverdale took over the term “Ecclesiastical Fellowship” from the report of the Committee for Correspondence and began to use it to describe our relations with sister churches (see: Acts 1983, pp. 313-4, as well as Art. 121). Hence the two terms “ecclesiastical fellowship” and “sister churches” are synonymous. The former being the official name and the latter being the popular or common name.
- 3.3 Abbotsford, Edmonton Immanuel and Willoughby Heights would all like to see our churches divide present relations into two categories. Unfortunately, none of these churches interact with the decision of Synod 1980, (Acts, Art. 154) which concluded that (1) “there is no reason to establish a different form of permanent ecclesiastical relationship with other churches in the world than as regulated in the rules for correspondence, (2) These rules can be applied realistically according to the circumstances, like the lesser or greater degree of difference between the churches.”
- 3.4 In recommending that the CRCA add to its mandate, the church at Smithers needs to realize that minor differences are covered by the Church Order (Article 50). Should there be major differences, Smithers ought to reckon with the fact that these are normally dealt with by the CRCA and then passed along to synod in its report.
- 3.5 The recommendations of Smithers and the CRCA regarding full delegation to the ICRC has merit seeing that at the last two meetings of the ICRC our delegation was kept to a minimum but other CanRC members present were expected to help out (i.e., the Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer of the ICRC). This put added pressure on them. It also needs to be realized that the meetings of the ICRC provide a valuable opportunity for members of the CRCA to hold additional meetings with deputies from sister churches at virtually no additional expense to the churches.
- 3.6 The recommendation of the CRCA whereby synod gives direction to the committee as to which churches in ecclesiastical fellowship should be visited has merit as it involves the broadest assembly of our churches in the matter of delegation. At the same time the CRCA should not be forced to rely solely on the direction of synod seeing that there may be circumstances and situations in our relations with other churches that demand an unexpected visit.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To mandate the CRCA:

- 4.1.1 To consider requests for ecclesiastical fellowship from churches abroad in consultation with and taking note of the judgment of (in accordance with the rules for ecclesiastical fellowship re third party relationships), a sister church familiar with the church from which the request originates.
- 4.1.2 To respond, only if necessary, to specific requests made to attend assemblies, synods, or meetings of other churches outside the Americas, besides those visits specifically mandated by general synod.
- 4.1.3 To serve Synod 2010 with a report with suitable recommendations, to be sent to the churches six months prior to the next general synod.
- 4.2 Keeping in mind Consideration 3.6 above, synod decide to instruct the CRCA to send delegates to:
 - 4.2.1 The General Synod 2008 of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands
 - 4.2.2 The General Synod 2008 of the Reformed Churches in New Zealand
 - 4.2.3 The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (in consultation and rotation with sister churches)
 - 4.2.4 The 2009 meeting of the ICRC (full delegation: two delegates and two advisors).

ADOPTED

Article 143

Reformed Churches in The Netherlands - Restored (GKH)

The advisory committee presented its second proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CRCA Report 5, section 5.6 re GKH and Addendum (pp. 94-95)
- 1.2 Letter from Fergus North
- 1.3 Letter from the GKH (March 19, 2007) with an attached article
- 1.4 Email from the GKH (May 7, 2007) with an attachment containing English translation from their recent Acts of Synod Marienberg

2. Admissibility

With respect to the submissions from the GKH, synod can admit the letter as it takes issues with the CRCA Report regarding itself. It notes that the appended copy of “Do not take words away from this book of prophecy,” had been previously received by the CRCA which interacted with it (see the Addendum to the report). With respect to the email, it simply is information, not requiring action. As such, it can be “received for information.”

3. Observations

- 3.1 The report of the CRCA and the Addendum, which are included in the Appendices in the Acts, serve as Observations.
- 3.2 The CRCA recommends that Synod 2007:
 - 3.2.1 [5.6.7.1] Express sadness over the schism in the GKN which began in 2003.
 - 3.2.2 [5.6.7.2] Urge the federation to pray for the restoration of unity between the GKH and GKN.
 - 3.2.3 [5.6.7.3] Not accept the GKH request to acknowledge these churches as sister churches.
 - 3.2.4 [5.6.7.4] Mandate the CRCA to communicate 5.6.7.1., 5.6.7.2. and 5.6.7.3. to the Deputies BBK of the GKH and maintain contact with them.
- 3.3 Fergus North believes the committee has not given sufficient proof for the statement made in 5.6.6, “we must therefore reject the allegations of the GKH, and express regret that unproven accusation has been made and illegitimate actions have been taken with respect to the GKN.”
- 3.4 The letter from the GKH dated March 19, 2007 interacts with the CRCA Report and Addendum. It explains that no delegate was invited to their synod because their deputies had no

authorization to do so. With respect to the CRCA's comments, they state that the CRCA has "drawn conclusions without indicating anything on which it is founded." They feel the GKN brochure 'Not Beyond What is Written' "underexposes the facts or at times facts are not even mentioned." They also feel the CRCA wrongly gives the impression that the separation was over liturgical issues and provides no factual basis for this. They indicate that the deformation is visible to all who take the time to see publications in the press and church magazines. It is their conclusion that "the Word, the Sacraments and church discipline were no longer safe in the GKN."

- 3.5 From the submitted translation of the Acts of Synod Marienberg it can be gathered that the issues of concern are as follows: Women's voting rights; New Bible Translation; Salutation and Benediction; Ordinarium; Marriage Form; Hymns; Articles 65 and 67 of the (Dutch) Church Order; Relationship with Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken, Nederlandse Gereformeerde Kerken, PCEA; Divorce; Fourth Commandment. The GKH, seeing itself as the lawful continuation of the GKN, rescinded a series of decisions about these matters made by Synods Ommen 1993 through to Zuidhorn 2002.

4. Consideration

- 4.1 It is true that the CRCA does not give details in their Report leading to their conclusions. However, all the issues raised by the GKH, as listed at 3.5, have had the attention of the CRCA over the years. The CRCA has been aware of the critiques of the decisions and studied them (see Acts of previous synods and the most recent CRCA Report). They have been able to conclude that the GKN has remained faithful. The documents provided by the GKH did not lead the CRCA to change their assessment as presented in their Report (see Addendum). In this respect, it is good to refer to the comment of the CRCA in which they express concern that "the GKH is in danger of not carefully examining what has actually been decided by GKN Synod" (p. 66).
- 4.2 The GKH clearly indicates that they consider the GKN a false church. This shows in the way that they consider themselves the "lawful continuation of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands" (Report 5.6.4). Further, they are unwilling to consider reconciliation unless the GKN would see "the need to return to the Scriptures, confession and Church Order" (Report 5.6.5). For this reason, synod agrees with the CRCA when it speaks of the separation that occurred as "schism." The CRCA should be instructed to admonish the GKH in a brotherly manner on this matter as this action is not scripturally valid according to Belgic Confession Article 28 where we confess that "all therefore who draw away from the church or fail to join it act contrary to the ordinance of God." At the same time, the CRCA should continue to look for ways to facilitate reconciliation.

5. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 5.1 To express sadness over the separation in the GKN that began in 2003.
- 5.2 Not to accept the GKH's request to acknowledge these churches as sister churches.
- 5.3 To urge the churches to pray for the restoration of unity between the GKH and GKN.
- 5.4 To mandate the CRCA:
- 5.4.1 To admonish the GKH in a brotherly manner for its unlawful separation as outlined in Consideration 4.2.
- 5.4.2 To communicate 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 to the Deputies BBK of the GKH and continue to seek ways to facilitate reconciliation between the GKH and GKN.

ADOPTED

Article 144

Closing Devotions and Adjournment

Brother DeVries led in closing devotion from Psalm 119:1-24. The meeting sang Psalm 119:17 and 62 followed by prayer. The chairman adjourned the meeting.

**Day 11 — Morning Session
Tuesday, May 22, 2007**

Article 145

Opening Devotions and Rollcall

The meeting was called to order. The chairman read Exodus 5:22 - 6:8 and explained that this passage shows that the Lord's promise "I will be your God" is the basis of redemption. He led in prayer and the meeting sang Psalm 81:1-4. Rollcall showed that all members were present.

Article 146

Request to reopen the discussion on synod's decision re the GKH.

Brother Nordeman moved that the decision about the GKH be revisited on the basis of Guideline IV.G. called "Motion to Bring Matters Once Decided Again Before Synod." He brought six reasons to the fore as follows:

1. Synod is using excessively strong language with words such as "schism" and "admonish."
2. Synod is not consistent in its approach as compared to the situation with the FCS and FCC, where the FCC also considers itself the lawful continuation of the Free Church of Scotland.
3. Synod is premature in its position taken as no correspondence was received from any of the churches requesting synod to make such pronouncements.
4. Synod is passing a public judgment on the GKH with words and terminology that have not first been used in communications with the GKH.
5. In view of the strong opinions expressed by many churches in regards to the situation in the GKN, Synod Smithers risks creating further unrest in the CanRC.
6. By adopting the above mentioned consideration and recommendation Synod Smithers further underlines the concerns expressed by our sister church in Australia: that developments in the CanRC "do not parallel those in theirs" (Report CRCA section 2.3, pp. 23-24).

The motion was seconded. A round of discussion followed on this motion and was put to the vote. The motion carried. Brother Nordeman was instructed to bring a new proposal to the meeting.

Article 147

Appeals from Coaldale and Guelph re Art. 89 of Synod Chatham

The advisory committee presented its second proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1-2 Letters from Coaldale and Guelph

2. Observations

- 2.1 Regional Synod East 2003 overtured General Synod 2004 to add the following to the Guidelines for General Synod: "Although advice can be requested in particular matters, advisory members shall not be appointed."
- 2.2 Synod Chatham 2004 notes that Regional Synod East submitted two reasons for its overture:
 - 2.2.1 The convening church does not send a delegate to general synod; rather, delegates to general synod are sent by regional synod.
 - 2.2.2 To preclude the seating of advisors does not mean that general synod cannot call upon others for advice in particular matters. Article III.A.9 of the Regulations states that: "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."
- 2.3 In rejecting the overture of Regional Synod East 2003, Synod 2004 considered the following:
 - 2.3.1 That regional synod is correct when it says that "delegates to general synod are sent by the regional synods and not by the convening church." However, Synod 2004 went on

to say that “this does not say anything about advisors.”

- 2.3.2 That “advisors may be called upon for advice by synod but, unlike delegates, advisors cannot vote on any matters before synod.”
- 2.3.3 That while general synod can call upon others for advice on any matter at any time, this does not preclude the seating of advisors.
- 2.4 Coaldale and Guelph argue that Synod 2004 has failed to recognize that even without the right to vote, advisors to synod could have a great deal of influence on decisions made by synod and that this type of influence is contrary to the principles and spirit of Reformed church polity. Coaldale and Guelph believe that only those properly delegated by a regional synod may have the privilege of deliberating and making decisions at the table of a general synod; non-delegated persons should be at the table “only by way of exception and for a good reason.” Coaldale and Guelph also argue that Synod Chatham 2004 failed to reckon with Article 16 of Winnipeg 1989 which records a decision to not seat professors at synod.
- 2.5 In addition, Coaldale presents arguments which quote from and interact with the overture of Regional East 2003 to Synod Chatham 2004.

4. Considerations

- 4.1 Coaldale and Guelph are correct in emphasizing that the right to be part of the deliberative and decision making process of a general synod belongs only to those who have been delegated by a regional synod.
- 4.2 Those who have been delegated to represent churches with whom we have ecclesiastical fellowship have the right to be seated at the table of a general synod. They may participate in the deliberative process but not in voting.
- 4.3 Even though Synod Chatham 2004 was correct in stating that the place of an advisor is not specifically covered by the Church Order, the principles expressed in Articles 3, 47 and 49 of the Church Order indicate that while synod can ask anyone for advice, advisors should not be seated at the table of a synod as part of the deliberative process. Article III.A.9 of the Guidelines for General Synod states that “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.”
- 4.4 Synod is not able to interact with the material mentioned in observation 5 because the material from Regional Synod East 2003 is not available to this body.

5. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 5.1 Synod Chatham 2004 erred in rejecting the proposal of Regional Synod East 2003.
- 5.2 To add to the Guidelines Article 1.G as follows: “Although advice can be requested in particular matters, advisory members shall not be appointed.”
- 5.3 To allow Rev. J. VanSpronsen to remain seated as advisory member for the duration of this synod.

ADOPTED

Rev. VanWoudenberg and br. Westrik abstained according to Art. 32 CO.

Article 148

SCBP – Revision of the Psalms and Other Recommendations

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 SCBP Report 14-17 and Appendices A, B
- 1.2-15 Letters from the following fourteen churches:
Hamilton, Carman West, Flamborough, Burlington Ebenezer, Cloverdale, Chilliwack, Grand

Valley, Lynden, Willoughby Heights, Orangeville, Fergus North, Ottawa, Burlington Fellowship, London

2. Observations

- 2.1 The committee report section 15 and 16 serves as an observation.
- 2.2 The committee recommends that synod mandate the committee:
 - 2.2.1 To initiate a thorough review of all 150 Psalms in the 1984 text of the *Book of Praise*.
 - 2.2.2 To prepare an updated psalm section for the *Book of Praise* or the Common Song Book.
 - 2.2.3 To engage Dr. W. Helder to work with the committee to update the psalm section.
 - 2.2.4 To provide for a fair remuneration for the work involved.
 - 2.2.5 To solicit input from the churches at all stages of the process.
 - 2.2.6 To publish revised/updated psalm versions as they become available on a website linked to the official website of the Canadian Reformed Churches (www.canrc.org).
 - 2.2.7 To report to general synod on the progress of the work.
- 2.3 The committee further recommends that the Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise be continued, that the size of the committee be kept to five members and that the committee may make use of technical advisors as necessary in order to carry out its regular mandate.
- 2.4 Carman West notes that reference is made to a website in Vol.2. p. 200, where revised/updated psalm version could be published, but the link is not given. It requests that an appropriate link be mentioned in the Acts. Also it requests that if there are indeed melodies that are genuinely hard to learn, they are of the opinion that the SCBP should be given the freedom to propose alternative melodies based on the musical modes in the Anglo-Genevan tradition and present their findings to the churches for evaluation.
- 2.5 Hamilton, Flamborough, and Cloverdale support the conclusion and the recommendation of the SCBP with regard to the review of the Anglo-Genevan Psalter.
- 2.6 Burlington Ebenezer urges the committee to continue working on improving the wording of the psalms. This should also include paying particular attention to the way in which the words fit the melody (e.g., Psalm 52 and 141)
- 2.7 Chilliwack agrees that some of the wording is old and could use some updating, but recommends the synod to proceed with caution. It expresses the concern that the wording needs to be changed each time a new Bible translation is adopted.
- 2.8 Grand Valley does not see the need for changes to the language if it is not for doctrinal reasons. They note the decisions of Synod Fergus 1998 (Art. 140 iv.c.1,2) and Chatham 2004 (Art. 115, 5.2.2, p. 119)
- 2.9 Lynden recommends that errors and poor translations ought to be changed so that the words we sing accurately reflect the meaning of God's Word. However unless there are errors or poor translations it would not be beneficial to change these words purely for reasons of style, personal preference or updating.
- 2.10 Willoughby Heights is not convinced of the validity of the grounds adduced by the committee for updating the metrical psalms in the Book of Praise. The language of the 150 psalms as found in the Book of Praise/Anglo-Genevan Psalter needs not be an impediment to unity with the URC or an obstacle to promoting love for psalm singing among the young people of the church. The poetic language is not outdated and in fact is still very much in use today, even among our young people. Willoughby Heights requests that except for correction of flaws and inaccuracies in the psalms, Synod Smithers not accede to the request of the SCBP for a mandate for "revising the metrical rhymings of the Psalms to reflect the language of the bible translation presently in use by our churches."
- 2.11 Orangeville is not in favour of the committee's recommendation to initiate an update of the metrical psalms. The grounds adduced by the committee are in many instances not to be considered new grounds, but more correctly reiteration of personal preferences which have been

presented previously. Considering the ever evolving nature of language, the committee fails to prove that updating to a current text would serve future generations any better than our present text.

- 2.12 Fergus North lauds the intention of promoting psalm singing among the young people of the church and sees updating the out-of-date wording as one step that will aid this promotion. Fergus North also wants to see more appropriate tunes to replace tunes that are deemed difficult or unattractive to sing.
- 2.13 Ottawa supports the recommendation to update our psalms and provide remuneration to those given this task (17.14). This follows from the Reformed principle that we should primarily be a psalm singing church. The new versions composed by Dr. Helder are wonderfully clear and would be a great blessing, especially to the younger generation.
- 2.14 Burlington Fellowship endorses the committee recommendation of making the revised psalms available on the internet for testing in the churches.
- 2.15 London requests that where possible the lyrics should preserve the existing text for the sake of the large number of members in our churches who are familiar with those lyrics, and have memorized them since childhood.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The SCBP mentions as first reason that it is of utmost importance that we present the best possible metrical version of the psalms for inclusion in a common songbook. Careful improvements to our existing *Book of Praise* will allow us to do so. Synod agrees with this ground and is of the opinion that it is now the time to mandate the SCBP to work on these improvements. The committee should therefore also seek means and ways to consult with the Psalter-Hymnal committee of the URCNA.
- 3.2 The committee should also take into consideration the concerns expressed by the churches, as mentioned under the observations. However, we should keep in mind, as the SCBP explains in consideration 15.2.10, that this undertaking will not be such a major undertaking as was assumed by Synod Chatham 2004.
- 3.3 It is important to make a distinction between archaic language on the one hand and poetic language or biblical language on the other. Therefore the committee should be careful in changing language that is perceived to be archaic.
- 3.4 The suggestion as brought forward by Fergus North and Carman West to find better tunes for some of the psalms is being dealt with by the joint songbook committee (see decision regarding Common Songbook Committee, in these Acts, Art. 104, Cons. 3.5).
- 3.5 To involve the churches in all stages of this process and to solicit input from the churches, the committee will do well to publish revised or updated psalm versions as they become available, on a website linked to the official website of the Canadian Reformed Churches (www.canrc.org).

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To mandate the Standing Committee for the Book of Praise:
 - 4.1.1 To initiate a thorough review of all 150 Psalms in the 1984 text of Anglo-Genevan Psalter in the *Book of Praise*.
 - 4.1.2 To prepare and present an updated psalm section in the anticipation of being included in the common songbook.
 - 4.1.3 To engage Dr. W. Helder to work with the committee to update the psalm section and provide for a fair remuneration for the work involved.
 - 4.1.4 To solicit input from the churches at all stages of the process.
 - 4.1.5 To publish revised and updated psalm versions as they become available on a website linked to the official website of the Canadian Reformed Churches (www.canrc.org).

- 4.1.6 To report to General Synod 2010 on the progress of the work.
- 4.2 That the Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise be continued.
- 4.3 That the size of the committee be kept to five members and that the committee can make use of technical advisors as necessary in order to carry out its regular mandate.
- 4.4 To further mandate the committee:
 - 4.4.1 To function according to the arrangements for publishing and distribution accepted by General Synod Cloverdale 1983 (Acts Cloverdale 1983, pp. 297-9), under the original terms of the contract with Premier Printing Ltd., to be reviewed in 2011.
 - 4.4.2 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*.
 - 4.4.3 To foster an increased awareness of the existence of the *Book of Praise* among others and to promote the availability of a book of harmonization facilitating the use of the *Book of Praise* in the English speaking world.
 - 4.4.4 To serve as the address to which any correspondence regarding the *Book of Praise* can be directed. To evaluate and to scrutinize the contents of this correspondence, and to report to the next general synod as to the validity of the suggestions made.

ADOPTED

Article 149

SCBP – Expanded Hymn Section

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

1.1 SCBP Report 11

1.2-14 Letters from the following thirteen churches:

Carman West, Flamborough, Burlington Ebenezer, Fergus Maranatha, Carman East, Cloverdale, Yarrow, Carman West, Glanbrook, Willoughby Heights, Langley, Orangeville, Burlington Fellowship

2. Observations

2.1 The committee report (section 11.0) serves as observations.

2.2 Synod Chatham mandated the committee to deal with the submissions, re Hymn section as outlined in Observation 6.1.1 of Art. 115, and to present a proposal to the next general synod. These are:

- Maintain the current structure of our hymn section.
- Identify and correct deficiencies and/or weaknesses in the existing hymn section and come with a proposal for change, addition or improvement.
- Select suitable hymns using the *Guidelines and Principles* agreed upon by the committee together with the Psalter-Hymnal committee of the URCNA.
- Set the limit at 100 hymns since psalms have a predominant place in the liturgy of the Reformed Churches.
- Publish a revised section proposed for testing by the churches.

2.3 Carman West recommends that if a supplement is to be published it should only contain hymns that are fully acceptable to the SCBP and the Psalter Hymnal Committee of the URCNA since discussions are ongoing regarding a common songbook with the URCNA.

2.4 Carman West, Carman East, and Willoughby Heights recommend that the committee be mandated to consider also deleting some of our current hymns that are of lesser quality.

2.4.1 These churches point out that this was part of Synod Chatham's mandate.

2.4.2 Carman West says that this will avoid having an excessive number of hymns. The church at Carman East appreciates that Synod Chatham set 100 hymns as the maximum, but encourages Synod Smithers to keep the number smaller than that. The usage of the

- psalms should be promoted by making less hymns available as historically done in the Reformed Churches.
- 2.4.3 Carman West says that consultation with the Psalter Hymnal Committee of the URCNA could be helpful in deciding which hymns to delete in our *Book of Praise*. Less popular hymns and those not well known in other churches can be replaced by those more well known to a wider public including the URCNA, RCUS, and the OPC, assuming they meet the criteria adopted by our churches and the URCNA.
- 2.5 Regarding the making of suitable music available for singing the Votum and the Amen:
- 2.5.1 Flamborough recommends Synod Smithers to mandate the committee to make suitable music available for singing the Votum and the Amen to be included in future editions of the *Book of Praise*. Flamborough agrees with the committee that the matter of singing the Votum and/or the Amen is in the freedom of the churches, but that this has nothing to do with the request the committee dealt with: the request was to make the music available for this purpose, not to make this a rule. The committee should have served the churches by providing suitable music and tunes that would help the churches in case they decide to implement these liturgical practices.
- 2.5.2 Langley recommends that synod clarify whether the committee is correct in stating that the singing of the Votum and Amen is in the freedom of the churches. Langley asks this in order to ensure good harmony in the federation.
- 2.5.3 Burlington South supports the proposal of the Kerwood Canadian Reformed Church to include music for the Votum and the threefold Amen, so that this is available for those churches who wish to adopt the practice of singing these.
- 2.6 Carman West, Burlington Ebenezer, Cloverdale, Orangeville, and Willoughby Heights give suggestions, and/or express reservations/objections regarding a number of proposed hymns.
- 2.6.1 Carman West hopes that further critical attention will be given to the proposed hymns before they are published.
- 2.6.2 Some churches brought specific concerns about faithfulness of some of the lyrics to Scripture and confession. The following are the more significant ones:
- 2.6.2.1 re Hymn 1 (We come O Christ to You).
- 2.6.2.1.1 General: The hymn separates/confuses the works of the Trinity. We do not come to Christ directly and praise him at the expense of the triune God. One should never bypass the Father and exalt the Son to a higher level. This hymn ascribes all works of the triune God to Christ.
- 2.6.2.1.2 stanza 3: God is sung to as being the sure answer to our every quest. However, not every quest is a legitimate one and God certainly does not answer sinful quests.
- 2.6.2.1.3 stanza 5: How are old or weak people supposed to feel about singing, “to you our youth and strength adoringly we bring.”
- 2.6.2.2 re Hymn 4 (Christ Jesus lay in death’s strong bands). Stanza 1 indicates “but now at God’s right hand he *stands*.” Although there is a scriptural reference to Christ standing (Acts 7:55) that is unusual. In the Apostles’ Creed we confess that he sits at the right hand of God. We therefore wonder at the appropriateness of highlighting in a hymn Christ as standing at God’s right hand.
- 2.6.2.3 re Hymn 7 (Since our Great High Priest, Christ Jesus). In the 4th stanza we seem to elevate our position as friend of Christ.
- 2.6.2.4 re Hymn 13 (O God, Great Father Lord and King). The phrase, “we dare your love to prove.” Is it proper to “challenge” God in this way?
- 2.6.2.5 re Hymn 23 (O Christ, Our Hope, Our Heart’s Desire). This hymn lacks clarity with respect to the works of the triune God.

- 2.7 Burlington Ebenezer, Fergus Maranatha, Glanbrook, and Willoughby Heights find it unnecessary to include two hymns about marriage since it is very unlikely that they will be used as part of the regular worship services.
- 2.8 Yarrow considers that the churches should test the proposed new hymn section before it is provisionally adopted as per Art. 55 CO. Hence Yarrow recommends to not adopt the recommendation of the committee to “provisionally adopt the Hymns presented... for testing by the churches,” and further states that singing the proposed hymns should be done before the worship services, on music evenings or at various other occasions , but not during the worship services.
- 2.9 Willoughby Heights expresses concern about both the direction that the churches are taking in the addition of still more hymns and also in the choice of the hymns to be included in the expanded hymn section. This church
 - 2.9.1 opines that in view of what has happened in history and in other federations, the Canadian Reformed Churches will also face deformation with the increasing number of hymns, particularly those not in the “style of the psalms.” The social gospel with its humanistic approach is greatly promoted by purging psalms from the liturgy.
 - 2.9.2 gives some general remarks regarding the 28 proposed hymns:
 - 2.9.2.1 Our forefathers made a concerted effort to limit the hymn section to so-called “scripture songs” to minimize the emergence of unscriptural hymns.
 - 2.9.2.2 Duplication or replication undermines memorization of the tune and the words and thus the message that the words are meant to convey.
 - 2.9.2.3 Mention of God’s wrath and anger toward his covenant people is absent.
 - 2.9.2.4 Congregational singing is an act of professing faith, and the Genevan tunes, with their easily recognized characteristics, are still the most suitable for reformed congregational singing.
 - 2.9.2.5 they have no definable style or standard, so almost anything goes – something that also applies to our present hymn section.
 - 2.9.3 remarks that we should focus our efforts on finding and creating hymns that are based on scripture passages and are in the style of the Genevan Psalms. If we move away from that aim we should be fully alert to the inherent danger of adopting unscriptural songs and singing heresy in harmony.
 - 2.9.4 remarks that in the selection of our hymns in the style of the psalms, we should consciously err on the side of caution since the slope is slippery and the consequences irreversible.
 - 2.9.5 remarks that we do not need more hymns, but should make every effort to “identify and correct deficiencies and/or weaknesses in the existing hymn section.”
 - 2.9.6 opines that we have a rich and powerful heritage in the Genevan tunes, and that we ought to adopt for our worship singing the principles that underline these tunes.
- 2.10 Willoughby Heights on the basis of the above as well as specific points about the proposed hymns requests synod to:
 - 2.10.1 endorse the mandate that the SCBP received from Synod Chatham to “identify and correct deficiencies and/or weaknesses in the existing hymn section.” (1.1.10 / 6.1.1, p.2)
 - 2.10.2 not adopt the proposed hymns for testing by the churches and not proceed with further initiatives toward an expanded hymn section.
- 2.11 Langley recommends that synod mandate the committee to include an introduction or appendix with the proposed supplement which will clarify the manner in which the hymns are to be accompanied, reasons for the inclusion of the harmonies, some suggestions/guidelines for the use of the harmonies, and background on the selected harmonizations for each hymn. Grounds: currently there is no explanation as to why the particular harmonies were chosen. Furthermore, the inclusion of harmonies is new to the Canadian Reformed churches and the churches will use

these harmonies more profitably with some explanation provided for their proper use.

- 2.12 Langley recommends that synod mandate the committee to explain to the churches the reasons why each of these 28 particular hymns were chosen. Grounds: while we have been given some general criteria, the committee has given no information to the churches about the way in which each of these hymns was individually evaluated and determined to be suitable. The churches would benefit from knowing this.
- 2.13 Burlington South endorses the committee's recommendation for the test period of the hymns.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 re 2.3 – it should be noted that the mandate already specifies that the hymns selected must meet the guidelines and principles adopted by the CanRC and URCNA committees.
- 3.2 re 2.4 – it should be noted that the committee evidently read the mandate differently than the churches. The committee understood that it was required only to come with a proposal for change, addition, or improvements to the ten categories in the hymn section currently in our *Book of Praise* (pp. 312-3). The churches understood that the committee was required to review the hymns already adopted and in use. The committee understood the mandate correctly, but the recommendation of the churches merits consideration.
- 3.3 re 2.5 – the committee is correct in stating that “these are matters left to the freedom of the churches.” Such votums and amens are in a different category than our psalms and hymns, and therefore ought not be included in the *Book of Praise*.
- 3.4 Most churches would have assumed that the time for giving input would come after Synod Smithers.
- 3.5 re 2.6 – this should be passed on to the committee to consider along with other input that the churches will give before next synod.
- 3.6 re specific concerns about faithfulness of some of the lyrics to Scripture and confession:
- 3.6.1 re Obs. 2.6.2.1.1 – in Hymn 32 we sing/pray specifically to Christ, and in Hymn 37 we sing/pray specifically to the Holy Spirit.
- 3.6.2 re Obs. 2.6.2.1.2 – context makes clear that a godly quest is assumed – and God does answer the prayers of the godly.
- 3.6.3 re Obs. 2.6.2.1.3 – particularly in the worship service this hymn will be sung corporately. We should also understand the spiritual meaning of these terms (cf. Psalm 92:6 in the *Book of Praise*).
- 3.6.4 re Obs. 2.6.2.2 – the concern itself gives a scriptural reference to Christ standing.
- 3.6.5 re Obs. 2.6.2.3 – cf. John 15:15.
- 3.6.6 re Obs. 2.6.2.4 – though the phrase can be taken wrongly, the verb “dare” has several connotations, and the poetic character of the language must be kept in mind. The phrase can just as well be taken to mean “We have courage (first meaning of “dare”) to ask you to prove your steadfast love. This fits with the preceding sentence, “we come in faith and hope and love.” Anyone who comes this way does not come with “defiant” or “challenging” daring. cf. Hymn 33:6; Heb 4:14-16.
- 3.6.7 re Obs. 2.6.2.5 – while normally the title “Creator” is assigned particularly to the Father, yet without Christ nothing was made that was made (cf. Jn 1:1-3; Col 1:16).
- 3.6.8 The adoption of the 28 Hymns is provisional, and the committee will be mandated to interact with the input from the churches for a final decision by Synod in 2010.
- 3.7 re 2.7 – it should be noted that a marriage can be performed in a worship service (CO 63), that the Form for Marriage is found in the *Book of Praise*, and that the final selection of hymns will be made at the next synod.
- 3.8 re 2.8 – the last time hymns in our federation of churches were tested, they were sung in the worship services. Yarrow gives no reason for not following this practice again, and in this regard should also take note of Consideration 3.1.
- 3.9 re 2.9 – many important cautions and principles are given, but

- 3.9.1 if deformation comes with hymn singing, then we should have no hymn singing at all. Willoughby Heights itself does not approve of exclusive psalmody.
- 3.9.2 the hymns chosen have been selected according to the criteria adopted – and the church at Willoughby Heights has not challenged this criteria.
- 3.9.3 to say that the Genevan style is “crucial to and essential for the preservation and promotion of the heritage of Reformed congregational singing” improperly absolutizes the “Genevan style.”
- 3.10 re 2.11 – what Langley requests here does not belong to the mandate of the Book of Praise Committee: the committee is not mandated to suggest or specify in detail how the churches ought to sing. Such inquiries can be directed to the committee itself.
- 3.11 re 2.12 – it should be noted that the committee has agreed upon a set of guidelines, has decided which sections of the hymnary need additional hymns, and would have chosen accordingly after evaluating over 500 submissions.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To pass on the above letters of the churches to the committee for evaluation.
- 4.2 To provisionally approve the 28 hymns for a three year period of testing in the churches.
- 4.3 To encourage the churches to send responses directly to the committee before March 1, 2009. Individual church members are asked to send their submissions through their consistories.
- 4.4 To mandate the committee:
 - 4.4.1 To also review the suitability of individual hymns that we already have in our *Book of Praise*, for possible change, deletion, or improvement.
 - 4.4.2 To evaluate the input from the churches and come with a final proposal concerning the hymn section to Synod 2010.

ADOPTED

Article 150

Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Calvinis in Nusa Tenggara Timur (GGRC-NTT)

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CRCA Report 7B
- 1.2-3 Letters from Smithville and Edmonton Immanuel

2. Admissibility

The report and letters from the churches are admissible.

3. Observations

- 3.1 The report of the CRCA, which is included as an appendix to the Acts, serves as Observations.
- 3.2 The CRCA recommends that:
 - 3.2.1 [7.10.1] Synod Smithers delay entering into a sister church relationship until the legal proceedings have been resolved and unqualified support can be obtained for ecclesiastical fellowship from our Australian sister churches.
 - 3.2.2 [7.10.2] Synod mandate the committee to maintain close contact with this federation:
 - 3.2.2.1 [7.10.2.1] To encourage the GGRC to resolve its dispute with the GGRM.
 - 3.2.2.2 [7.10.2.2] To promote efforts towards federative unity with the GGRI.
 - 3.2.2.3 [7.10.2.3] To encourage the GGRC to cooperate with the FRCAus, GKN and GGRI in the establishment of joint theological training with the GGRC.
 - 3.2.3 Synod encourage our churches to work together in supporting the mission efforts of Smithville and channel support which is needed to clear the way to establish

ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRC.

- 3.3 Smithville informs synod that they have “a mission field in Timor and [have] regular contact with the GGRC through [their] missionary, Rev. Edwer Dethan and through visits of several members of the Mission Board of Smithville to Timor.” Smithville objects to the CRCA’s recommendation 7.10.1 and instead recommends that “Synod decide to enter into a sister church relationship with the GGRC.” Smithville points to Art. 50 CO and to Article 29 of the Belgic Confession to conclude that it is the “task of Synod to judge whether the GGRC are true (‘Reformed’) churches or not, and based on that judgment a decision shall be made regarding a sister church relationship.” According to Smithville, “the only reason to postpone a decision can be that there is not sufficient information to make this judgment.” Pertaining to the specific arguments presented by the CRCA for delaying entering into ecclesiastical fellowship, Smithville counters as follows:
- 3.3.1 *Re: Legal proceedings* - From Smithville’s close knowledge of the situation they advise synod that these proceedings arise from one minister and his church taking the GGRC to court over a name-change (to the federation) adopted by the GGRC in 2002. Instead of following the ecclesiastical way, they continue to pursue the matter in the courts. Meanwhile, “this minister and his church have in fact left the federation of the GGRC and they go their own ways.” Smithville opines that such a situation is no proper impediment to ecclesiastical fellowship.
- 3.3.2 *Re: Unqualified support from the FRCA* - Smithville notes that Rule #3 for Ecclesiastical Fellowship mandates consultation with sister churches but not unqualified support from them. They conclude that to do so could even mean that we “ask the Australian churches to lord it over us.” Moreover, Smithville believes the FRCA have implied that the GGRC are true churches when the FRCA encouraged the GGRC to “fully put into practice the unity they already recognize” with the GGRI (Art. 58 III B4, Acts of Synod West Kelmscott, 2006).
- 3.4 Edmonton Immanuel informs synod of their support for Rev. Yonson Dethan in Timor “so that he can give seminars to ministers, office bearers and society leaders about various topics.” Rev. Yonson Dethan is a minister in the GGRC which has ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI. Edmonton Immanuel submits that synod should consider how its actions towards the one federation will affect the other. They state that entering into relations with the one and not the other (at the same time) may well have negative ramifications on relations between the Indonesian federations. They plead for a tandem approach where the CanRC would enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with both federations and in that context encourage them to cooperate in joint theological training and work towards federative unity.

4. Considerations

- 4.1 While the committee gives an encouraging report about the Reformed character of the GGRC, it is not yet complete. Rule #3 for Ecclesiastical Fellowship mandates our federation to consult with sister churches prior to entering into ecclesiastical fellowship. This has been done with respect to the FRCA but there is no evidence that it has been done with the GKN who presently maintain ecclesiastical fellowship with both the GGRC and GGRI. Rule #3 obligates us to do so before making a final decision on entering into ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRC. Their input may prove to be quite helpful in gaining clarity into the GGRC and its circumstances.
- 4.2 The need to consult still with the GKN and the other sister churches is highlighted all the more when it is noted that another sister church, the FRCA, have as yet refrained from entering into ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRC, though they have ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI. The CRCA has not reported on the reason for this. This should give us pause before hurrying into ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRC without all the facts and concerns clearly understood and evaluated by ourselves. The reasons why the FRCA refrains from ecclesiastical

fellowship with the GGRC should be probed and evaluated.

- 4.3 Smithville's point about the legal proceedings and the unqualified support of a sister church being improper impediments to ecclesiastical fellowship is in itself correct. On their own, neither one of these things can be an impediment to ecclesiastical fellowship. Both of these matters, however, only demonstrate that the committee does not yet have clarity on all the pertinent facts surrounding the GGRC and that more consultation is needed with the parties involved and the churches with whom we have fellowship before a decision can be made.
- 4.4 From the information provided by both Edmonton Immanuel and Smithville, it is clear that entering into ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRC would be quite beneficial for them and, by implication, for the churches which support them in their endeavours in Indonesia. The CRCA should make a concerted effort to work toward this goal using also information that can be garnered from these two churches.

5 Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 5.1 To thank the committee for the work done re the GGRC.
- 5.2 To delay entering into a sister church relationship until:
 - 5.2.1 Proper consultation with other churches in ecclesiastical fellowship has taken place according to Rule #3.
 - 5.2.2 The reasons why the FRCA have not as yet entered into ecclesiastical fellowship are understood and evaluated.
 - 5.3.3 It is clear that there are no obstacles to entering into ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRC.
- 5.3 To mandate the CRCA to maintain close contact with this federation and:
 - 5.3.1 To consult with all sister churches as per Rule #3 bearing in mind Considerations 4.2-4.4 and Recommendation 5.2.
 - 5.3.2 To seek clarity into the situation of the GGRC using also information solicited from the churches at Smithville and Edmonton Immanuel.
 - 5.3.3 To promote efforts towards federative unity with the GGRI.
 - 5.3.4 To encourage the GGRC to cooperate with the FRCA, GKN and GGRI in the establishment of joint theological training.

ADOPTED

Article 151

Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Di Indonesia Propinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur (GGRI-NTT)

The advisory committee presented its second proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CRCA Report 7A
- 1.2-5 Letters from the following four churches:
Spring Creek, Surrey, Lynden, Edmonton Immanuel

2. Admissibility

The report and letters from the churches are admissible.

3. Observations

- 3.1 The report of the CRCA, which is included as an appendix to the Acts, serves as observations.
- 3.2 The CRCA recommends that:
 - 3.2.1 [7.5.1] Synod accepts the invitation from the GGRI to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship.
 - 3.2.2 [7.5.2] Synod mandate the CRCA to inform the GGRI and the FRCA of this decision

and make formal arrangements for this relationship.

- 3.3 Spring Creek, considering the geographical distance, cultural differences and language barriers, states: “We do not think that ecclesiastical fellowship with... the GGRI would be a meaningful relationship for the Can. Ref. Churches.” Lynden feels the same as does the church at Surrey which asks: “Can we realistically maintain meaningful relations with these churches, given the limited resources we have and given the number of other churches with whom we already have ecclesiastical fellowship?”
- 3.4 Edmonton Immanuel submits that synod should consider how its actions towards the one federation in Indonesia will affect the other. They state that entering into relations with the one and not the other (at the same time) may well have negative ramifications on relations between the Indonesian federations. They plead for a tandem approach where the Canadian Reformed Churches would enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with both federations and in that context encourage them to cooperate in joint theological training and work towards federative unity.
- 3.5 Smithville informs synod that they have “a mission field in Timor and [have] regular contact with the GGRC through [their] missionary, Rev. Edwer Dethan and through visits of several members of the Mission Board of Smithville to Timor.” Smithville also “urges Synod to... urge the GGRI to do what they can to come to federative unity with the GGRC and to cooperate with the GGRC for the theological training.”

4. Considerations

- 4.1 From the report it is clear that the CRCA has fulfilled the mandate given to it by Synod Chatham with respect to the GGRI.
- 4.2 The committee provides the proof (Report, 7.3) that the GGRI are a federation of faithful churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. The committee gives evidence that it followed Rule #3 for Ecclesiastical Fellowship when it consulted with the GKN and the FRCA (Report, 7.4).
- 4.3 At present two churches (Smithville & Edmonton Immanuel) have contact with the GGRC but no churches have contact with the GGRI. The benefits of ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI are directly tied to our relationship with the GGRC. The common point of contact between the two federations is joint cooperation in theological training.
- 4.4 The concern of Edmonton Immanuel that we deal with both Indonesian church federations in tandem is pertinent and important. Since more information needs to be collected and evaluated before ecclesiastical fellowship can be established with the GGRC, and since there is no pressing reason to establish ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI at the moment, it is wiser to wait until all the relevant information pertaining to the GGRC is available.

5 Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 5.1 To thank the committee for the work done re the GGRI.
- 5.2 To delay accepting the invitation from the GGRI to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship until all the necessary information is available to make a decision concerning ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRC.
- 5.3 To mandate the CRCA to encourage the GGRI to:
 - 5.3.1 Promote efforts toward federative unity with the GGRC.
 - 5.3.2 Cooperate with the GGRC in joint theological training.

ADOPTED

Article 152

Korean Presbyterian Church in America (KPCA)

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CCCA Report 2

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Chatham (Art. 26) gave the CCCA the mandate to contact the Korean Presbyterian Church in North America with the help of our sister churches in Korea.
- 2.2 Though the CCCA was successful in establishing some initial contact with the KPCA, further attempts at contact have not proven fruitful.
- 2.3 The CCCA recommends that synod decide not to renew the mandate to actively pursue contact with the KPCA.

3. Considerations:

- 3.1 Though the KPCA membership lives in North America, cultural and language barriers presently hinder contact.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 Not to renew the mandate to the CCCA concerning the KPCA.

ADOPTED

Article 153

Guidelines for Synod

The advisory committee presented its second proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 Letter from Smithers re Convening of Synod

2. Observations

- 2.1 In the light of new technology, Smithers is asking for changes in the Guidelines for General Synod.
- 2.2 Specifically, they ask that Guideline 1.C be amended to allow for the convening church at a general synod to send material to delegates and first alternates in digital format instead of in hard copy.
- 2.3 They also ask that Guideline 1.D be amended to allow for the churches and individual members to send material to the convening church in digital form instead of in thirty hard copies.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 It is true that new technology allows for the electronic transfer of information; however, the printout of such electronic files would then be left up to the individual delegates at considerable inconvenience to them. In addition, those delegates who are not computer literate would find themselves in difficulty.
- 3.2 The convening church, if it is able, is free to turn printed material into electronic material for the convenience of the delegates; however, this is best left to the discretion of that church.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 Not to accede to the request to change the Guidelines.

ADOPTED

Article 154

Appeal from Owen Sound re Arts. 10 and 11 of Regional Synod East 2005

The decision of synod will be conveyed to the churches via Confidential Acts.

Article 155

Appeal by Burlington Ebenezer re Days of Prayer

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

1.1 Appeal from Burlington Ebenezer

2. Observations

2.1 In 2003, the church at Winnipeg Redeemer had approached the churches appointed for days of prayer ad Art. 54 CO to declare a day of prayer in response to legalization of same-sex marriage in Canada. The churches ad Article 54 did not declare a day of prayer. The church at Winnipeg Redeemer in turn complained to synod that a day of prayer should have been declared. Synod Chatham 2004 disagreed with Winnipeg. Chatham argues:

2.1.2 [4.4] “Article 54 states ‘In time of war, general calamities, and other great afflictions the presence of which is felt throughout the churches...’ The plain reading of this article does not include the issue of general moral decline as reason for calling a day of prayer...”; and

2.1.3 [4.5] “The general moral decline of our nation should be a constant matter of congregational prayers.”

2.2 Burlington Ebenezer appeals this conclusion of Synod Chatham, since “Synod’s application of article 54 CO is too narrow and/or restrictive.” Burlington says that “Synod failed to recognize the broader purpose for days of prayer, namely, the forgiveness of sin and guilt on the part of the churches and Nation.” Burlington’s point is that our churches are part of the nation and certainly not without guilt in the matter. Burlington Ebenezer further explains that Bill C-250 legalizes a great evil, that “our nation is in big trouble, and that the judgment of God is coming down upon our nation and upon the Church in our nation.” Burlington adds: “it is in circumstances such as the passing of Bill C-250 that we as a federation of churches must join together and communally implore the Lord to avert His coming judgment upon our nation.”

2.3 Burlington Ebenezer requests Synod Smithers to decide that:

2.3.1 Winnipeg was correct in identifying this development as a national crisis for the churches.

2.3.2 They were also correct in their assessment of the threat to Christian freedoms and their concerns for the moral decay in our land.

2.3.3 Their request for a day of prayer was appropriate and should have been endorsed.

3. Considerations:

3.1 In Art. 31 CO the churches have agreed that “if anyone complains that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly, he shall have the right to appeal to the major ecclesiastical assembly; and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, unless it is proved to be in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order.” The church at Burlington Ebenezer has detailed that Bill C-250 was an evil development requiring prayer, but has not shown that Synod Chatham erred in not granting Winnipeg’s request.

3.2 Synod Chatham drew to the churches’ attention the fact that “the moral decline of our nation should be a constant matter of congregational prayer.”

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

4.1 Not to grant Burlington Ebenezer’s appeal.

ADOPTED

Rev. Nederveen and br. Nordeman abstained according to Art. 32 CO.

Article 156

Overture from Regional Synod East, Nov. 8 & Dec. 7, 2006 re Change to Art. 63 CO

The advisory committee presented its proposal. It was moved and seconded to change Recommendation 4.1 into Consideration 3.2

- 4.1 That the proposed change to Article 63 of the Church Order suggested by Regional Synod East properly reflects the religious beliefs and practices of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

This amendment was **defeated**.

1. Material

- 1.1 Letter from Regional Synod East (Nov. 8 & Dec. 7, 2006) with attachments

2. Observations

- 2.1 In response to overtures from Classis Ontario West, June 14, 2006, and Classis Central Ontario, June 9, 2006, Regional Synod East 2006 overtures Synod Smithers to change Article 63 of the Church Order to read (changes italicized):

The Word of God teaches that marriage is a union between one man and one woman.

The consistory shall ensure that the members of the congregation marry only in the Lord, and that the ministers – as authorized by the consistory – solemnize only such marriages as are in accordance with the Word of God.

The solemnization of a marriage may take place either in a private ceremony or in a public worship service. The adopted Form for Solemnization of Marriage shall be used.”

- 2.2 Regional Synod adopted as grounds, those provided by Classis Ontario West. These grounds are as follows:

2.2.1 The recent change to the definition of marriage. The Civil Marriage Act of Canada now defines marriage as “the lawful union of two persons to the exclusion of all others.”

2.2.2 The recognition by both the Supreme Court of Canada as well as at least two provincial governments that there is a potential risk or liability on the part of ministers who refuse to solemnize a same-sex marriage. The relevant laws at both levels state that a refusal to solemnize a same-sex marriage must be based on the fact that such an action is contrary to one’s ‘religious beliefs’ or ‘doctrines, rites, usages or customs.’ In order to demonstrate clearly to a judge or human rights tribunal that solemnizing a same-sex marriage is against the beliefs and practices of the Canadian Reformed Churches a clear definition of marriage in Art. 63 CO is necessary since neither the present Article 63 nor our Form for the Solemnization of Marriage referred to therein do so explicitly. The lack of clarity may make it more difficult for ministers to prove that their objection is contrary to their religious beliefs or the teachings of the church.

2.2.3 This change will also assist a church in Ontario, and presumably in other places, in its lawful refusal to allow a ‘sacred place’ to be used for ‘solemnizing a marriage or for an event related to the solemnization of a marriage’ where that marriage is against the beliefs and practices of the church.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 In light of the recent judicial developments in Canada regarding the definition of marriage, the overture of Regional Synod East 2006 proves that a change to the Church Order has become necessary.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 That the proposed change to Article 63 of the Church Order suggested by Regional Synod East properly reflects the religious beliefs and practices of the Canadian Reformed Churches.
- 4.2 To adopt the proposal of Regional Synod East 2006 to change Article 63 of the Church Order

to include the words, “The Word of God teaches that marriage is a union between one man and one woman.”

ADOPTED

**Day 11 — Afternoon Session
Tuesday, May 22, 2007**

Article 157

Reopening

The meeting was called to order and we sang Hymn 59. All the members were present.

Article 158

Adoption of the Acts — Day 10

The proceedings of morning and afternoon sessions of Day 10, as recorded in Articles 119-134, were reviewed and adopted as part of the Acts of Synod.

Article 159

Appointments

Synod went into closed session. The officers of synod presented their proposal with the use of confidential letters from the various committees with their recommendations for appointments. They made the following recommendation for appointments:

1. Board of Governors

1.1 Academic Committee

1.1.1 From Eastern Canada: G. Nederveen (2010), G. Ph. van Popta (2013), J. VanWoudenberg (2013). (Substitutes: E. Kampen, D.G.J. Agema, W. den Hollander, in that order).

1.1.2 From Western Canada: R.A. Schouten (2010), W.B. Slomp (2013), A.J. Pol (2016). (Substitutes: R. Aasman, E.J. Tiggelaar, J.D. Louwerse, in that order).

1.2 Finance and Property Committee

1.2.1 A.J. Bax (2016), H.C. Kampen (2016), L. Jagt (2013), G.J. Nordeman (2010) , K.J. Veldkamp (2013).

2. Committee for Pastoral Training Program Funding

- The church at Guelph

3. Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA)

3.1 H.E. Hoogstra (2010), H. Leyenhorst (2013), W.M. Wielenga (2013), J. Visscher (2013), R.A. Schouten (convener) (2016), J. Vanderstoep (2013), J. Pruijm (2016), J. Moesker (2016)

4. Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA) *

4.1 For Subcommittee East: R.A. Faber (convener) (2013), J. Jonker (2010), E. Kampen (2016), R.E. Pot (2013).

4.2 For Subcommittee West: P.H. Holtvlüwer (2016), J. Kuik (2013), A.J. Pol (2010), A. Poppe (2010)

5. Committee for Church Unity (CCU) **

5.1 Coordinators: D.G.J. Agema and P.G. Feenstra

5.2 Subcommittees:

5.2.1 *Church Order Subcommittee*: G. Nederveen, G.J. Nordeman, J. Vanwoudenberg (convener), A. Witten

- 5.2.2 *Theological Education Subcommittee*: R. Aasman, K.J. Veldkamp, J. Visscher (convener), B. Faber
- 5.2.3 *Common Songbook Subcommittee*: Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise
- 5.2.4 *Creeds and Forms Committee*: C. Bouwman (convener), W. Bredenhof and T. Lodder.
 - 5.2.4.1 Advisors: N. Gootjes and J. VanVliet.

6. Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise (SCBP)

- 6.1 D.G.J. Agema (2010), N.H. Gootjes (2010), C.J. Nobels (2010), C. van Halen-Faber (2013), G.Ph. van Popta (convener) (2010).
 - 6.1.2 Advisors: F. Ezinga (music), K. Dieleman (language)

7. Committee on Bible Translations (CBT)

- 7.1 P. Aasman (2016), M. Jagt (2013), M. Van Luik (convener) (2013).

8. The Committee on Women Voting

- The church at Hamilton

9. Committee for Official Website

- 9.1 Cheryl Harke (2013), Harold Sikkema (2013), A. Souman (2010), A. Van den Hoven (2010), M. Van der Velde (convener) (2010)

10. Churches for Days of Prayer ad Article 54 CO

- The churches at Burlington-Waterdown and Edmonton-Providence

11. General Fund

- The church at Carman East

12. Archive Church

- The church at Burlington-Ebenezer

13. Archive Inspection

- The church at Burlington-Waterdown

14. Audit Finances of Synod Smithers 2007

- The church at Houston

15. Address Church

- The church at Burlington-Ebenezer

16. Committee for Printing of the Acts

- Clerks of Synod Smithers 2007

17. Convening Church for Next Synod

- The church at Burlington-Ebenezer (May, 2010)

* All decisions in these Acts that refer to the CCCA now apply to the CCCNA.

** All decisions in these Acts that refer to the CPEU now apply to the CCU.

ADOPTED

The meeting returned to open session.

Article 160

The Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA)

The advisory committee presented its second proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CRCA Report 2
- 1.2-7 Letter from Burlington Ebenezer

2. Observations

- 2.1 The report of the CRCA re the FRCA, which is included in the appendix to the Acts, serves as Observations.
- 2.2 The CRCA recommends that Synod Smithers decide:
 - 2.2.1 To maintain the existing Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship under the adopted rules.
 - 2.2.2 To thank the FRCA for their continued support for the Theological College in Hamilton and recommend the Board of Governors investigate the possibility of including the Australian churches in the Pastoral Training Program.
 - 2.2.3 To suggest that the deputies for the *Book of Praise* maintain regular contact with the Australian committee in order to advise them of our direction.
 - 2.2.4 To direct the CRCA to send a member to attend Synod Legana 2009 to foster mutual support and understanding of the issues faced by both federations.
 - 2.2.5 To encourage the CanRC operating mission work in the region of Australia to contact the deputies of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia in order to increase the working relationship between our churches with regard to mission and leadership training.
- 2.3 Burlington Ebenezer questions on what basis the CRCA comes to the recommendation that those churches doing mission work in the region of Australia need to contact the deputies. The church at Burlington Ebenezer argues that mission activities is the responsibility of, and are organized by a local church or neighbouring churches. They request that synod does not take over this recommendation of the CRCA.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 From the report of the CRCA it is evident that the FRCA remain true and faithful churches.
- 3.2 From the report it is evident that the CRCA fulfilled its mandate with regard to the FRCA.
- 3.3 Burlington Ebenezer makes a valid point. Mission work is a local matter, organized with the support of neighbouring churches. The CRCA does not provide any support for their recommendation that those churches doing mission work in the region of Australia should contact the deputies.
- 3.4 Synod endorses the remaining recommendations of the committee.
- 3.5 The FRCA can interact directly with the committee for the Pastoral Training Program regarding their participation in this program.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To maintain the existing Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the FRCA under the adopted rules.
- 4.2 To thank the FRCA for their continued support for the Theological College in Hamilton.
- 4.3 To suggest that the Standing Committee for the Book of Praise maintain regular contact with the Australian committee in order to advise them of our direction.

ADOPTED

Article 161**Finance Report Synod Chatham 2004**

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 Financial statement from Chatham
- 1.2 Audit report from Kerwood

2. Observations

- 2.1 The Finance Committee for Synod Chatham 2004 reported that the total expenses were \$30,221.50. The committee itemized this as follows:

Office supplies	\$1,099.80
Miscellaneous	2,487.66
Acts of Synod	14,832.00
Rent/Leases	1,271.22
Travel – Eastern delegates	2,342.10
Travel – Western delegates	4,222.22
Postage	360.11
Stationary	95.42
Food	2,058.79
GST	<u>1,452.18</u>
Total	30,221.50

- 2.2 Kerwood reported that, upon auditing the books of Synod Chatham, they found everything to be in good order.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The financial records and the audit indicate that all financial matters relating to Synod Chatham have been handled satisfactorily.
- 3.2 A Finance Committee needs to be appointed to take care of the finances of Synod Smithers 2007.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To accept the report of the Finance Committee of Synod Chatham 2004 and to thank the committee for the work done.
- 4.2 To accept the audit report of Kerwood and to thank this church for the work done.
- 4.3 To appoint to the Finance Committee for Synod Smithers 2007: Bernice Hamelink, Dick Bandstra and Ralph Paize.
- 4.4 To charge the Finance Committee for Synod Smithers 2007 to report to the next synod.
- 4.5 To appoint the church at Houston to audit the books of the Finance Committee of Synod Smithers 2007 and to report to the next synod.

ADOPTED

Article 162**Request of Hamilton for Convening Synod 2010 in July**

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material:

- 1.1 Letter from Hamilton

2. Observation

- 2.1 Hamilton requests Synod Smithers to instruct the convening church for the next general synod to schedule the 2010 synod in July in order to make the work of the general synod accessible to more brothers since the timing in the month of May prevents most members of the consistory at Hamilton to be considered for delegation.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Although Hamilton makes this request, there is no evidence that convening a synod in July instead of in May would be of benefit to the majority of the churches.
- 3.2 July is traditionally a time for summer vacation for many people including elders and ministers.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To deny Hamilton's request.

ADOPTED

Article 163

Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA)

The advisory committee presented its second proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CCCA Report 6
- 1.2 CCCA supplementary report
- 1.3-6 Letters from the following four churches:
Carman East, Ottawa, Owen Sound, Spring Creek

2. Observations

- 2.1 The mandate to CCCA includes responding, if possible and feasible, to specific requests made to attend assemblies, synods, or meetings of other churches in the Americas. The CCCA received an invitation to attend the 2005 Synod of the RPCNA. The CCCA delegated a brother to attend this synod.
- 2.2 The mandate to CCCA also includes reporting on its findings with suitable recommendations to the next general synod. In connection with reporting on the contact with the RPCNA, the CCCA has made initial study of the RPCNA, through attendance at its 2005 Synod, through study of material gleaned from the internet, through discussions with RPCNA officials at NAPARC and via email, etc. As a result the CCCA has supplied synod with extensive information about the RPCNA.
- 2.3 The RPCNA maintains that organic union with other churches would involve "commitment to the Westminster Standards and the Testimony of the RP Church as being agreeable to and founded upon the Scriptures." The CCCA is currently in communication with the RPCNA seeking clarification on various aspects of this *Testimony*.
- 2.4 The RPCNA is committed to exclusive psalmody. Our CCCA notes that "this would be an obstacle in the process of pursuing full organic unity."
- 2.5 The initial conclusion of the CCCA is that the RPCNA exhibits the marks of the true church as listed in Article 28 of the Belgic Confession.
- 2.6 The RPCNA is a member of NAPARC, and has established relationships with the RCUS and the URCNA.
- 2.7 According to the Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship, the CCCA has solicited input from the OPC about our growing contact with the RPCNA. The OPC's many contacts with the RPCNA have been very positive. The OPC recommends that we give attention to the RPCNA's approach to the Kingship of Christ, the 1643 covenant, and the RPCNA's view that women can serve as

deacons.

- 2.8 The CCCA recommends that synod decide to mandate the CCCA:
 - 2.8.1 To explore further what we have in common with the RPCNA and to assess if and when a decision can be made regarding ecclesiastical fellowship with this church.
 - 2.8.2 To keep the churches with which ecclesiastical fellowship has already been established informed of all progress made in this regard.
 - 2.8.3 To submit its report to the next general synod.
- 2.9 Carman East is “in agreement with the basic recommendation of the CCCA but we also wish to express our alarm at the view of the covenant expressed by the RPCNA in their extra-confessional statement known as ‘The Testimony’.” Carman East hopes “Synod will impress this concern upon the CCCA to make it abundantly clear where we stand as a federation of churches.”
- 2.10 Ottawa supports the committee’s recommendations “to further investigate the possibility of relations with the RPCNA.” The church at Ottawa has had good relations with RP Churches in the Ottawa area. Ottawa’s minister has also attended a presbytery meeting, and reported positively on his observations.
- 2.11 Owen Sound notes that the “status and content of the *Testimony* has major implications for any recommendation to enter Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the RCPNA and we would recommend that this be reflected in the mandate given to the Committee.”
- 2.12 Spring Creek overtures synod to establish ecclesiastical fellowship with the RPCNA. Spring Creek supports this overture with the observation that there are many favourable comments in the CCCA’s report, indicating that the RPCNA is a faithful church at Jesus Christ.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Christ prayed that his followers would be one in faith. It is our duty to observe where the Lord Jesus Christ is busy gathering his church, and unite with those who are obedient to him.
- 3.2 The initial conclusion of the CCCA is that the RPCNA exhibits the marks of the church. Therefore we are called to consider further whether one can in fact recognize the RPCNA as a church of the Lord, and if Yes, to pursue unity.
- 3.3 Carman East’s concern and Ottawa’s recommendation are worthy of pursuit. The CCCA should be instructed to study the status and content of the *Testimony* in the RPCNA, including what it says about the covenant. This demonstrates that Spring Creek’s request to establish ecclesiastical fellowship with the RPCNA is premature.
- 3.4 The CCCA’s concern about exclusive psalmody ought to be investigated further, as ought their views on ordaining women as deacons.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To thank the CCCA for the extensive work they have done in researching the RPCNA.
- 4.2 To mandate the CCCA:
 - 4.2.1 To confirm whether the marks of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ are evident in the RPCNA.
 - 4.2.2 To explore further whether the matters mentioned in Considerations 3.3 and 3.4 are a hindrance to the establishment of ecclesiastical fellowship.
 - 4.2.3 To submit its report to the next general synod.

ADOPTED

Article 164

SCBP - Overleaf Notation and Other Matters

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 SCBP Report 12

2. Observations

- 2.1 Regarding the overleaf notation:
 - 2.1.1 Synod Chatham mandated the committee to recommend that the SCBP proceed with the Overleaf Musical Notation Edition (re 7.3.1 of Art. 115).
 - 2.1.2 The committee proposes to keep the overleaf notation on hold until the progress of developing the common songbook becomes clearer. The committee remarks that there is a growing sense that the URCNA committee will much prefer the music in the common book to be four-part harmony. Moreover, many changes to the prose section are pending. With this in mind it is economically responsible to implement all the changes at once, be it a reworked *Book of Praise* or the common songbook.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The committee's recommendation is prudent.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To instruct the committee to keep the overleaf notation on hold until the progress of developing the common songbook becomes more clear.

ADOPTED**Article 165****SCBP – General Items**

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 SCBP Report 1-6
- 1.2 Letter from Orangeville

2. Observations

- 2.1 The committee report (1.0 – 6.0) serves as observations.
- 2.2 Synod Chatham mandated the committee:
 - 2.2.1 To authorize the committee to renew the contract for the printing of the *Book of Praise* in 2006.
 - 2.2.2 To authorize the committee to continue to foster an increased awareness of the existence of the *Book of Praise* and to promote its availability.
 - 2.2.3 To encourage the committee to welcome input from the Australian sister churches.
 - 2.2.4 To maintain the corporate status of the committee.
 - 2.2.5 To continue to have the committee as the address to which any correspondence regarding the *Book of Praise* can be directed.
- 2.3 The committee met 22 times (not including meetings with the URCNA counterparts) since Synod Chatham.
- 2.4 Printing and Distribution
 - 2.4.1 The committee operated under a contractual relationship with *Premier Printing Ltd.*, Winnipeg, MB. In 2006 the contract was extended for five years to February 28, 2012.
 - 2.4.2 From May 16, 2003 – July 3, 2006, 7601 books were printed. After July 3, 2006, 4200 additional books were to be printed: this should be sufficient until 2008. With this latest printing run the retail price increased to \$22.00.
 - 2.4.3 In the past 3 years 6751 copies were sold in Canada, 318 in the United States, 496

internationally.

2.5 Fostering Awareness

2.5.1 In the past three years the committee responded to various requests for information and approximately a dozen requests to copy the whole or parts of the *Book of Praise*. Considerable interest from at home and abroad in the Anglo Genevan Psalter remains. Of special note given the original Genevan Psalter was published in French, an ERQ brother made a request regarding copyright since there is interest in developing a French Book of Praise.

2.5.2 The committee continued to protect the copyright of the *Book of Praise*. Those granted permission to copy material had to ensure that all copies clearly state that copyright rests with the Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise. No written documentation exists with respect to copyrights assigned to the committee by the authors. The process to obtain formal assignments was initiated.

2.5.3 Some requests were received to make the *Book of Praise* material available electronically via links to websites. Where permission is granted the committee insists that a link to the churches' official website at www.canrc.org be provided. One such effort seeks to publish all 150 Genevan Psalms of the *Book of Praise* in 4-part harmony on a website.

2.5.4 A brother in Coaldale, AB published the music of all the psalms and hymns on a CD six-pack called "Daily Will I Praise You."

2.6 Input from the Australian Sister Churches

2.6.1 Since granting the Free Reformed Churches of Australia permission to use *Book of Praise* material for eventual publishing of their own Book of Praise (with the proviso that a different name be chosen and the copyright to all parts of the *Book of Praise* be acknowledged and maintained), official communication has taken place. Advice regarding various subjects was sought and received from Rev. G. VanRongen and Dr. J. Smith.

2.7 Corporate Status

2.7.1 Corporate status has been properly maintained.

2.8 Committee Address

2.8.1 The mailing address is: Standing Committee for the Book of Praise (SCBP), c/o Theological College, 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON, L9C 5A1.

2.8.2 The email address is: bookofpraise@canrc.org

2.9 Archives

2.9.1 An effort was made to collect as much historical information as possible about the work of the SCBP. Much was found and official archives were established at the Theological College. Rev. C. Bosch was appointed as the archivist.

2.10 Orangeville notes that while the committee refers to an email address for the committee, it does not publish the actual address.

3. Considerations

3.1 Synod notes with thankfulness:

3.1.1 all the work of the committee.

3.1.2 the continued interest, at home and abroad, in the *Book of Praise*.

3.1.3 the setting up of archives.

3.2 Synod encourages input from the Free Reformed Churches of Australia since the *Book of Praise* is in common use in those churches.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

4.1 To express gratitude to the committee for all its work.

- 4.2 To authorize the committee to continue to foster an increased awareness of the existence of the *Book of Praise* and to promote its availability.
- 4.3 To encourage the committee to welcome input from the Free Reformed Churches of Australia.
- 4.4 To maintain the corporate status of the committee.
- 4.5 To continue to have the committee as the address to which any correspondence regarding the *Book of Praise* can be directed.

ADOPTED

Article 166

SCBP – Capitalization of personal pronouns referring to God

The advisory committee presented its second proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 SCBP Report 9
- 1.2-3 Letters from Carman West and Ottawa

2. Observations

- 2.1 The committee report serves as observations.
- 2.2 The church at Chatham requested Synod Chatham to decide that all pronouns referring to God in all of the *Book of Praise* remain capitalized. In accordance with the advice received from synod, the church at Chatham placed this request before the SCBP. The committee received permission from the copyright holder of the NIV to use such capitals for quotations from the NIV. The committee has incorporated the use of initial capitals for pronouns referring to God for all material to be published in the *Book of Praise*.
- 2.3 Ottawa notes that Synod Chatham passed on the request of the church at Chatham to the SCBP, and that the SCBP does not interact with this request as Synod Chatham appears to imply it should. Instead the SCBP simply “goes ahead” and capitalizes the pronouns. Hence more study should be done on this issue.
- 2.4 Two churches give reasons questioning the necessity of maintaining the use of initial capitals for pronouns referring to God:
 - 2.4.1 This is not done in the NIV (Carman West).
 - 2.4.2 This does not follow current rules of English usage (Ottawa).
 - 2.4.3 This is not supported by the original languages of Scripture (Carman West, Ottawa).
 - 2.4.4 Maintaining such capitalization has no biblical grounds (Carman West).

3. Considerations

- 3.1 From the report it appears that the church at Ottawa is correct that the SCBP simply “went ahead” with capitalizing the pronouns referring to God without investigating the issue.
- 3.2 To ask the SCBP to yet investigate this matter would mean delaying the publication of the revised prose section for another three years.
- 3.3 It is noted that the NIV and ESV do not capitalize, and that the NKJV (which the FRCA uses) and the NASB do.
- 3.4 While the points of observation 2.4 have merit, to capitalize is consistent with how the pronouns have been capitalized in our forms in the past.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To retain capitalization of the personal pronouns referring to God.

ADOPTED

Article 167

Motion to reconsider the decision regarding the GKH

In light of the decision made this morning the motion was given into discussion. On the grounds given, the motion read:

To maintain the advisory committee's proposal as adopted in Article 143 of these Acts, but delete Consideration 4.2 and Recommendation 5.4.1, and to change Recommendation 5.4.2. to read: "to facilitate reconciliation between the GKH and the GKN".

The motion was **defeated**.

Another motion was moved and seconded as follows:

To maintain the advisory committee's proposal as adopted in Article 143 of these Acts, but change Consideration 4.2 by deleting: "For this reason, Synod agrees with the CRCA when it speaks of the separation that occurred as 'schism.' The CRCA should be instructed to admonish the GKH in a brotherly manner on this matter as this action is not Scripturally valid according to Belgic Confession Article 28 where we confess that 'all therefore who draw away from the church or fail to join it act contrary to the ordinance of God.' At the same time, ..."

And to change Recommendation 5.4.1 to read:

5.4.1 To advise the GKH that its separation from the GKN is unlawful.

The motion was **defeated**.

The original decision, as found in Article 143 of these Acts, stands.

Article 168

Appeal from Guelph re Art. 7 of Regional Synod East 2005

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

1.1 Appeal from Guelph against Regional Synod East 2005

2. Observations

2.1 Guelph appeals the fact that Regional Synod East 2005 declared an overture inadmissible because "the churches did not receive a copy of this proposal in advance of Regional Synod, and so did not have the opportunity to interact with it" (Acts Regional East 2005, Art. 7).

2.2 Guelph states that this proposal was sent to the church convening regional synod on time.

2.3 Furthermore, Guelph states that the proposal was time sensitive in that it had to do with a change made by the government of Ontario regarding marriage.

3. Considerations

3.1 While it is regrettable that the convening church of Regional Synod East 2005 did not send this proposal to the churches, the fact that it neglected to do so does not mean that regional synod should have proceeded to deal with it in any case.

3.2 On the basis of the documents supplied to synod, it is not possible to judge the time sensitive nature of this matter. Furthermore, there does not appear to be a time sensitive clause in the Regulations of Regional Synod East that would have allowed it to override its normal rules.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

4.1 Not to sustain the appeal of Guelph.

ADOPTED

Rev. VanWoudenberg and br. Westrik abstained from voting according to Art. 32 CO.

**Day 11 — Evening Session
Tuesday, May 22, 2007**

Article 169

Reopening

The chairman called the meeting to order. We sang Hymn 14:1.

Article 170

Adoption of the Acts — Day 10 and Day 11

The proceedings of the evening session of Day 10, as recorded in Articles 135-144, and those of the morning and afternoon sessions of Day 11, as recorded in Articles 145-168, were reviewed and adopted as part of the Acts of Synod.

Article 171

Confidential Acts

It was moved and seconded that Articles 114 and 154 be sent to the churches as confidential acts.

Grounds: The appeals contain information that have never been publicly known. It would make public private matters and be pastorally insensitive to have these matters made public.

The motion **carried**.

Article 172

SCBP – Other Matters Dealing with Changes in the Book of Praise

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

1.1 SCBP Report 13

1.2-7 Letters from the following six churches:

London, Carman West, Fergus Maranatha, Orangeville, Fergus North, Ottawa

2. Observations

2.1 The committee, in keeping with its mandate to be the address to which any correspondence regarding the *Book of Praise* can be directed, submits several proposals for changes.

2.2 Lord's Day 27, Answer 74, "... adults. Therefore, by baptism... they must be grafted into the Christian church."

2.2.1 The committee notes that here the image of "grafting" is used, which probably has been taken from John 15. This gives the impression that a foreign element is included. The original German text is slightly different: "they, by baptism, as the sign of the covenant, also must be incorporated in the Christian church and from the children of unbelievers distinguished." Here the difference is made between "belonging" to the covenant, and being "incorporated" in the covenant. The word "belonging" indicates the status, while the words "being incorporated" refers to the action that makes the status official. Children of believers are from the beginning in God's covenant. However, through baptism they are officially included in the covenant and registered as such.

2.2.2 The committee therefore proposes to use the word "incorporated" rather than "grafted," reflecting the original text.

2.2.3 The committee notes that if the above proposal is adopted, then the phrase "by baptism ingrafted into" in the form for the excommunication of communicant members (2nd line of the first announcement and 3rd line of the second announcement) should then be changed to "by baptism incorporated into."

2.3. Proposed phrasing of Lord's Day 37, A. 102 (13.2 of report):

2.3.1 The committee opines that the current phrasing "calling upon God" is linguistically

- problematic. This phrasing was compared with the original German while also proper language flow in English was considered. A literal translation does not work in this instance. In addition, the committee is of the opinion that the last line also requires changing. As it stands, “creature” receives the emphasis while the intention is to emphasize “honour.” The committee recommends that synod adopt the reworded Answer 102: “No, for a legitimate oath is an appeal to God, who alone knows the heart, to testify to the truth, and to punish me if I swear falsely. This honour does not belong to any creature.”
- 2.3.2 London is not convinced of the argument of the committee. The confessions, whose language and content is on the hearts and lips of the members of the churches, should only be changed when there is good and convincing reason to do so.
- 2.3.3 Fergus Maranatha opines that our current formulation is adequate and need not be changed. In fact “calling upon God” is preferred over “an appeal to God” and is more in line with the previous question and answer.
- 2.3.4 Orangeville is not in favour of the committee’s proposal to change the last line of the answer to “This honour does not belong to any creature” since this proposal removes the emphasis from the fact that no creature is worthy of such honour.
- 2.4. Proposed changes to the Lord’s Supper form (13.3 of report):
- 2.4.1 Regarding the paragraph, “From the beginning... eternally. By His perfect obedience He has fulfilled for us all the righteousness of God’s law. He did so especially when the weight of our sins and the wrath of God pressed out of Him the bloody sweat in the Garden of Gethsemane”:
- 2.4.1.1 the committee opines that in the phrase “fulfilled for us all” the word “all” refers to the righteousness of God’s law and should not be read as “us all.” The committee recommends that synod adopt the following as a better formulation: “He has for us fulfilled all the righteousness of God’s law.”
- 2.4.1.2 London and Carman West point out that the committee’s proposed phrasing “He has for us fulfilled all the righteousness of God’s law” has already been incorporated in the latest edition of the *Book of Praise*. Carman West suggests either “He has fulfilled all the righteousness of God’s law for us” or “He has fulfilled for us all the righteousness of God’s law.”
- 2.4.2 Regarding the phrase “He did so especially when the weight...”:
- 2.4.2.1 The committee opines that this phrase gives the wrong impression that ‘fulfilling the righteousness of God’s law’ is limited to Christ’s suffering. The committee therefore recommends that synod adopt the following formulation: “We remember in particular that the weight of our sins and the wrath of God pressed out of Him His sweat like drops of blood falling to the ground in the Garden of Gethsemane.”
- 2.4.2.2 Carman West opines that the phraseology “the weight of our sins and the wrath of God” sounds as if there are two distinct elements involved in the burden that Christ bore. The connection could be made stronger by this phraseology: “We remember in particular that the weight of the wrath of God caused by our sins pressed out of Him...” This would be consistent with Answer 17 of the Heidelberg Catechism which speaks of “the burden of God’s wrath,” and with Answer 37 which indicates that “Christ bore in body and soul the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race.”
- 2.4.3 Regarding the adverb “innocently”: The committee opines that in the statement, “He was innocently condemned to death that we might be acquitted at the judgment seat of God,” the adverbial form “innocently” is not correct. The committee recommends that synod adopt the following solution as this best captures the original meaning: “Though innocent, He was condemned to death that we might be acquitted at the judgment seat

of God.”

2.4.4 Regarding the structure of the paragraphs:

2.4.4.1 The committee reports that while studying this section it was also discovered that where it reads (top of p. 597): “First of all, let us...” it is not anywhere followed by “Secondly” to complete the thought. In the original German version it essentially reads as follows: “We are to remember in the following manner first of all.” In this way it can exist without a “secondly.” This can best be corrected by altering the paragraph structure slightly as follows: “(Par.1) Let us now consider... (Par.2) First of all, let us fully trust... (Par.3) We remember in particular that the weight...” The committee recommends that synod adopt the above paragraph restructuring.

2.4.4.2 London feels that the committee’s analysis is wrong. The point is not that there needs to be a “secondly” to complete the thought, but that the “first of all” is to direct our primary focus on the promises of the Old Testament, that Christ is the fulfilment of those promises, and that we are to have complete trust in that. The final paragraph deals with the suffering of Christ, and should not be truncated, with part placed in the second paragraph, and the rest in the final paragraph. The current division is correct: the one paragraph describes how Christ fulfilled the Old Testament promises and became true man; the other paragraph describes the nature and extent of Christ’s sufferings.

2.4.5 Regarding the section on Assurance:

2.4.5.1 The committee states that this section has a problematic expression in that the words “and He declared, saying” indicate that what follows is a literal quote of the Lord Jesus when in fact it is not. The committee suggests that if the statements from the gospel of Matthew are inserted this difficulty is avoided. The committee therefore recommends

2.4.5.1.1 To adopt the reworked formulation of the section on Assurance as follows: “In order that we might firmly believe that we belong to this covenant of grace, the Lord Jesus Christ instituted the holy supper during His last Passover. While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is My body.” Then He took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” That means: As often as you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you are reminded and assured of My hearty love and faithfulness toward you.”

2.4.5.1.2 To add the marginal reference of Mt 26:26-28.

2.4.5.2 Fergus North agrees that the current wording in the section on Assurance is problematic, but opines that the proposed change (13.3.3.1) goes too far in that it virtually repeats the earlier section on the institution of the Lord’s Supper. The church at Fergus North suggests the following (changed wording in italics): “In order that we might firmly believe that we belong to this covenant of grace, the Lord Jesus Christ during His last Passover instituted the holy supper. He gave the bread and the cup to His disciples in remembrance of Him, *so that* as often as you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you are reminded and assured of *His* hearty love and faithfulness toward you...”(change the rest of the first person pronouns in this section to the third person pronoun in order that people understand that this is not a scriptural quote from the Lord).

2.5. Introduction to the Form for Public Profession of Faith (13.4)

2.5.1 The committee notes that the Form for the Baptism of Adults has an introductory

explanation and that this form contains a section “Public Profession of Faith” for use by those who are baptized as adults. The Form for Public Profession of Faith, however, has no such introduction. The committee recommends that in order to make it clear that this form is intended only for those that were baptized as infants, the following introduction be adopted to the Form for the Public Profession of Faith: (Prior to admission to the Lord’s Supper, those who were baptized as infants must be thoroughly instructed in the Christian doctrine. After having confessed this doctrine before the elders, they may publicly profess their faith, for which the following form shall be used.)

- 2.5.2 The church at Fergus Maranatha says it has no objections to these introductions, but suggests that to be consistent it should be done for all forms.
- 2.5.3 The church at Fergus North does not agree with the addition of the introduction since:
 - 2.5.3.1 The form itself has a long history of use in the churches.
 - 2.5.3.2 None of the churches have requested such an introduction.
 - 2.5.3.3 The form itself refers to the prior baptism form. Hence there is no reason to add an introduction to make this issue more clear.
 - 2.5.3.4 If the words of the introduction are strictly enforced, there would be no opportunity for those who are mentally handicapped to profess their faith since many of them cannot be “thoroughly instructed in the Christian doctrine” but may still be able to profess a simple and childlike faith in Christ.
- 2.6. Correction of Misprints
 - 2.6.1 Correction needing approval of synod: The committee recommends that synod adopt the following proposed change in the *Book of Praise*: p. Page 459, BC Art. 25: “to order our life in all honour” should be “to order our life in all honesty.” The original edition read: “tout honneur,” but as result of the Dordrecht revision, it became: “toute honestete,” which is clearly intended.
 - 2.6.2 Corrections already provided to the printer. The committee notes for information a number of corrections that have already been provided to the printer, particularly since quite a number have to do with our confessions:
 - 2.6.2.1 Page v of the Preface, the last sentence, “Except for the Nicene Creed,” is no longer true, since the language of the Nicene Creed has also been updated in the 1998 edition.
 - 2.6.2.2 Page viii of the Preface, Under Hypoionian: Ps 99 needs to be added.
 - 2.6.2.3 Page 453, BC Art. 18: “of the seed of Abraham”, for consistency this should be followed by the text: (Gal 3:16)
 - 2.6.2.4 Page 460, BC Art. 26: not as quoted. Heb 4:14,15 should be Heb 4:14-16
 - 2.6.2.5 Page 470, BC Art. 35: the text reference should be to 1 Cor 11 rather than 1 Cor 10.
 - 2.6.2.6 Page 594, the text in the margin at top of the page should be 1 Pet 5:10,11
 - 2.6.2.7 Page 535, Canons of Dort I, 9: should read “or any other good quality or disposition.” It currently is of.
 - 2.6.2.8 Page 631, Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons, about the middle of the page, there is a sentence, which reads: To each was contributed according to need. The verb should read, “distributed.” Note that the bottom of the same page correctly states, “They shall gather and manage the offerings and distribute them in Christ’s Name, according to need.”
 - 2.6.2.9 Page 655, third paragraph, 4th line, Introduction to the Church Order, the word Oder should be spelled Order.
- 2.7. Ottawa expresses appreciation for the improvements to the Lord’s Supper form, both with regards to the actual text of Matthew, and the clarifying language in this form (13.3). This church further notes that in general the age of our forms is beginning to show: they could benefit from an overall updating.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 re 2.2 – The committee’s suggestion is convincing.
- 3.2 re 2.3 –
 - 3.2.1 the wording “a calling upon God” treats the verb “to call” as a noun. As such, though not wrong, it is linguistically awkward. The “calling upon God” is more in line with the previous Lord’s Day which is also about the third commandment. London is correct in stating that the wording of the confessions should not easily be changed.
 - 3.2.2 The committee’s suggestion that “honour” should receive the emphasis in the last line of A. 102 is not convincing. The answer as a whole highlights the vast difference between God and creatures, and thus our current formulation is adequate.
- 3.3 re 2.4.2 – Carman West gives a good recommendation.
- 3.4 re 2.4.3 – The committee’s proposal is sound.
- 3.5 re 2.4.4 – As the church at London says, the current division is correct: the one paragraph describes how Christ fulfilled the Old Testament promises and became true man; the other paragraph describes the nature and extent of Christ’s sufferings.
- 3.6 re 2.4.5 – the committee’s phraseology is less awkward and more suitable than that of Fergus North; yet neither are entirely satisfactory.
- 3.7 re 2.5 – Fergus North and Fergus Maranatha have valid points.
- 3.8 re 2.6.1 – the committee’s proposal is sound.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To adopt the proposal as found in observation 2.2.2 and 2.2.3.
- 4.2 To not adopt the proposals of the committee in observation 2.3.1.
- 4.3 To adopt the proposal of the committee in 2.4.1.1.
- 4.4 To adopt the proposal of Carman West in 2.4.2.2.
- 4.5 To adopt the proposal of the committee in 2.4.3.
- 4.6 To not adopt the proposal of the committee in 2.4.4.1.
- 4.7 To not adopt the proposal of the committee in 2.4.5.1.1.
- 4.8 To not adopt the proposal of the committee in 2.5.1.
- 4.9 To approve the corrections in 2.6.

ADOPTED

Article 173

CCCA – General Mandate

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CCCA Report pp. 111-114

2. Observations

- 2.1 The CCCA formed two sub-committees divided geographically. The sub-committees carried out their allotted work, and also met together to fulfil their mandate. The CCCA requests that new appointments be made taking the geography into account.
- 2.2 One of the appointees of previous synod could not accept his appointment. The committee appointed Dr. R.A. Faber to fill the vacancy.
- 2.3 Three of the eight committee members have served their full term.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The geographical spread of the committee, each section with its own emphasis, is to be commended.

3.2 To keep the committee at full strength, new appointments should be made.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

4.1 To thank the CCCA, as well as its subcommittees, for all the work done and presented.

4.2 To thank specifically the retiring brothers for the work they have done over the years, and appoint two new brothers from Manitoba and one new brother from Ontario.

4.3 To mandate the CCCA:

4.3.1 To continue contact with all those churches in the Americas with which we have ecclesiastical fellowship according to the adopted rules, and in accordance with the mandates described in decisions taken by synod with respect to the churches with which we have ongoing relationships.

4.3.2 To investigate diligently all the requests received for entering into ecclesiastical fellowship in the Americas.

4.3.3 To respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests made to attend assemblies, synods, or meetings of other churches in the Americas.

4.3.4 To report on its findings with suitable recommendations to the next general synod, and to present to the churches a report of its work six months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

ADOPTED

Article 174

Committee Changes

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. In connections with decisions made, it should be noted that the name of the Committee for Contact with Churches in the Americas (CCCA) has been changed to Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA).

The CCCNA will be responsible for:

1.1 Maintaining Ecclesiastical Fellowship with:

1.1.1 The Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)

1.1.2 The Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS)

1.1.3 The Reformed Churches in Quebec (ERQ)

1.2 Applying for membership in the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC).

1.3 Investigating the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA).

1.4 Communicating with:

1.4.1 The Free Reformed Churches in North America (FRCNA)

1.4.2 The Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches (OCRC)

2. It should also be noted that the Committee for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity (CPEU) has been re-named The Committee for Church Unity (CCU).

The CCU will be responsible for:

2.1 Promoting unity with the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA)

3. There is no name change for the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA).

The CRCA will be responsible for:

3.1 Maintaining Ecclesiastical Fellowship with:

- 3.1.1 The Free Church of Scotland
- 3.1.2 The Reformed Churches in The Netherlands
- 3.1.3 The Free Reformed Churches in South Africa
- 3.1.4 The Free Reformed Churches in Australia
- 3.1.5 The Reformed Churches in New Zealand
- 3.1.6 The Presbyterian Church in Korea
- 3.1.7 The Reformed Churches in Brazil
- 3.2 Maintaining membership in the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC).
- 3.3 Gathering additional information on
 - 3.3.1 The Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Calvinis in Nusa Tenggara Timur (GGRC-NTT)
 - 3.3.2 The Gereja-Gereja Reformasi de Indonesia Propinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur (GGRI-NTT)
- 3.4 Communicating with:
 - 3.4.1 The Free Church of Scotland – Continuing (FCC)
 - 3.4.2 The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands – Restored (GKH)
 - 3.4.3 The Independent Reformed Church in Korea (IRCK)
 - 3.4.4 The Presbyterian Church in Eastern Australia (PCEA)
 - 3.4.5 The United Reformed Churches in Myanmar (URCM)

ADOPTED

Article 175

Concluding Matters

Censure ad Art. 34 CO

The chairman concluded with gratitude that censure ad Art. 34 CO was not necessary and noted with thanks that synod could work through the items on the Agenda of Synod in good harmony.

Publishing of the Acts

The first and second clerks were appointed to prepare the Acts for publication.

Press release

The press release will be prepared by the vice-chairman.

Article 176

Adoption of the Acts — Day 11

The proceedings of the remainder of Day 11, as recorded in Articles 166-175, were reviewed and adopted as part of the Acts of Synod.

Article 177

Closing of Synod

The chairman spoke some fitting closing word which can be found in the appendices to these Acts. He concluded his remarks by reading Ephesians 3:14-21. On behalf of synod the vice-chairman expressed his appreciation for the capable manner in which Rev. Agema had chaired the sessions. The meeting sang Hymn 1B after which the chairman led in closing prayer. He declared Synod Smithers 2007 closed.

Finis