

**COMMITTEE ON RELATIONS WITH CHURCHES ABROAD  
OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES  
REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD 2010**

November 7, 2009

Esteemed brothers:

From General Synod 2007, the CRCA received the responsibility to maintain the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the following:

- The Free Church of Scotland.
- The Free Reformed Churches of Australia.
- The Free Reformed Churches of South Africa.
- The Presbyterian Church of Korea
- The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

In addition, Synod also decided :

- To establish a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the Reformed Churches of New Zealand.
- To discontinue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing).
- To continue the participation of the Canadian Reformed Churches in the International Conference of Reformed Churches.

Another change for the CRCA since Synod 2007 is that it is now responsible for contact with the Reformed Churches in Brazil, a responsibility which previously rested with the Committee for Contact with Churches in the Americas.

Furthermore, the CRCA was directed to continue gathering information about the Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Calvinis in Nusa Tenggara Timur (GGRC-NTT) and the Gereja-Gereja Reformasi de Indonesia Propinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur (GGRI-NTT).

Lastly, the CRCA was mandated to communicate with the Free Church of Scotland - Continuing, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands – Restored, the Independent Reformed Church in Korea, the Presbyterian Church in Eastern Australia and the United Reformed Churches in Myanmar.

Synod 2007 gave the following operational guidelines to the CRCA (see Article 142, Acts 2007):

- To consider requests 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.

- 45 • To respond, only if necessary, to specific requests made to attend assemblies, synods or  
46 meeting of other churches outside the Americas, besides those visits specifically mandated  
47 by general synod.  
48 • To serve Synod 2010 with a report with suitable recommendations, to be sent to the churches  
49 six months prior to the next general synod.  
50

51 For the convenience of the churches and delegates to General Synod, we wish to include again  
52 the Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship adopted by General synod Lincoln (Acts Lincoln 1992,  
53 Article 50, page 33). They are as follows.  
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| 55 1. The churches shall assist each other in the maintenance, defence and promotion of the<br>56 Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline and liturgy, and be watchful for<br>57 deviations.<br>58 2. The churches shall inform each other of the decisions taken by their broadest assemblies,<br>59 if possible by sending each other their Acts or Minutes and otherwise, at least by sending<br>60 the decisions relevant to the respective churches (if possible, in translation).<br>61 3. The churches shall consult each other when entering into relations with third parties.<br>62 4. The churches shall accept one another's attestations or certificates of good standing,<br>63 which also means admitting members of the respective churches to the sacraments upon<br>64 presentation of that attestation or certificate.<br>65 5. The churches shall in principle open their pulpits for each other's ministers in agreement<br>66 with the rules adopted in the respective churches.<br>67 6. When major changes or additions are being considered to the confessions, church<br>68 government or liturgy, the churches shall be informed in order that as much consultation<br>69 as possible can take place before a final decision is reached.<br>70 7. The churches shall receive each other's delegates at their broadest assemblies and invite<br>71 them to participate as much as local regulations permit.<br>72 |
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73 Since Synod 2007, the CRCA has had twelve meetings. Br. Henk Hoogstra underwent open  
74 heart surgery in 2008 and missed a subsequent meeting. However, we can mention with  
75 gratitude to God that he recuperated well and continued to sit on our committee. In the summer  
76 of 2009, Rev. J. Moesker moved to Owen Sound, Ontario. Although he was not able to attend  
77 our last three meetings, Rev. Moesker remained a part of our committee and continue to provide  
78 input and advice.  
79

80 The Report which follows contains five sections. The first deals with the churches with whom  
81 there is a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship. Since the last Synod, our committee has  
82 spent a lot of time investigating the Reformed churches in Indonesia. Our summary and  
83 recommendations in relation to GGRC-NTT and the GGRI-NTT are contained in the second part  
84 of this report. The third section supplies information about our contact with churches which are  
85 seeking contact or a relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches. The fourth section  
86 deals with the International Conference of Reformed Churches. In the last section, the CRCA  
87 makes some proposals about how our relations with churches both close to home and abroad  
88 might be managed in a more efficient manner. Following the last section are a number of  
89 appendices. It should be mentioned that the various parts of the Report have different writing  
90 styles because they were authored by different individuals.

91 In our Report, the following abbreviations will be used:  
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- 93 • Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia (Gereja Gereja Reformasis Calvinis di Indonesia  
94 NTT): **CRCI**
- 95 • Canadian Reformed Churches: **CANRC**
- 96 • Free Church of Scotland: **FCS**
- 97 • Free Church of Scotland - Continuing: **FCC**
- 98 • Free Reformed Churches in South Africa: **FRCSA**
- 99 • Free Reformed Churches of Australia: **FRCA**
- 100 • Independent Reformed Church in Korea: **IRCK**
- 101 • Presbyterian Church in Korea - Kosin: **PCK**
- 102 • Reformed Churches in Indonesia - NTT (Gereja Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia NTT): **RCI**
- 103 • Reformed Churches of Korea: **RCK**
- 104 • Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland - Vrijgemaakt):  
105 **RCN**
- 106 • Reformed Churches in the Netherlands - Restored: **GKH**
- 107 • Reformed Churches of Brazil: **RCB**
- 108 • Reformed Churches of New Zealand: **RCNZ**

## 111 **I. Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship.**

### 113 **A. Free Church of Scotland (FCS) and Free Church of Scotland - 114 Continuing (FCC).**

#### 116 **Mandate**

118 Synod Smithers 2007 decided, among other things:

- 120 • to continue the Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the FCS under the adopted  
121 rules;
- 122 • to acknowledge that Synod Chatham 2004 erred by “continuing” a Relationship of  
123 Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the FCC which, in fact, did not exist;
- 124 • to discontinue the Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the FCC and express  
125 regret for the error and any hurt we may have caused them with this error;
- 126 • to express thankfulness for the efforts which have been made by both the FCS and the  
127 FCC towards reconciliation;
- 128 • to exhort the FCS and the FCC to continue their efforts towards reconciliation for the  
129 glory of Christ our Head and not to be discouraged by the difficulties on the path towards  
130 that goal.

132 It also mandated the CRCA

- 134 • to convey the decisions under Recommendations 1.1.1 - 1.1.6 to both the FCS and FCC,  
135 assuring them of our continued prayerful support and  
136 • to continue to monitor the situation between the FCS and FCC and report any important  
137 developments to the next synod. (see: *Acts 2007*, Article 80)  
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## 139 Correspondence

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141 On July 18, 2007, a letter was received from the Clerk of the FCC in which he expresses his  
142 “sadness” that Synod Smithers decided to discontinue the Relationship with the FCC.

143 Furthermore, in the letter he makes the following comments:  
144

- 145 • “I confess that I find it difficult to understand that Synod Smithers should resolve to  
146 continue their relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with that part of the Free Church  
147 of Scotland which has just entered into a formal relationship with the Church of Scotland  
148 (a member of the World Council of Churches)...”
- 149 • “it is simply untrue that “no other federation other than the Christelijke Gereformeerde  
150 Kerken in Nederland have entered into ecclesiastical fellowship with the FCC.”
- 151 • “it is also a value judgment to say that the FCC have left the FCS.”
- 152 • “it is not accurate to say that the division is simply over a matter of polity. The division  
153 comes down to a question of practical acceptance of the doctrine that Christ is the Head  
154 of the Church. The FCS (Residual) position is that ministers must obey every instruction  
155 of General Assembly even if the instruction of General Assembly be unconstitutional or  
156 unscriptural - in other words that the General Assembly has absolute authority even in  
157 matters in which the Scriptures and the constitution of the Church allow liberty.”
- 158 • “The Free Church Continuing would strongly challenge any suggestion that they have  
159 ‘seceded.’ We hold that it is the FCS (Residual) who have acted in a way that is contrary  
160 to the constitution of the Free Church of Scotland.”
- 161 • “The sentiments in 4.3 (Considerations) are no doubt well-intentioned but manifest a  
162 complete misunderstanding of our position - we did not want a division and do not want a  
163 division and from the beginning have worked towards reconciliation. The division came  
164 about when those who are now of the FCS (Residual) unconstitutionally excommunicated  
165 and removed from their pulpits the ministers who are now the FCC.”
- 166 • Commenting on Consideration 4.4. of Synod Smithers the Clerk states, “with respect, we  
167 are unaware of any pursuit by the FCS (Residual) of restoration of unity with the FCC  
168 whose status they do not regard as that of ministers and who they dealt with in terms of  
169 the Greater Excommunication.”
- 170 • Commenting on Recommendation 5.3 (see 1.1.3. above) the Clerks states, “In our view  
171 ‘continuing a relationship’ was appropriate as a way of recognizing that a division had  
172 occurred in the Free Church of Scotland and continuing a relationship with both parties  
173 did not involve judging which party was more correct.”
- 174 • Commenting on Recommendation 5.4 (see 1.1.4. above) the Clerk states “it would seem  
175 that Synod Smithers has now pronounced that the position of the FCS (Residual) is  
176 correct. If this is so, it would seem to follow by implication Synod Smithers now regard  
177 ministers of the FCC in terms of their status in relation to the FCS (Residual) - under the  
178 Greater Excommunication and not valid ministers of the Gospel. Was this the intention of  
179 Synod Smithers?”

- 180 • Commenting on Recommendation 5.5 (see 1.1.5. above) the Clerk states, “to our  
181 knowledge, there has been no effort by the FCS (Residual) towards reconciliation.  
182 Indeed, contrary to their undertakings to ICRC Pretoria 2005 they have now taken the  
183 Free Church Continuing to the civil courts.”  
184

185 In December of 2008 an **Extract Minute** of the Proceedings of the Commission of Assembly of  
186 the FCS was received. In that Extract:

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- 188 • the names of the suspended ministers are mentioned and their suspensions are  
189 “terminated” on the grounds that the FCC is “a denomination distinct from and separate  
190 from the Free Church of Scotland” and that the above-mentioned are “no longer subject  
191 to the jurisdiction of the Courts of the Free Church of Scotland.”
  - 192 • “The Commission of Assembly further declare that any others who are or were ministers  
193 Free Church (Continuing) who were disciplined by Courts of the Free Church of Scotland  
194 in consequence and in relation to the separation of January 2000 and its aftermath,  
195 together with any such office-bearers, are now held by the Free Church of Scotland, in  
196 consequence of this declaration, to be of good standing in a Christian church, unless  
197 under discipline from the said church.”
  - 198 • “In addition, the Commission of Assembly, having the highest concern for the unity of  
199 Christ’s visible church and the interests of the gospel, call upon all in the Free Church of  
200 Scotland to regard this declaration as an expression of this concern, as also a sincere  
201 overture of peace and reconciliation towards the Free Church (Continuing).”
  - 202 • “The Commission of Assembly direct the Deacons’ Courts of the following  
203 congregations to initiate and engage in discussions with their counterparts in the Free  
204 Church (Continuing) over unresolved issues of property, funds, church records or any  
205 other assets, with a view to reaching a solutions acceptable to both sides, thereby  
206 avoiding having to settle matters by legal action...”  
207

208 On March 19, 2009, an invitation to be present at the General Assembly of the Free Church of  
209 Scotland (Continuing) was sent to the CRCA. In it the following sentences are of note:

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- 211 • “We most sincerely pray that your Committee will be able to correct at as early a date as  
212 possible the errors of fact which seem to underlie the finding of Synod Smithers.”
  - 213 • “We understand that the finding of your most recent Synod may preclude the sending of  
214 an official delegate to our forthcoming Assembly, but we nonetheless wish to express our  
215 warm invitation to send a representative or representatives in whatever capacity you  
216 might see fit (e.g. observer/s). It is our desire to be as open as possible in all our  
217 dealings.”  
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219 On March 25, 2009, an invitation was sent by the Clerk of the FCS inviting the CRCA to send a  
220 representative to the 2009 Assembly.

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222 The Principal ACTS of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland for 2007, 2008 and  
223 2009 were received. The Principal ACTS of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) for 2007  
224 was received.  
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226 **Comments and Evaluation - FCC and FCS**

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228 For an in-depth look at the conflict between the FCC and the FCS, we refer you to the Report of  
229 the CRCA addressed to Synod Smithers 2007. After Synod Smithers, the CRCA, having  
230 received new members, reviewed the dealings and evaluation of the previous CRCA in relation  
231 to the division between the FCC and the FCS.

232

233 It also took note of the decision of Synod Smithers. In the end your present Committee came to  
234 the conclusion that Synod Smithers would have served these Churches in Scotland better if it had  
235 followed the original recommendation received from the CRCA.

236

237 The CRCA had recommended to Synod Smithers 2007 that it acknowledge that Synod Chatham  
238 2004 had made a mistake in entering into Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the FCC. It also  
239 recommended that, notwithstanding the mistake, the Relationship with the FCC should now  
240 continue and be used to promote reconciliation between both the FCC and the FCS.

241

242 Synod Smithers, however, decided to apologize to the FCC and to *terminate* the Relationship  
243 with the FCC. At the same time it urged the CRCA to exhort both churches to work towards  
244 reconciliation.

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246 From the comments made by the Clerk of the FCC (quoted above), it would appear that Synod  
247 Smithers erred in some of its assumptions and conclusions.

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249 Furthermore, the FCC letter points out that by terminating the Relationship with the FCC, the  
250 decision of Synod Smithers results in the Canadian Reformed Churches making a *de facto*  
251 decision in favour of the FCS and against the FCC. You will understand that such a position now  
252 makes it very hard, if not impossible, for the Canadian Reformed Churches to play the role of  
253 honest broker in this dispute.

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255 It should also be noted that other Reformed churches from around the world have taken a  
256 different stand than the Canadian Reformed Churches. They have chosen to recognize both  
257 Churches and then used this recognition as a stepping stone to promote reconciliation.

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259 **The Free Church of Scotland and the Church of Scotland**

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261 The Principal ACTS of the General Assembly of 2007 contain a Joint Statement issued by the  
262 Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland. This Statement opens with “the Biblical  
263 Basis” which contains quotations from John 17, I Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4 and Galatians 2  
264 about the unity of Christ and His Church. Following this “the Confessional Basis” is dealt with  
265 and it consists of quotations from the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapters 25 (2 - 5) and  
266 26 (1 - 2). Next, there is a section dealing with “Implications” and then a section on “Practical  
267 Application.”

268

269 Under the last section on “Practical Application” it mentions that “some cooperation already  
270 takes place, particularly at the level of parish ministry and in representations to parliament and  
271 other bodies.”

272 It is also “recognized by each Church that the liberty of local ministers and Kirk Sessions must  
273 be maintained and that the level of cooperation in practical ministry will vary geographically.”  
274

275 As well, “areas where cooperation might be carried out and expanded where already taking  
276 place, involving where appropriate church members, elders and ministers:  
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- 278       ▪ *evangelism and church planting*
- 279       ▪ *theological education within in-service training*
- 280       ▪ *services* - prayer, pulpit exchanges, shared sacramental celebrations, marriages,  
281       funerals, Remembrance Day, School Assemblies etc
- 282       ▪ *formal links* - moving from cooperation to commitment in local structures through  
283       formal links
- 284       ▪ *social projects* - alcohol and drug related, housing, debt, counseling, Youth work,  
285       elderly, prison ministry, etc
- 286       ▪ *conferences and fellowships* - including fraternals, missions, local Bible studies  
287       etc
- 288       ▪ *social events* - charity events, Sunday School outings
- 289       ▪ *representations* - to governments and members of the Scottish, UK and European  
290       parliaments, police, Licensing Boards, local authorities, Health Boards, etc.”  
291

292 Now it cannot be denied that this “Joint Statement” is an interesting document, but that is not  
293 why we have chosen to refer to it at some length. We have done so because it is our  
294 understanding that the Church of Scotland is very much a mixed body theologically. Within its  
295 ranks one finds the staunchly Reformed and the vocally liberal.  
296

297 Furthermore, the Church at Scotland is a member of the World Council of Churches, as well as  
298 of other ecumenical organizations whose commitment to the infallibility of the Bible may be  
299 called into question.  
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301 Finally, a recent decision of the Church of Scotland (the Scott Rennie case) to permit a  
302 homosexual minister to be inducted into active ministry in that church while at the same time  
303 maintaining his relationship with a male partner, calls into serious question the orthodoxy of  
304 such an ecclesiastical body.  
305

306 So what does all of this do to the Joint Statement?  
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308 Seeing that members of our Committee would be going to the ICRC in Christchurch and would  
309 be meeting delegates there from the Free Church, our delegates were instructed to speak with  
310 members of the FCS delegation.  
311

312 This meeting took place on Oct. 21, 2009, in Christchurch, NZ with the Revs. Alex MacDonald  
313 and James Maciver. They explained that the Joint Statement was meant to form a basis for  
314 discussion and did not purport to be either a covenant or an agreement. In the meantime they  
315 stated that the discussions with the Church of Scotland had run stuck over the matter of how to  
316 view and interpret Holy Scripture (infallibility and inerrancy), as well as over the matter of  
317 ordaining homosexuals to ministry in the Church of Scotland.

318 By way of further clarification they explained that whereas the Free Church holds the Bible to be  
319 the Word of God, the Church of Scotland speaks about the “doctrine contained” in the Bible.  
320 In addition, they stated that we need to realize that there are any number of local Church of  
321 Scotland congregations, especially on the Island of Lewis, that are just as reformed as local Free  
322 Church congregations. They also wondered aloud as to what these conservative congregations  
323 would do seeing that they were in great distress over the recent Rennie case relating to  
324 homosexual pastors.  
325

326 In light of these clarifications and assurances, our Committee sees no need to delve further into  
327 this matter. From this discussion, as well as from many other discussions held during the ICRC  
328 with the brothers from the FCS, we can only conclude that their church continues to remain  
329 faithful to its confession and maintains a high view of Scripture.  
330

### 331 **Recommendations**

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333 The CRCA recommends that Synod Burlington 2010 decide:  
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- to continue the Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the FCS under the adopted rules;
- to rescind the decision of Synod Smithers 2007 with respect to FCC and to re-instate the Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with that church;
- to use its good offices to exhort the FCS and the FCC to work earnestly at reconciliation and reunion;
- to charge the CRCA to send two committee members to the FCS and FCC with a view to encouraging them, also when it comes to the unity of the church.

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## 345 **B. The Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA).**

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### 347 **Mandate**

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349 Synod Smithers 2007 decided the following regarding the FRCA:  
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- 352 1. To maintain the existing relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the FRCA under the adopted rules.
- 353 2. To thank the FRCA for their continued support for the Theological College in Hamilton.
- 354 3. To suggest that the Standing Committee for the Book of Praise maintain regular contact with  
355 the Australian committee in order to advise them of our direction.

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357 The decisions of Synod were conveyed to the Australian churches in a letter dated June. 26,  
358 2007. After they became available in print, a copy of the official ACTS of Synod Smithers 2007  
359 was sent to the FRCA.  
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364 **Communication**

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366 During the last three years, the CRCA has maintained contact with the deputies of the FRCA. as  
367 follows:

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369 • A letter was received regarding our contact and visiting schedule regarding the PCK on Oct.  
370 4, 2007.

371 • On Feb. 18, 2008 we requested information and clarity regarding their decision to delay  
372 extending ecclesiastical fellowship to the GGRC-NT. In the same letter, we also sought the  
373 cooperation of the FRCA in promoting unity between the GGRC and GGRI and cooperation  
374 between them in theological training. A response was received on Dec.8, 2008 in which we  
375 were informed that Br. B. Bosveld, one of their deputies who had visited Indonesia 18 times  
376 would be available to meet with the CRCA. This meeting found place in Langley, BC on  
377 Jan. 7, 2009.

378 • In February of 2009, an invitation was received to attend Synod Legana 2009. Since no one  
379 was able to travel to Australia at the time of Synod, a letter of greeting was sent.

380 • An extract of Synod Legana's decisions regarding the Canadian Reformed Churches was  
381 received in September of 2009.

382 • On July 5, 2009, a letter was received from the deputies of the FRCA for Relations with  
383 Sister Churches, requesting that some of our delegates meet with the FRCA deputies in  
384 Australia following the ICRC meeting in Christchurch, NZ. Due to lack of manpower and  
385 time constraints, this request could not be answered positively.

386

387 **Synod Legana 2009**

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389 Synod Legana was held from June 15 – 24, 2009. Perusal of its ACTS confirms the desire of  
390 this federation to remain faithful to the Scriptures and the Reformed Confessions. Matters of  
391 interest to our federation include:

392

393 • Synod decided to continue the support for our Theological College and its Pastoral Training  
394 Program.

395 • Synod decided to continue the use of our Book of Praise and to allow the use of the 2008  
396 Interim Book of Praise with the NIV prose section, as well as inviting their churches to  
397 scrutinize and test the 28 additional hymns (which our synod 2010 may adopt) outside the  
398 church services, for recommendation to their next synod.

399 • While restating their recognition of the RCNZ as a true church of Jesus Christ, the FRCA  
400 declined to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with this federation because of its continued  
401 sister church relationship with the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia (which  
402 continues to be "under strain").

403 • Concerns were expressed by Synod about developments in the RCN including the following:  
404 the approach of these churches to hermeneutics, their position on the Lord's Day, the public  
405 comments of Dr. Harinck and the administration of the sacraments for military personal. The  
406 Deputies for Sister Churches were instructed to examine and discuss the concerns about  
407 hermeneutics as expressed in the report of the late Rev. M. Nap, the report concerning the  
408 role of Men and Women in the church, the decisions of the RCN on Divorce and Remarriage,  
409 the proliferation and content of new hymns, the position of the RCN regarding developments

410 in the NGK in connection with female office bearers, the need for the RCN to uphold the  
411 plain meaning of Gen. 1 – 11 and signs of independentism in the RCN. Synod expressed the  
412 hope that these matters can be discussed with the Dutch deputies and those of other sister  
413 churches.

- 414 • Synod decided that the FRCSA will also keep themselves apprised of the situation in the  
415 GKH.

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#### 417 **Decisions of Synod Legana 2009 concerning the Canadian Reformed Churches**

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- 419 1. To Continue sister church relations with the CANRC according to the established rules.
- 420 2. To mandate the Deputies to:
  - 421 a. Monitor developments within the CANRC for mutual benefit according to the  
422 established rules and keep the churches informed;
  - 423 b. Stay informed on developments concerning the pending merger between the CANRC  
424 and the URCNA, including the proposed revisions to the Church Order.
  - 425 c. Seek clarification about and discuss the changing manner in which they deal with  
426 significant differences with other church federations in their unity discussions;
  - 427 d. In the unity discussion between the CANRC and the URCNA, encourage the CANRC  
428 to maintain the principle that the churches maintain a theological college on the basis  
429 that we use their college for our Australian churches
  - 430 e. Encourage the CANRC to continue supporting the FRCA as much as possible in its  
431 discussions with the RCNZ
  - 432 f. Invite the CANRC to combine a visit to Australia with their planned visit to New  
433 Zealand in September
  - 434 g. Send two delegates to the next CANRC General Synod 2010 pending finances.

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#### 436 **Evaluation**

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438 From the contact with the FRCA deputies by means of both oral and written communications, it  
439 is evident that the churches of this federation strive to be faithful to the Word of God and  
440 maintain the Reformed Confessions and Church Order. We share a common heritage and  
441 express this in the manner in which we deal with issues and matters which are of concern to both  
442 federations. The geographical situation of the FRCA may determine a difference of approach  
443 with regard to certain issues. Yet, the desire to discuss the divergent views presents the basis for  
444 mutual agreement on the fundamental principles as laid down in Scripture. It is of utmost  
445 importance that we support each other in our endeavour to be faithful Churches of Christ and so  
446 maintain our ecclesiastical fellowship. This should also be expressed in the relations we jointly  
447 have with other sister churches and with those which have approached us to that end.

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456 **Recommendations**

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458 The CRCA recommends that Synod Burlington 2010 decide:

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1. To maintain the existing sister church relation with the FRCA under the adopted rules;
2. To thank the FRCA for its continued support for the Theological College in Hamilton;
3. To maintain close contact with the various deputyships of the FRCA to discuss matters of mutual interest, e.g. mission work in Indonesia, Book of Praise, third-party relationships, issues of common interest with regard to sister churches, etc.;
4. To send a delegate to the next synod of the FRCA in 2012

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468 **C. The Free Reformed Churches of South Africa (FRCSA).**

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470 **Mandate**

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472 Synod Smithers 2007 decided (Article 124):

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1. To continue ecclesiastical fellowship with the FRCSA under the adopted rules.
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.
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.

483 **Communication**

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485 The CRCA maintained communication with the FRSCA as follows:

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- A letter dated June 26, 2007 was sent informing the FRCSA of the observations, considerations and recommendations of Synod Smithers 2007.
- In response to a request from the CRCA, Rev. C. Kleijn of the FRCSA submitted a list of projects and needs among the FRCSA to bring to the attention of the CARCs.
- In January 2008 the CRCA sent a letter to all Canadian and American Reformed Churches outlining the opportunities available to extend help to the FRCSA with their mission and relief efforts.
- Later in 2008 an article was published in Clarion magazine outlining the same information and noting that Synod Smithers 2007 has urged the CANRC to consider these churches and their work when thinking of sharing our bounty in Canada and to please consider becoming involved and providing help to and via the brotherhood in South Africa.
- On May 8, 2008 a letter was sent expressing regret that we were not able at this time to accede to the invitation to send a delegation to the General Synod of the FRCSA in Cape Town May 2008.

- 501 • In August of 2008, a letter was sent to all Canadian and American Reformed Churches  
502 informing them of an upcoming visit of Rev. Pieter Boon to Canada and indicating that there  
503 were opportunities for local churches to arrange meetings with him. In at least two places,  
504 meetings were organized in the course of which, Rev. Boon was able to explain how our  
505 churches could be of assistance to the FRCSA.
- 506 • An Afrikaans short report of the FRCSA Synod Cape Town May 12-15 2008 was received in  
507 January 2009 as well as an English copy of the full Acts in March 2009.
- 508 • A letter dated May 20, 2009 was received from the Deputies for Support of Needy Churches  
509 of the FRSCA mentioning that some aid had been received from some of the CANRC but  
510 asking the CRCA to help coordinate and structure this support in a more sustainable way.
- 511 • On June 29, 2009, the CRCA sent a letter to the church at Coaldale asking its Council to take  
512 on the project of being the coordinating church for aid to needy churches of the FRSCA.  
513 Coaldale was asked to do the following: distribute information received from the Deputies  
514 for Needy Churches of the FRCSA, issue periodic requests for help on behalf of the FRCSA  
515 to the churches of our federation, establish the most effective way to transfer funds to South  
516 Africa. On November 4, 2009, the CRCA learned that Coaldale had agreed to take on this  
517 project and had established a Committee of Council for that purpose. On November 6, 2009,  
518 the CRCA informed the Deputies for the Support of Needy Churches of the FRCSA of this  
519 decision. In the near future, Coaldale will send out a letter to all the CANRC informing them  
520 that it has agreed to be the coordinating church for aid to the needy churches of the FRCSA.

521

## 522 **Synod Capetown 2008**

523

524 The following are some of the highlights of this Synod.

525

526 With respect to relations with the CARC Synod decided:

527

- 528 1. To continue sister church relations with the CANRC according to the adopted rules;  
529 2. To authorize deputies to send one delegate to attend the next synod of the CANRC and to  
530 instruct that the delegate also give presentations on the FRCSA.

531

532 As grounds for this decision, Synod stated:

533

- 534 1. The CANRC gives evidence of continuing faithfulness to the Word of God, the Reformed  
535 Confessions and the Church Order;  
536 2. Personal visits to synods are a good means of maintaining and building relationships;  
537 3. Our two federations, with similar backgrounds, can support each other and learn from each  
538 other.

539

540 In its instruction to its Deputies for Relations with Churches Abroad, Synod decided to send one  
541 delegate to attend the next synod of the CANRC and to instruct that the delegate also give  
542 presentations on the FRCSA.

543

544 With respect to the ICRC Synod decided:

545

- 546 1. To continue membership of the ICRC;

- 547 2. To accept the proposed amendment to the ICRC constitution;  
548 3. To authorize the deputies to send one delegate to the next conference to be held in New  
549 Zealand, 2009.

550

551 As grounds for its decisions pertaining to the ICRC, Synod stated:

552

- 553 1. The ICRC is an organization with a reformed foundation and shows that it doesn't just allow  
554 any church to become member, but truly wishes to maintain its basis;  
555 2. The ICRC provides us with a platform to maintain contact with reformed churches all over  
556 the world  
557 3. The ICRC assists us to reflect on and coordinate our missionary work which can only be to  
558 our benefit.  
559 4. The proposed amendment to the ICRC constitution is an improvement.

560

561 The Deputies for Contact with Churches in South Africa seem to have come to a dead end in  
562 their talks with the Reformed Churches in South Africa (GKSA). It was decided that the deputies  
563 would continue to monitor how the GKSA deals with matters such as women in office and  
564 confessional faithfulness in its contacts with other churches in South Africa. It was also decided  
565 to again explore contact between local churches of the two federations as a means to move  
566 towards unity on the basis of Scripture and Confessions.

567

568 As far as theological training is concerned, synod decided that the deputies curators should  
569 appoint a National Coordinator to implement the required steps for a "Ministerial Training  
570 Structure." Work should continue on the statutes and regulations for a theological training  
571 manual and the facilitation, writing and development of a training program as well as the  
572 establishment of a library. Investigation should also continue into developing diploma courses or  
573 making use of existing facilities. It was finally decided that deputies not only guide and take  
574 responsibility for the developing of the Ministerial Training Structure, but also accept and retain  
575 their responsibility for the training of the present and future theological students.

576

577 The Synod Treasurer reported concerning Denominational Expenses, Needy Churches, and  
578 Needy Students. It was obvious that the fund for Needy Churches places a considerable financial  
579 burden on the churches, so it was decided to lessen the costs in other areas to try to lessen that  
580 burden. The deputies for Needy Churches were instructed to organize a national conference to  
581 draw up a plan for sustainable support for the needy churches.

582

583 Some revisions of liturgical forms were adopted and the revised Church Order and Regulations  
584 for Synod in both English and Afrikaans were officially adopted.

585

## 586 **Evaluation**

587

588 As demonstrated in our contacts and in the Acts of Synod Cape Town 2008, the Free Reformed  
589 Churches of South Africa continue to give evidence of faithfulness to the Word of God, to  
590 maintaining the adopted confessions and to upholding their Church Order. The Lord's great  
591 blessings over the extensive mission and mission aid work continue to be noted with gratitude. In

592 their own situation the FRCSA continue to work at developing their own Ministerial Training  
593 Structure. There remain considerable opportunities for mission and mission aid in South Africa  
594

### 595 **Recommendations**

596  
597 The Committee recommends that Synod decide:  
598

- 599 1. To continue Ecclesiastical fellowship with the FRCSA under the adopted rules.
- 600 2. To recommend the FRCSA to the churches as worthy of continued financial assistance, to  
601 help them support the needy churches in the federation, and to assist them with their  
602 extensive mission work and relief efforts among the disadvantaged and sick in South Africa.
- 603 3. To mandate the Board of Governors of our Theological College to encourage and assist the  
604 FRCSA in their efforts to set up their Ministerial Training Structure.

### 605 **D. The Presbyterian Church of Korea**

606  
607 Synod Smithers 2007 decided the following (Article 142, 4.2, of the *Acts*):  
608

- 609 • Keeping in mind Consideration 3.6 above, to instruct the CRCA to send delegates to the  
610 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (in consultation and rotation with  
611 sister churches).  
612

613 Synod 2007 also decided (Article 86, of the *Acts*):  
614

- 615 • To continue the Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Presbyterian Church in  
616 Korea according to the adopted rules.
- 617 • To express thankfulness to the PCK for sending such a large delegation to synod thereby  
618 indicating the value they place on our relations.
- 619 • To charge the committee:  
620
  - 621 ▪ To work diligently on improving our relations with the PCK by mail/email, by meeting  
622 with their delegates at the ICRC, and by sending a member of the CRCA to Korea on a  
623 more regular basis.
  - 624 ▪ To contact those sister churches who have relations with the PCK with the request that  
625 we alternate with them in visiting the General Assembly of the PCK.
  - 626 ▪ To send a copy of our agreement with the OPC to the PCK and ask for their reaction  
627 and possible agreement.
  - 628 ▪ To report on the state of communications to the next synod.

### 629 **Communication and actions**

630  
631  
632 As mandated by Synod 2007 (Art. 86, 4.1), the Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship,  
633 according to the adopted rules, was maintained with the PCK. This was put into practice by more  
634 extensive communication, by visiting the General Assembly and by discussions with the  
635 Fraternal Relations Committee (FRC) of the PCK. The relationship and all that this entails has

636 been helped tremendously by the active exchange between members of the CRCA and Prof.  
637 Haemoon Yoo, an English- and Dutch-speaking member of the FRC of the PCK.

638  
639 The CRCA received official letters of invitation to attend the 57<sup>th</sup>, 58<sup>th</sup> and 59<sup>th</sup> General  
640 Assemblies. There is still some confusion as to how these letters are to be received. They come  
641 from the General Secretary, but are sent to different individuals in the CANRC, who are  
642 mistakenly assumed to be the logical recipients. The CRCA sent a letter of greeting to the 57<sup>th</sup>,  
643 but was unable to do so for the 59<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, because of the late receipt of the letter of  
644 invitation.

645  
646 The CRCA was able to send the brs. H. Leyenhorst and J. Vanderstoep to the 58<sup>th</sup> General  
647 Assembly of the PCK in September 2008. The decision to send delegates to the 58<sup>th</sup> GA was in  
648 response to the mandate of Synod 2007 (Art. 86, 4.3.1; Art. 142, 4.2.3). It was discussed with the  
649 RCNv and the FRCA that a three-year rotation would be tried. The FRCA sent a delegate in  
650 2007 and the RCNv did so in 2009. While there, the CANRC delegates were privileged to  
651 address the GA and to meet with the FRC. In preparation for the meeting with the FRC, a  
652 document was prepared outlining the matters to be discussed with it. In this document, the  
653 matters directed by Synod 2007 (Art. 86, 4.2 and 4.3.) were addressed. The address to the 58<sup>th</sup>  
654 GA and the document used by the delegates in discussion with the FRC, are appended.

655  
656 In discussions with the FRC, it became clear that, while we officially send our Acts to the PCK,  
657 we do so to the Office of the General Assembly (General Secretary). They likely do not make it  
658 to the FRC. The delegates committed to trying to direct a copy to the FRC and also to make an  
659 English summary of the main points (of particular importance to our relationship with the PCK)  
660 for the FRC.

661  
662 On a number of occasions, mention has been made in the CANRC of differences between the  
663 CANRC and the PCK concerning a number of confessional and polity matters, particularly  
664 fencing of the Lord's Supper and confessional membership. These matters have been considered  
665 as unresolved. Synod 2007 charged the CRCA to share with the PCK a Statement of Agreement  
666 reached between the OPC and the CANRC, which led to the establishment of Ecclesiastical  
667 Fellowship, and ask for the reaction of the PCK (Synod 2007, Acts, Art. 86,. 4.3.3). This was  
668 done, providing the members of the FRC with a copy of that statement, as found in the Acts of  
669 Synod 2007, p. 316, (it was reproduced in the Acts of 2007 as part of a synopsis of past  
670 discussions with the OPC).

671  
672 The reaction of the FRC to this matter was that there is agreement with the first point (fencing of  
673 the Lords Supper). It is recognized, certainly by a number of prominent members of the PCK,  
674 that the matter of more involvement of elders in church government is needed. While, this is  
675 acknowledged, it was also stated that given the culture of Korea and the busyness of individuals  
676 appointed/ordained as elders, makes the reality of this requirement difficult. With respect to the  
677 matter of Confessional Membership, it was stated that this in fact is contained in the Constitution  
678 of the PCK. While a letter from the FRC, clarifying this second matter was promised, to date it  
679 has not been received.

680

681 The delegates also spoke about the relations the CANRC has with other church federations, with  
682 the intent of explaining the approach the CANRC take in such matters. It was mentioned that the  
683 IRCK had requested relationship (at the 2007 Synod, Art. 127), but that we were not ready to  
684 enter into such. There was a need for more information. Furthermore it was related that in the  
685 first instance some of this information needed to come from the PCK. It was acknowledged by  
686 the FRC that we (the CANRC) should in fact be relying, at least in part, on them for this  
687 additional information. The FRC expressed appreciation for our position of consultation with the  
688 federation with which we already have a relationship when another federation in that same  
689 country makes a request for church relationship.

690  
691 The matter of church relations within Korea was also discussed. We were informed that  
692 there is virtually no contact between the PCK and the Independent Reformed Church in Korea  
693 (IRCK), at least in any official way. There were a number of reasons given, such as they (IRCK)  
694 are so small, and they do respect the PCK seminary (implication – they are not different?).  
695 There was a commitment made by the FRC to give some attention to this matter, especially in  
696 light of our position about consulting the federation that we already have a relationship with. The  
697 FRC did question why the IRCK approached the ICRC for membership before having  
698 discussions with the PCK. In personal discussions, we learned quite a bit more about the IRCK  
699 as well as the more recent Reformed Church in Korea (RCK). Much more information will need  
700 to be gathered before an informed decision about relationships with either or both of these  
701 federations can be made.

702  
703 With respect to cooperating with our sister churches in visiting the PCK (Synod 2007, Art. 86,  
704 4.3.2), this seems to have worked quite well. The Australian delegate to the 2007 GA shared his  
705 report with the CRCA. We in turn, shared our report with the Australians and the Dutch and we  
706 have been informed that we will receive the report of the Dutch visitation to the 59<sup>th</sup> GA.

707  
708 From the PCK we received highlights (through and translated by Prof Yoo), of both the 57<sup>th</sup> and  
709 58<sup>th</sup> GA. Some highlights of the 57<sup>th</sup> GA (2007) are:

- 710
- 711 • The Korean Theological Seminary (KTS), and the GA, has had to deal with a number of
  - 712 professors re: their teachings and their writings.
  - 713 • The Faculty of the KTS has been entrusted to translate the Westminster Confession, Larger
  - 714 and Shorter Catechisms into modern Korean.
  - 715 • The new Korean Bible Translation by the Korean Bible Society has been accepted as the
  - 716 pulpit Bible. This translation uses modern Korean. It does not replace the existing
  - 717 translation, which was revised more than 50 years ago, but both can be used side by side.
  - 718 • A report by the Senate of the KTS on the charismatic movement, especially on the Vineyard
  - 719 movement was accepted. The report strongly criticizes that movement, which emphasizes
  - 720 the charisma of healing.
  - 721 • The proposal that a minister who is suspended or dismissed by his Presbytery or by the GA,
  - 722 cannot work as a professor at the KTS, was accepted.

723  
724 Some of the highlights of the 58<sup>th</sup> GA are:

- 725
- 726 • The matter of baptism for the mentally handicapped is to be studied.



- 727 • Prof. Dr. Lee, Sung-koo was reinstated as a minister. This professor had been suspended in  
728 2006 because of his views of ethics in Amos. The GA also accepted his resignation as  
729 professor of Old Testament. Before the decision, Prof. Lee apologized for the fact that he  
730 had caused a long-term theological dispute, which was not edifying for the whole church.  
731 He pledged that he believes the old and New Testament to be the only Word of God and that  
732 he accepts the Westminster Standards as its summary.  
733

734 **Recommendations to Synod 2010:**

- 735
- 736 1. to continue the Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Presbyterian Church of  
737 Korea, under the adopted rules.
  - 738 2. to continue to discuss with the PCK, their relationship with the IRCK and the RCK, and with  
739 them to seek further insight into these two federations.
  - 740 3. to continue to work cooperatively with the RCNv and the FRCA in exercising our  
741 relationship in meaningful ways, such as by regular communication, by visiting the General  
742 Assembly of the PCK, and by meeting and interacting with their delegates at the ICRC.

743

744 **E. The Reformed Churches in Brazil.**

745

746 Synod 2007 decided to mandate the CRCA to continue the relationship of ecclesiastical  
747 fellowship with the RCB under the adopted rules, either directly or via the sending churches for  
748 mission in Brazil (Article 128, page 119 *Acts*).

749

750 Following Synod, the CRCA informed the RCB of the decision to continue ecclesiastical  
751 fellowship. Due to barriers of language and due to the heavy workload of the ministers and  
752 missionaries, contact with the RCB has been sporadic.

753

754 Via the church at Surrey, the CRCA received information concerning a Council (Synod) of the  
755 RCB in May of 2008. One of the main points was a decision to suspend for the time being the  
756 initial contact between the RCB and the IPB due to the disunity this issue had generated in the  
757 RCB and because of the lack of time, money and personnel to more thoroughly investigate the  
758 IPB. Also at the May 2008 Council, encouraging reports were heard concerning two existing  
759 churches which had recently embraced the Reformed faith and were now seeking entrance into  
760 the RCB. It was decided that one of these churches could be received as a sister church with  
761 entrance into the federation in 2010 while the other would be visited by the Church Visitors who  
762 would report to the next Council.

763

764 The CRCA sent a letter of greeting and encouragement to the Council which took place on  
765 October 13-16 of 2008. This letter also contained an official request for a copy of the Acts of the  
766 Councils/Synods of the RCB. The CRCA asked the Mission Board of the Church at Hamilton  
767 whether it would be able to represent the CRCA at this Council but due to other responsibilities  
768 they were not able to do so. Rev. C. Van Spronsen was planning to be present at this Council  
769 and agreed to represent the CRCA. In his subsequent report to the CRCA, he mentioned the  
770 following:  
771

- 772 1. At the present time, the RCB has only one broader ecclesiastical assembly, the Concilio.  
773 Each of the four churches, Greater Recife, Maragogi, Unai and Maceio send two  
774 delegates.
- 775 2. New at this Concilio was the presence of two delegates from the Igreja Biblica  
776 Reformada in Cabo Frio, in the state of Rio de Janeiro. This congregation has requested  
777 to become part of the RCB. Currently, it is accepted as a sister church of the RCB.
- 778 3. Another congregation in Esperanca, Paraiba was accepted as a sister church.
- 779 4. A third congregation in Fortaleza, Ceara has asked the Reformed Church in greater  
780 Recife to take them under supervision.
- 781 5. Radio broadcasts, internet presence, symposia and the activities of the Reading Room in  
782 Recife have contributed to these increased contacts.
- 783 6. The RCB maintain sister church relations with the Can. Ref. Churches, the RCN and is in  
784 the process of applying to join the ICRC.
- 785 7. The RCB suffers from a lack of manpower and financial resources. It appears difficult  
786 for various committees appointed by previous Synods to complete their work.
- 787 8. The Canadian missionaries contribute greatly to further training and teaching.
- 788 9. There is, as yet, no clear direction in regard to theological training; the need for it,  
789 however, is well appreciated.
- 790 10. The church at Colombo (Curitiba) is struggling; it has decreased in size and is need of a  
791 pastor; Synod asked the church of Maragogi to "lend" Pastor Thyago for a short term; the  
792 Canadian missionaries will also be asked to make visits to Colombo.
- 793 11. A considerable amount of time is spent in dealing with church discipline; the churches  
794 discipline members at a younger age than is customary among the Can. Ref. Churches.
- 795 12. Official contacts with IPB have been put on hold for the present time.
- 796 13. While there are struggles, there is also much progress and growth in the RCB.
- 797

798 Rev. VanSpronsen ended his report by saying that "one experiences a deep devotion and great  
799 thankfulness to the Lord, combined with a sincere desire to remain faithful to the Scriptures and  
800 the Confessions.

801  
802 In November of 2008 a letter was received from the RCB asking the Canadian Reformed  
803 Churches to sponsor them in their application to join the ICRC. The CRCA decided to agree to  
804 this request. The membership application of the RCB was received by the 2009 assembly of the  
805 ICRC.

806  
807 **Recommendations:**

- 808  
809 1. To express gratitude for the continued faithfulness and growth of the RCB.  
810 2. To continue the relation of ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCB under the adopted rules.

811  
812  
813  
814  
815  
816

817 **F. The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN).**

818

819 Synod Smithers 2007 decided (Article 133, pages 137-138 of the *Acts*):

820

821 1. To thank the committee for the work done with respect to the RCN.

822 2. To continue the Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the RCN under the adopted  
823 rules.

824 3. That the CRCA end the discussion about the proportion of psalms and hymns by expressing  
825 the concern that the vast multiplication of hymns does nothing to advance to the priority of  
826 psalm singing and places at risk this principle.

827 3.1. To instruct the CRCA to pay attention to the content of the hymns.

828 4. That the CRCA has fulfilled its mandate in continuing the discussion with the RCN  
829 regarding the new Marriage Form and in reporting to the churches on this and, though  
830 questions remain, this discussion is concluded.

831 5. That the CRCA has fulfilled its mandate with respect to studying the results of the  
832 deputyship “Fourth Commandment and Sunday” and reporting to the churches but should  
833 continue to monitor developments to see how the decisions about the fourth commandment  
834 work out in practice.

835 6. To mandate the CRCA to discuss with the Deputies BBK the new approach to divorce in  
836 order to get answers to the hermeneutical concerns highlighted by the committee with  
837 respect to “the-style-of-the-kingdom” approach to divorce and remarriage. Attention should  
838 also be paid to the suggested revision of the Church Order about discipline in cases of  
839 divorce and remarriage.

840 7. To encourage the committee to monitor the situation in the RCN, keeping in mind the  
841 concerns expressed by the churches about the situation in the RCN.

842 8. To instruct the CRCA to hold joint meetings at least every two years with the Deputies of  
843 the BBK to discuss pro-actively matters of mutual concern and interact with requests for  
844 advice or feedback about issues coming before Synods as much as possible in keeping with  
845 Rule 1 of Ecclesiastical Fellowship.

846 9. To express appreciation for the way the RCN has sought to engage the GKH in unity talks  
847 by means of the appeal from Synod Amersfoort and to encourage them to continue to reach  
848 out to the GKH.

849

850 **Communication**

851

852 On June 26, 2007, the newly appointed member of the CRCA, the Rev. James Visscher, sent an  
853 email to the Deputies of the RCN on behalf of the Rev. Jack Moesker, br. John Pruijm and  
854 himself. (These three brothers, as a sub-committee of the CRCA, had been charged with dealing  
855 with the RCN.) In that email he made some suggestions and posed a number of questions that  
856 would hopefully serve to improve communications between the CRCA, through its sub-  
857 committee, and the RCN Deputies.

858

859 On Sept. 6, 2007, the RCN Deputies responded giving various answers and suggestions of their  
860 own. They pointed out too that there would be a Synod of the RCN in 2008 and that the dates  
861 May 27 - 31 had been set aside as “Foreigners Week.” During that “Week” there would be ample  
862 opportunity to sit down and discuss matters together.

863 **Synod Zwolle 2008**

864

865 Prior to Synod Zwolle the CRCA received various documents, as well as a web address where all  
866 of the documents relating to Synod Zwolle could be found. Most of these documents were in the  
867 Dutch language, although a few reports had been translated into English.

868

869 The reports that had been translated into English were “Men and Women in the Church,” dealing  
870 especially with the role of women in the church and “Church Unity,” dealing with the matter of  
871 confessional subscription between the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (also known by the  
872 initials - RCN) and the Netherlands Reformed Churches (also known by the initials - NGK). The  
873 reason for singling out these two reports for translation into English is that both the Synod and  
874 the Deputies of the RCN wanted to hear the reactions of the foreign delegates to these reports.

875

876 The CRCA delegated the Revs. Jack Moesker and James Visscher to attend the General Synod of  
877 Zwolle. From May 27 - 31, 2008, they took part in the so-called “Foreigners Week.” This  
878 involved being lodged outside of the town of Steenwijk and being shuttled back and forth  
879 between there and Zwolle, a journey of almost an hour.

880

881 It should be mentioned that both prior to the 27<sup>th</sup> of May and after, we managed to meet together  
882 with delegates from the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, the Orthodox Presbyterian  
883 Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, the Reformed Church in New Zealand,  
884 the Presbyterian Church in Korea, the Free Church of Scotland, and the Free Church of Scotland  
885 (Continuing).

886

887 On Tuesday, May 27, 2008, the foreign delegates came together with the members of Synod and  
888 the deputies dealing with foreign churches. During the morning session the Reformed Churches  
889 of the Netherlands introduced themselves to the visiting delegates in terms of their history,  
890 statistics, activities, and struggles. They also gave an overview of their relations with different  
891 churches around the world.

892

893 After this the Dutch organization De Verre Naasten (Our Distant Neighbours) introduced its  
894 work. Finally, attention was directed to broadcasting as a tool to spread the gospel.

895

896 On Tuesday afternoon a closed session was held in which foreign delegates were urged to be  
897 frank and open about their evaluation of the two reports that had been translated into English. It  
898 would not be proper to reveal what precisely went on in this closed session except to say that a  
899 number of the brothers used the opportunity to speak in a very forthright manner.

900

901 The two reports just mentioned were also discussed rather bluntly at times during the next few  
902 days in the open sessions that were held. It should be noted too that a great deal of time was  
903 given to foreign delegates in order that they might introduce their respective churches. Also, an  
904 outing was organized to the Theological University in Kampen where we listened to a number of  
905 lectures. After that we went on a boat trip which served as a good venue for sightseeing and for  
906 any number of informal meetings. All in all, warm Dutch hospitality was very much in evidence  
907 during these days.

908

909 **ICRC Christchurch 2009**

910

911 Seeing that the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands sent two delegates (Rev. P.K. Meijer and  
912 Prof. K. Wezeman) to the International Conference of Reformed Churches meeting in  
913 Christchurch, New Zealand, Oct. 15 - 22, 2009, your delegates (Schouten, Vanderstoep, and  
914 Visscher) took the opportunity to meet several times with them.

915

916 Discussions took place about our proposed report to Synod Burlington 2010, about the  
917 instructions that we received from Synod Smithers 2007, as well as about developments in our  
918 respective churches.

919

920 **Comments**

921

922 While the idea of having a “Foreigners Week” at Synod Zwolle was in some ways a good idea, it  
923 is to be regretted that there was no real opportunity to speak together as Canadian and Dutch  
924 deputies. As a result, we were not able to discuss a number of pertinent matters with our Dutch  
925 counterparts. A further attempt will be made when we meet with them at the ICRC in  
926 Christchurch, New Zealand

927

928 Also disappointing was the fact that we received an opportunity to address only two matters on  
929 the agenda of Synod. Other matters could not be discussed due to scheduling, lack of translated  
930 materials, and other factors.

931

932 The first matter that we were invited to address at Synod Zwolle had to do with the role of  
933 women in the church. A synodical committee had written up a preliminary draft suggesting  
934 various approaches to this matter. This draft received a lot of comments from both the members  
935 of synod and the visiting delegates. While some were in favour, others questioned the underlying  
936 hermeneutics and what they considered the slanted nature of the report. They also expressed their  
937 concerns about where this report and its recommendations would take the Reformed Churches of  
938 the Netherlands in the future.

939

940 The second report on confessional subscription in connection with the Netherlands Reformed  
941 Church (NRC, Dutch initials NGK) also attracted more than a little debate. The committee that  
942 prepared this report was divided into majority and minority. The majority was of the opinion that  
943 the RCN should move forward with the NRC seeing that there was a new openness towards  
944 confessional binding in those churches. The minority report, however, questioned this seeing that  
945 these same churches had decided already in principle to open all of the offices in the church to  
946 women.

947

948 By and large the foreign delegates expressed their support for the minority report and warned  
949 against the adoption of the majority report.

950

951 Some weeks after we departed, Synod Zwolle took up the matter of these two reports again. It  
952 decided to adopt most of the recommendations of the report on the role of men and women in the  
953 church and thus appointed a number of committees to study the matter further and to come with  
954 practical applications.

955  
956 As for the report on confessional subscription, Synod decided to proceed more in line with the  
957 minority report and charged the committee dealing with this matter to have further discussions  
958 with the Netherlands Reformed Church about subscription and women in office.

959  
960 **Evaluation**

961  
962 From the above it is clear that the input of foreign delegates did have some impact when it came  
963 to the matter of confessional subscription. Still, this is a matter that will need further monitoring  
964 and close study in the days to come.

965  
966 With respect to the report on the role of women in the church, it is hard to say what sort of an  
967 impact was made by the foreign delegates. At present all that we can do is wait and see what the  
968 committees dealing with this matter come up with. No doubt we should be prepared to discuss  
969 this matter further, if need be, in the future.

970  
971 What concerns us about both reports, however, is the increasingly large role that sociology  
972 appears to play. It seems as if undue weight and importance is being given to sociological  
973 theories, models, forms of inquiry and evaluations. This is a matter of concern since the Church  
974 is to be shaped and governed by the Word of God and not by the social sciences.

975  
976 **Other Matters**

977  
978 With respect to the matter of the new hymns, there is evidence that this controversy is dying  
979 down and that the RCN has adopted better procedures on how to evaluate existing hymns and  
980 how to incorporate them into the life of the church. Once the new song book is complete, we  
981 shall be in a better position to evaluate this matter.

982  
983 As for the matters relating to the Fourth Commandment and the divorce and remarriage, we did  
984 not receive an opportunity to speak about these items with the Dutch deputies at Synod Zwolle.

985  
986 In our meetings at Christchurch, however, the matters relating to our mandate were discussed  
987 again. In particular attention was paid to the key area of hermeneutics, namely on how we are to  
988 understand, interpret and apply the Scriptures. One of the suggestions that arose out of these  
989 discussions was that it would be very beneficial if a conference could be organized in which the  
990 professors at Hamilton and Kampen would come together to discuss current hermeneutical issues  
991 and concerns.

992  
993 It may also be pointed out here that Synod Smithers instructed the CRCA “to see how the  
994 decisions about the fourth commandment *work out in practice*” (italics ours - CRCA). On the  
995 surface this seems to be a reasonable demand; however, in reality it is an almost impossible  
996 demand to meet. How are we to discover what goes on “in practice” in a rather large church  
997 federation? It would take an extensive trip through the Netherlands, any number of surveys and  
998 interviews to discover just what is being done with the fourth commandment. And even then we  
999 would not have the complete picture. As a result, we would urge Synod Burlington to ensure that

1000 our future mandate restricts itself to actual decisions (which we can evaluate) rather than to  
1001 practices (which are almost impossible for us to evaluate).

1002  
1003 A new and different matter that has arisen since Synod Smithers has to do with men who are  
1004 connected with the Theological University. First, we read about the controversial remarks made  
1005 by Dr. G. Harinck in the Dutch press. Second, we were confronted with the appointment of Dr.  
1006 S. Paas, an appointment that proved to be a lightning rod for more criticism directed at the TU.

1007  
1008 With regard to the comments of Dr. G. Harinck, we expressed disappointment at Synod Zwolle  
1009 that those who are in a position of oversight did not call on him to retract his remarks. A fudged  
1010 apology is no substitute for a clear retraction.

1011  
1012 With regard to the appointment of Dr. S. Paas, we are disappointed that a theological seminary  
1013 that professes to be solidly biblical and reformed would appoint as a teacher someone who writes  
1014 and defends a dissertation that makes so many concessions to liberal scholarship.

1015  
1016 **Recommendations**

1017  
1018 The CRCA **recommends** that Synod Burlington 2010 decide:

- 1019
- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 1020 | 1. To continue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCN.                       |
| 1021 | 2. To monitor developments regarding the quality or contents of new hymns.                       |
| 1022 | 3. To give priority to the matter of biblical hermeneutics, discussing this with deputies of the |
| 1023 | RCN and through them with the appropriate committees of synod.                                   |
| 1024 | 4. To seek ways to organize a conferences on hermeneutics which would involve professors         |
| 1025 | currently teaching at Hamilton, Kampen and perhaps elsewhere.                                    |
| 1026 | 5. To pay special attention to the upcoming report on the role of women in the church and to     |
| 1027 | discussions currently taking place between the RCN and the Netherlands Reformed                  |
| 1028 | Churches.  |
| 1029 | 6. To express disappointment that:   |
| 1030 | a. Synod Zwolle of the RCN did not demand that one of the professors teaching at the             |
| 1031 | Theological University in the Kampen retract his controversial remarks.                          |
| 1032 | b. The Theological University did not exercise greater care in the case of a more recent         |
| 1033 | appointment to its faculty.  |

1034  
1035 **G. The Reformed Churches in New Zealand.**

1036  
1037 Synod 2007 decided the following (Article 66, p.35, of the *Acts*):

- 1038
- 1039 1. To recognize that the RCNZ is a faithful church of God and accept the invitation of the  
1040 RCNZ to enter into a Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship according to the  
1041 established rules.
  - 1042 2. To write a letter addressed to the next synod of the RCNZ communicating this decision  
1043 and including the request that the RCNZ take note of and take seriously the concerns of  
1044 the FRCA regarding the CRCAustralia.

1045 3. To send a delegate (delegation) to the next synod of the RCNZ in order to present this  
1046 letter to formalize relations and visit the churches.

1047

1048 Subsequent to Synod 2007, the CRCA wrote a letter addressed to the 26<sup>th</sup> Synod of the Reformed  
1049 Churches in New Zealand communicating the decision of Synod Smithers to enter into a  
1050 relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship. This letter included a request that the RCNZ take note  
1051 of and take seriously the concerns of the FRCA regarding the CRCAustralia. What follows is a  
1052 quotation from the letter of the CRCA to the RCNA Synod:

1053

1054 "In its deliberations Synod Smithers took note of the concern of the Free Reformed  
1055 Churches of Australia about the relationship of the RCNZ with the Christian Reformed  
1056 Church of Australia. Since this church body has a relationship of ecclesiastical  
1057 fellowship with the Christian Reformed Church of North America, we share the concern  
1058 of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia."

1059

1060 "As we live in North America, we are close witnesses of the Christian Reformed  
1061 Churches and we believe that their current decline into forms of theological liberalism is  
1062 a danger not only for their own churches but also for their sister churches such as the  
1063 CRC Australia. Already, approximately 100 congregations have seceded from the  
1064 Christian Reformed Churches of North America because of its loss of confessional  
1065 integrity as manifested, for example, in giving permission and encouragement to ordain  
1066 women in all the offices of the church. We trust that you will continue to watch this  
1067 situation closely."

1068

1069 The CRCA also sent one delegate (B. Wielenga) to the 26<sup>th</sup> Synod of the RCNZ, held in  
1070 Hastings. The delegate stayed for the duration of the synod, from September 6 to September 11,  
1071 2008, attending all the sessions of Synod, being seated as a fraternal delegate. In the course of  
1072 his address, our delegate conveyed brotherly greetings, reiterated the request of Synod Smithers  
1073 to take note of and take seriously the concerns of the FRCA regarding the CRCAustralia, and  
1074 read and delivered the letter communicating the decision of Synod Smithers to enter into a  
1075 relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the RCNZ.

1076

1077 Regarding the relationship with the CRCAustralia, Synod Hastings decided the following:

1078

- 1079 1. To continue our sister-church relationship with the CRCA.
- 1080 2. To continue the meetings between the CER [Committee for Ecumenical Relations] of the  
1081 CRCA and our IRC [Interchurch Relations Committee].
- 1082 3. To send two delegates to the next synod of the CRCA.

1083

1084 Synod also decided:

1085

1086 That Synod convey to the CRCA through the Interchurch Relations Committee that our  
1087 sister-church relationship continues under strain due to their approval of the practice of  
1088 ordaining women to the office of deacon.

1089

1090 Synod Hastings decided the following regarding relations with the FRCA:



- 1091 1. To acknowledge with sadness that we have been unable to make progress towards a sister  
1092 church relationship with the FRCA.  
1093 2. To inform the FRCA that we cannot accept that our sister-church relationship with the  
1094 CRCA should be an impediment to the FRCA accepting our offer.  
1095 3. To continue our offer of sister-church relations with the FRCA.  
1096 4. To convey these decisions to the FRCA by correspondence.  
1097 5. To send a delegate to the next synod of the FRCA.  
1098

1099 In connection with the RCNZ's relationship with the CRCAustralia, it is becoming evident that  
1100 the confidence of the RCNZ in the theological education given at the Reformed Theological  
1101 College in Geelong is not as strong as it once was. The seminary is jointly supported by the  
1102 CRCAustralia and the RCNZ. In regard to theological education, Synod Hastings decided the  
1103 following:  
1104

- 1105 1. To appoint two deputies (and an alternate) charged with supervising all RCNZ ministerial  
1106 students wherever they are studying.  
1107 2. That the deputies interview each student annually where this is geographically possible.  
1108 3. That both (or one) of the deputies shall visit the RTC [Reformed Theological College]  
1109 annually to:  
1110 a. meet with RCNZ students;  
1111 b. discuss curriculum and student progress with the RTC faculty;  
1112 c. meet with the CRCA deputies to discuss Vicariate placements.  
1113 4. That the deputies continue their responsibility for arranging Vicariate placements.  
1114 5. That the Churches continue to support the RTC financially by a recommended  
1115 contribution of \$63,000 p.a. in the inter-synodical period.  
1116 6. That the deputies be instructed to conduct a review of the requirements of the RCNZ for  
1117 theological education for the future (with authority to co-opt others to assist in this  
1118 review) and report back to the next synod with recommendations. This review is to  
1119 cover:  
1120 a. The content and type of theological education (i.e. practical/equipping, or  
1121 academic/theological, or what combination of both and how that combination  
1122 should be weighted)  
1123 b. The delivery of this education (e.g. through the RTC, MARS, or to be based more  
1124 in NZ)  
1125

1126 In light of this, the CANRC might more explicitly offer the services of the Theological College  
1127 in Hamilton as a possible alternative for the theological education of the RCNZ students for the  
1128 ministry.  
1129

1130 During the time our delegate was in New Zealand, there was opportunity to visit only the  
1131 Reformed Church in Hastings. During the ICRC meeting in Christchurch, October 2009,  
1132 delegates to that conference were able to visit more churches.  
1133

1134 Synod Hastings decided the following regarding the relation with the CANRC:  
1135

- 1136 1. To express our appreciation to the CANRC for their acceptance of our invitation to enter  
1137 a sister church relationship with them.  
1138 2. To continue to work closely with the CANRC in connection with the mission work in  
1139 PNG.  
1140 3. To send a delegate to the next synod of the CANRC.  
1141

1142 **Recommendations to Synod 2010:**  
1143

- |   |
|---|
| <p>1144 1. to continue the relation of ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCNZ under the adopted<br/>1145 rules.<br/>1146 2. to continue to monitor the relation between the RCNZ and the CRCAustralia and<br/>1147 encourage the RCNZ to remain vigilant re developments of concern in the CRCAustralia.<br/>1148 3. to encourage the RCNZ to keep seeking ways to grow closer towards the FRCA.<br/>1149 4. to invite the RCNZ to become better acquainted with the Theological College in<br/>1150 Hamilton.</p> |
|---|

1151  
1152  
1153 **II. The Indonesian Churches – The CRCI and the RCI**  
1154

1155 **Background**  
1156

1157 The need to establish contact and sister relations with faithful churches in Indonesia becomes  
1158 more urgent as the mission work of the Canadian Reformed Church of Smithville has borne fruit.  
1159 Rev. Edwer Dethan, the missionary in Kupang, the East Timor area of Indonesia, has  
1160 experienced God's blessings upon his work. One church (Dalam Tuak) has been established and  
1161 a number of other preaching point as are ready to become instituted congregation. However,  
1162 these must join a federation. There are two faithful federations in this area, the CRCI and the  
1163 RCI. The RCN has recognized both as sister churches, while the FRCA has extended  
1164 ecclesiastical fellowship to the RCI and has declared the CRCI to be a faithful Church of Jesus  
1165 Christ. A call has gone out to these two federations to unite. The proximity of the churches  
1166 would allow for each federation to become a separate classis or Regional Synod in a new  
1167 federation. Work has begun to realize this unity. Also, it would seem contrary to these efforts to  
1168 advise the newly-instituted Church in Dalam Tuak to organize yet another federation or to  
1169 recommend and so favour one of the existing ones, thereby torpedoing the unifying efforts  
1170 underway.

1171  
1172 **Mandate**  
1173

1174 In regard to the **CRCI**, Synod 2007 gave the CRCA the following mandate:  
1175

- 1176 1. To consult with all sister churches as per Rule #3 bearing in mind Considerations 4.24.4 and  
1177 Recommendation 5.2.  
1178 2. To seek clarity into the situation of the CRCI using also information solicited from the  
1179 churches at Smithville and Edmonton Immanuel.  
1180 3. To promote efforts towards federative unity with the CRCI.  
1181 4. To encourage the CRCI to cooperate with the FRCA, RCN and RCI in the establishment of

1182 joint theological training.

1183

1184 In regard to the **RCI**, Synod 2007 gave this mandate:

1185

1186 1. To delay accepting the invitation from the RCI to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship until all  
1187 the necessary information is available to make a decision concerning ecclesiastical  
1188 fellowship with the CRCI

1189 2. To mandate the CRCA to encourage the RCI to:

1190 a. Promote efforts toward federative unity with the CRCI.

1191 b. Cooperate with the CRCI in joint theological training.

1192

1193 **Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia (Gereja Gereja Reformasis**  
1194 **Calvinis di Indonesia NTT): CRCI**

1195

1196 **Please note: Some further information regarding Communications and Actions, as well as**  
1197 **an Evaluation and Recommendations in regard to the CRCI will follow in a Supplementary**  
1198 **Report**

1199

1200 **Communication and Actions**

1201

1202 • The CRCA sent a letter on June 26, 2007 to inform the CRCI of the decisions of Synod  
1203 Smithers 2007. A copy of the unofficial Acts of this synod was attached.

1204 • A letter was sent on Feb. 18, 2008 to the Deputies of the Free Reformed Churches of  
1205 Australia for Relations with Churches Abroad seeking information about their contact with  
1206 the CRCI.

1207 • A letter was sent to the Committee for Contact with Churches Abroad of the CRCI on Feb.  
1208 18, 2008, seeking further information about their churches. Mention was made of their  
1209 recent synod, which had been attended by official delegates of the RCN and also by Rev. A.  
1210 Souman who had been authorized to bring greetings on behalf of the CRCA.

1211 • Rev. Yonson Dethan emailed us on Feb. 28, 2008, to inform us he had received our  
1212 communication but had not yet been able to convene a meeting because of the weather. He  
1213 inquired about possibly convening an international synod with our federation once the CRCI  
1214 had been able to have a synod with the RCI

1215 • In January, 2009, Rev. A. Souman shared his report on his attendance at Synod Kupang  
1216 2008. A number of appendices were attached.

1217 • The Revs. E. Dethan and A. Souman met with the CRCA in January, 2009. They shared  
1218 their insights on the mission work on East Timor and spoke of the urgency to provide a  
1219 federative home for the newly-established congregation of Dalam Tuak and others that may  
1220 soon follow.

1221 • An email was received from Rev. Yonson Dethan on May 14, 2009 via the secretary of the  
1222 ICRC, informing us of the sudden death of his colleague and friend Yahya Teti.

1223 • Delegates of the CRCA met with the Mission Board of Smithville on Sept. 9, 2009.

1224 • Rev. A. Souman submitted a report on his private visit to the Kupang area and visits with the  
1225 Revs. E and Y Dethan as well as with Rev. Madah Bida of the GGRI in September 2009.

- 1226 • The delegates to the ICRC Conference in Christchurch NZ were able to carry out discussions  
1227 with Rev. Yonson Dethan.  
1228  
1229

1230 **Reformed Churches in Indonesia - NTT (Gereja Gereja Reformasi di**  
1231 **Indonesia NTT): RCI**

1232  
1233 **Please note: Some further information regarding Communications and Actions, as well as**  
1234 **an Evaluation and Recommendations in regard to the RCI will follow in a Supplementary**  
1235 **Report.**  
1236

1237 **Communications and Actions**  
1238

- 1239 • A letter was sent to this federation on June 26, 2008, to inform the RCI of the decisions of  
1240 Synod Smithers 2007. The unofficial Acts of this synod were attached.
- 1241 • A request for further information on the relationship between the RCI and the CRCI and the  
1242 theological training issue was sent on Feb. 18, 2008.
- 1243 • A response was received on Nov. 6, 2008, in which information was provided about the  
1244 federation, its theological training in on Sumba, its role in seeking to bring unity in the CRCI  
1245 as well as between the RCI and the CRCI were provided. It also contained the request for  
1246 strengthening the bond with our churches through visits, seeking assistance through lecturers  
1247 and financing for its theological training, and renewing its desire for a sister church  
1248 relationship.
- 1249 • An email was received from the federation on Sept.14, 2009 to inquire about our findings  
1250 and recommendation to our upcoming synod.
- 1251 • response was sent on Oct.1, 2009 to propose the delegates meet at the ICRC conference in  
1252 Christchurch, NZ.
- 1253 • The RCI extended an invitation to the CRCA to send an official delegate to its Synod in  
1254 2008. Since there is no official relationship between our federations, our committee could not  
1255 honour this request.
- 1256 • An email was received on Aug, 2009 asking what decisions the CRCA proposed to follow in  
1257 its recommendations to Synod.
- 1258 • A reply was sent that our delegates hoped to meet and discuss matters at the ICRC  
1259 conference in Christchurch, NZ. There a meeting took place with Rev. Umbu Pariamalinya.
- 1260 • A letter was sent to Rev. Pila Njuka on October 24, 2009 requesting information about  
1261 contact between the CRCI and the RCI and about possible cooperation in theological  
1262 education between the RCI and the CRCI. The main point of the letter was to determine  
1263 whether the RCI and the CRCI had acted on suggestions from the CRCA and from brothers  
1264 in the CANRC about how to work for greater unity between the two federations in Indonesia.
- 1265 • On November 7, 2009, a letter was received from the Deputies for Relations with Churches  
1266 Abroad of the RCI. In it, they gave information about how the RCI has worked to promote  
1267 unity between the CRCI and the GGRM (which includes reconciliation between Rev.  
1268 Yonson Dethan and Rev. Eli Fangidae. So far, these efforts have not met with success. They  
1269 also reported that the deputies of the RCI spoke at the CRCI Synod in 2007 and openly  
1270 invited these churches to join the RCI on the grounds that their respective churches have the

1271 same confessions and church order and live in the same province. The RCI feels that the  
1272 CRCI should join their federation rather than vice versa because the RCI is registered and  
1273 acknowledged by the government whereas the the CRCI is not and likely won't be in the near  
1274 future. As of the present, the RCI has not received any response from the CRCI or even an  
1275 acknowledgment of its proposal. The deputies also report that a special Synod was called in  
1276 the CRCI for August 12 of 2009 to deal with the problem between Rev. Fangidae and Rev.  
1277 Yonson. Delegates of the RCI were also invited to be present and did send a delegation.  
1278 Unfortunately, while Rev. Fangidae was present, Rev. Yonson did not appear. Because  
1279 there were not enough delegates to convene a Synod, the delegates formed a team to meet  
1280 with Rev. Yonson. However, Rev. Yonson did not welcome this team. The RCI has  
1281 decided to once more attempt sending a team to Rev. Yonson in the beginning of 2010. This  
1282 visit will be important for the RCI since at its Synod in August of 2010, a decision will be  
1283 made whether or not to accept the GGRM and the CRCI as sister churches or to reject one or  
1284 both of them. The RCI believes the problems between the GGRM and the CRCI are not  
1285 doctrinal but arise out of the personal conflict between Rev. Fangidae and Rev. Yonson.  
1286 The RCI believes that unification talks with the CRCI can proceed only when these two  
1287 individuals and their church federations are reconciled. In short, the RCI is convinced that it  
1288 has done all it could to promote unity between itself and the CRCI. The deputies of the RCI  
1289 also inform the CRCA that cooperation in theological education between the RCI and the  
1290 CRCI should be possible. Ministers of the CRCI (including Rev. Yonson) were in fact  
1291 appointed to the Board of the College in Sumba by Synod 2001 of the RCI. According to the  
1292 RCI, the CRCI members of the Board withdrew only when Rev. Yonson was not elected  
1293 chairman (the RCI believes the chairman should be from the RCI since the College belongs  
1294 to the RCI).

- 1295 • In its letter of November 7, 2009, the deputies of the RCI state that they do not believe it  
1296 would be right for the CANRC to withhold recognition of their churches until unity is  
1297 achieved with the CRCI. They also express the belief that it would be proper for churches  
1298 established through the mission work of Smithville to join the RCI since they have been in  
1299 existence the longest and because the churches of the CRCI are in some disarray.

### 1301 III. **Churches not in ecclesiastical fellowship.**

1302  
1303 A. **The Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (PCEA).** Synod 2007 decided to not  
1304 enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with the PCEA. This decision was communicated by the  
1305 CRCA in June of 2007. A reply was received on July 31, 2007 acknowledging receipt of our  
1306 letter. There has been no further communication with this federation of churches.

1307  
1308 B. **The Independent Reformed Church in Korea (IRCK).** Synod 2007 decided to not  
1309 enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with these churches. This decision was communicated by the  
1310 CRCA to the IRCK in June of 2007. There has been no further communication with these  
1311 churches until delegates of the CRCA met with Rev. Heon Soo Kim during the ICRC  
1312 Conference in October, 2009. From our discussion with him and from his presentation to the  
1313 ICRC, a number of important points became evident. One of the concerns about the IRCK in the  
1314 past had been its episcopal form of church government. However, in August of 2009, the ICRK  
1315 held a General Synod to revise the constitution's episcopal governance structures. We also  
1316 learned that elders have been ordained in their various congregations. The IRCK gives every

1317 evidence of being a confessionally-grounded and self-consciously Reformed denomination.  
1318 They have adopted the Three Forms of Unity and the Church Order of Dordt. They celebrate the  
1319 Lord's Supper between 4 and 6 times per year and exercise care in oversight of the Table.  
1320 Catechetical preaching during the second worship service is the norm. Members of the IRCK  
1321 have translated a large amount of Reformed literature used among the CANRC into Korean. The  
1322 IRCK are concerned about false ecumenism (especially in view of the fact that the 10th  
1323 Assembly of the World Council of Churches will be held in Korea in 2013). At the 2009 ICRC  
1324 Conference, the IRCK was received as a member church, having been sponsored by the Christian  
1325 Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands -  
1326 Liberated.

1327

1328 **Recommendation to Synod 2010:**

1329

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|------|----|---|
| 1330 | 1. | To recognize the IRCK as faithful churches of the Lord.                         |
| 1331 |    |   |
| 1332 | 2. | To mandate the CRCA to continue contact with the IRCK with a view to making a   |
| 1333 |    | recommendation regarding ecclesiastical fellowship to Synod 2013.               |
| 1334 |    |   |
| 1335 | 2. | To mandate the CRCA to discuss the matter of the IRCK with the PCK and with the |
| 1336 |    | RCK.  |

1337

1338 **C. The Reformed Churches in Korea (RCK)**

1339

1340 • The CRCA received a letter dated July 17, 2009, containing extensive information about this  
1341 federation of churches along with an official request for ecclesiastical fellowship with  
1342 CANRC. From this letter, the following information can be highlighted:

1343

- 1344 • This is a very young federation of churches established in 2008. The ministers and  
1345 members have their background in various presbyterian denominations in Korea  
1346 which were deemed to be neglectful of confession truth.
- 1347 • The federation consists of five congregations and a total of 200 members.
- 1348 • The federation has adopted the Three Forms of Unity and the Dort Church Order.
- 1349 • The federation has a complete Psalter set to Genevan melodies.
- 1350 • The federation has translated the liturgical forms used by the CANRC and has  
1351 adopted them for their own use.
- 1352 • Several ministers of the CANRC have visited congregations of the RCK.

1353

1354 • On October 7, 2009, the CRCA sent a letter or reply to the RCK indicating our gratitude for  
1355 its commitment to the Reformed faith. At the same time, the CRCA indicated that it could  
1356 not at this time recommend ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCK for the following reasons:

1357

- 1358 • This federation is very new and we need to learn more about these churches.
- 1359 • We have a sister church relationship with the Presbyterian Church of Korea and we  
1360 need to discuss the RCK with the PCK.

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- It is not clear to the CRCA why the RCK churches do not work with the Independent Reformed Churches of Korea.
  - In our October 7, 2009, letter to the RCK, we invited them to further dialogue with us. On October 17, 2009, we received another extensive letter from the RCK answering the questions posed by the CRCA in its letter of October 7, 2009. The following can be highlighted:
    - Ministers of the RCK come from various Presbyterian churches in Korea (there are over 100 Presbyterian denominations in Korea). These men were united by a common concern about a perceived deformation among the Korean Presbyterian churches and had a desire to build up a "true reformed church." In 2002, they established a group to study the Reformed Confessions and Church Order. They frequently invited Dr. S.G. Hur to give lectures to them regarding Reformed faith and life. In 2004, they came to the decision to establish a new church federation. They felt that they could not join any of the existing churches without compromising their Reformed commitments.
    - The RCK has adopted the Three Forms of Unity and the Church Order of Dort.
    - The RCK has a translated version of the Book of Praise of the CANRC.
    - The RCK began with two congregations but has grown to five and is currently in the process of receiving a sixth congregation.
    - The RCK feels that there is some creeping deformation in the PCK of which they provided several examples such as pulpit exchanges between PCK ministers and men who serve liberal churches.
    - The RCK feels that it cannot join the IRCK due to hierarchical elements in its church government and because the IRCK has as its main standard the Westminster Confession.

1389 **Recommendation**

1390

- 1391 1. To recognize the RCK as faithful churches of the Lord.
- 1392 2. To mandate the CRCA to continue the contact with the RCK with a view to making recommendations regarding ecclesiastical fellowship to Synod 2010.
- 1393
- 1394 2. To mandate the CRCA to discuss the matter of the RCK with the PCK and with the
- 1395 IRCK.

1396 **D. The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands - Restored (GKH).** Synod

1397 2007 decided not to accept the request of the GKH to acknowledge them as sister churches.

1398 Synod also decided to admonish the GKH in a brotherly manner for its unlawful separation. In

1399 accordance with the instruction of Synod, a letter of admonishment was sent in June 2007.

1400 Since that time, there has been no response from the GKH. The CRCA did receive a copy of a

1401 new publication entitled *Continua* (Vol. I, January 2009). This publication contains part 1 of a

1402 projected four part series critiquing the decision of Synod 2007 not to enter into ecclesiastical

1403 fellowship with the GKH.

1404 **IV. The International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC)**

1405

1406 **Mandate**

1407

1408 Synod Smithers decided

1409

- 1410 1. to continue the participation of the Canadian Reformed Churches in the ICRC and send two  
1411 voting delegates and two advisory members to New Zealand in 2009;
- 1412 2. to convey synod's decision on Art. IV.1.a. of the Constitution to the corresponding secretary  
1413 of the ICRC;
- 1414 3. to use the opportunities presented at the conference to interact with and gather information  
1415 from delegates of other churches;
- 1416 4. to submit a report of the 2009 ICRC to the next synod with an evaluation and  
1417 recommendations.

1418

1419 **Correspondence**

1420

1421 On August 26, 2008, the Corresponding Secretary of the ICRC, the Rev. Cornelius Van  
1422 Spronsen informed us that all submissions for the next meeting of the ICRC needed to be  
1423 received by the end of October 2008. He also informed us about the theme, speakers and  
1424 speeches for the Christchurch meeting of the ICRC in October of 2009. The theme will be "The  
1425 Vitality of the Reformed Faith." Dr. George W. Knight III will speak on "Facing the Challenge  
1426 of the Charismatic Movement" Dr. Nelson Kloosterman on "Facing the Challenge of  
1427 Individualism in Church Life," Mr. Frank Van Dalen on "Facing the Challenge of Islam" and  
1428 Dr. Mohan Chacko on "Facing these Challenges in the Asian-Pacific Context." Also, the Rev.  
1429 C. Van Spronsen informed us that the Conference would be seeking the input of the members on  
1430 the proposed amendment to the Constitution.

1431

1432 On January 7, 2009, the CRCA sent a letter to the Secretary of the ICRC proposing that a  
1433 Committee of Review be appointed and that it initiate a complete review of the ICRC. It also  
1434 supplied a long list of questions that might serve as the substance of this review.  
1435 The CRCA decided to make this proposal seeing that soon the ICRC will have been in existence  
1436 for 25 years and that this would mark an opportune time to assess as to whether or not the ICRC  
1437 has lived up to its potential.

1438

1439 On March 23, 2009, the Secretary wrote us confirming our sponsorship for member status of the  
1440 Igreja Reformadas do Brasil and the receipt of our letter regarding a Committee of Review.

1441

1442 On April 24, 2008, the ICRC sent us two protocols and a number of additional documents. The  
1443 first protocol had to do with assistance to persecuted Christians and the second with responding  
1444 to major disasters. It also sent a report of the Mission Committee for the 2009 Assembly, as well  
1445 as a proposed mandate for the ICRC Missions Committee.

1446

1447

1448

1449



1450 **Delegation**

1451

1452 At its meeting of March 28, 2009, the CRCA in view of its mandate from Synod Smithers  
1453 delegated to the ICRC in Christchurch, New Zealand: Mr. Henk Hoogstra, voting delegate; Rev.  
1454 Dr. James Visscher, voting delegate; Rev. Robert Schouten, advisor; Dr. John Vanderstoep,  
1455 advisor.

1456

1457 It will be apparent from the above list that the CRCA delegated four of its members to the ICRC  
1458 in Christchurch, New Zealand. In the past when the CRCA was charged to send a full delegation  
1459 to the ICRC it often sent two committee members and two professors from the Theological  
1460 College in Hamilton. This time the CRCA decided to take a different approach. It did so because  
1461 it learned from past experience that the ICRC is a very convenient venue for arranging all sorts  
1462 of meetings with sister churches from around the world. In order to maximize the value of these  
1463 meetings, it makes more sense to delegate those who are already on the CRCA and who are  
1464 familiar with the work of the Committee.

1465

1466 **The Christchurch Meeting of the ICRC**

1467

1468 One day before the departure of the delegation, Mr. H. Hoogstra was forced to cancel his  
1469 departure because he came down with pneumonia. It was decided that in his place, the Rev. R.  
1470 Schouten would become the second voting delegate.

1471

1472 Highlights from the Conference included the following:

1473

- 1474 • the presentation of four addresses that were well received and thoroughly discussed in both  
1475 group and plenary sessions;
- 1476 • the reception of five new member churches: the Reformed Churches of Brazil, the Heritage  
1477 Reformed Congregations, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of India, the Free Church of  
1478 Scotland (Continuing), the Independent Reformed Church in Korea, bringing the  
1479 membership to 30 churches.
- 1480 • the presentation and discussion of an extensive report on missions;
- 1481 • the decision to appoint a committee that will review all aspects of the Conference;
- 1482 • the opportunity to meet with delegates from sister churches around the world and with  
1483 delegates from churches applying for Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Canadian Reformed  
1484 Churches;
- 1485 • the clear manifestation of the catholic character of the Church of our Lord;
- 1486 • the exceedingly warm hospitality of the local members and churches of the Reformed  
1487 Churches in New Zealand.

1488

1489 At the previous meeting in Pretoria the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) was denied  
1490 membership in the ICRC because it had initiated legal action against the Free Church of  
1491 Scotland. Thankfully, it could be reported that the legal action had ceased and that the Free  
1492 Church of Scotland was not opposed to the membership application of the FCS - C. Thus this  
1493 church was received as a member.

1494

1495 An extensive report on the mission activities of the member churches was received and made  
1496 available. The CRCA will see to it that copies of this report circulate among our mission sending  
1497 and supporting churches. Due to the confidential nature of part of this report, it will not be made  
1498 available to the general public.

1499  
1500 Among the recommendations of the report was one that called for a meeting of the  
1501 representatives of the world mission agencies of the ICRC member churches to exchange  
1502 information and explore ways for possible multilateral cooperation. Another called for  
1503 information to be gathered on short-term theological teachers in order that member churches may  
1504 be made aware of existing resources and make use of them.

1505  
1506 The Missions report also highlighted the fact that regional conferences have taken place in  
1507 various parts of the world in between the meetings of the Conference. These regional  
1508 conferences have dealt with both mission and theological matters. One glaring fact that emerged  
1509 from this part of the report is that no regional conference has thus far been held in North  
1510 America. Europe, Africa and Asia have hosted them, but not our part of the globe.

1511  
1512 Another matter that had the attention of the Conference was a proposed amendment to the  
1513 Constitution. Your delegates were instructed by the Synod of Smithers to vote against the  
1514 amendment, and that is what we did. Other churches voted “yes” or “no” but some made their  
1515 vote into a “yes, but...”. This caused procedural difficulties and led the Conference to refer the  
1516 matter to the Review Committee for its further study and recommendation.

1517  
1518 With respect to the proposal to review the Conference, it was decided without opposition to  
1519 appoint a committee to examine all aspects with the expectation that this will lead to further  
1520 improvements in the usefulness of the Conference. The Review Committee is composed of eight  
1521 members from around the world. Dr. John Vanderstoep and the Rev. Dr. James Visscher were  
1522 appointed to the Committee and the latter was made its convener/chairman.

1523  
1524 The Conference also re-appointed the Rev. Cornelius VanSpronsen as the Corresponding  
1525 Secretary and Mr. Henk Berends as the Treasurer. Both are well-known in our federation. The  
1526 next meeting of the Conference has been set, the Lord willing, for September of 2013 in Cardiff,  
1527 Wales and will be hosted by the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales.

## 1528 1529 **Other Meetings**

1530  
1531 As mentioned above, one of the reasons for limiting the delegates this time to the members of the  
1532 CRCA had to do using the ICRC as an opportunity to meet separately with delegates from other  
1533 churches. To that end we met with delegates from the Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia,  
1534 the Reformed Churches of India, the Free Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland  
1535 (Continuing), the Independent Reformed Church in Korea, the Presbyterian Church in Korea,  
1536 and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. We would have liked to meet formally with  
1537 several more delegates and delegations but we ran out of time. We will recommend that more  
1538 time be made available for such gatherings at future meetings of the ICRC.

1539

1540 Informal meetings and sharing was done with delegates from almost all of the churches present.  
1541 Conversations during coffee breaks, meal times, noon walks, and daily bus rides resulted in a  
1542 great deal of information being gathered and in many new ties being established.  
1543

1544 **Evaluation**  
1545

1546 Your delegates to the ICRC may report that while the distances to be traveled were great, the  
1547 effort was more than worthwhile. The papers, discussions, deliberations and fellowship were  
1548 memorable. The benefits for the Canadian Reformed Churches as members of the ICRC are  
1549 increasing. Our churches are becoming more and more active in the area of missions and we are  
1550 convinced that the help, advice and assistance of other member churches will prove invaluable  
1551 for us in the future.  
1552

1553 If there is an obvious weakness with the ICRC, it is not so much with the Conference as a whole,  
1554 but with its North American members. To date we have had not even one regional conference,  
1555 while there is much to discuss from missions to theology, from diaconal aid to theological  
1556 education.  
1557

1558 The CRCA would also like to direct your attention to the fact that several of our sister churches  
1559 or Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship are not members of the ICRC. Both the Free Reformed  
1560 Churches in Australia and the Reformed Churches in Quebec have either pulled out or never  
1561 applied. We see this as a regrettable development and would urge Synod Burlington to go on  
1562 record as encouraging these churches to either re-join or join for the first time.

1563 At the same time we are convinced that both churches would benefit from membership, as well  
1564 as be a benefit to the other members. Seeing that the decisions taken are all advisory, that we are  
1565 small churches in a large world, that we need one another's prayers, counsel, and resources, that  
1566 the Conference serves as one more way to spread the Reformed faith, we should urge them to  
1567 seek membership.  
1568

1569 **Recommendations:** The CRCA recommends that Synod Burlington 2010 decides  
1570

- |  |
|--|
| 1571 1. to continue the membership of the Canadian Reformed Churches in the International<br>1572 Conference of Reformed Churches;<br>1573 2. to instruct the CRCA to send a delegation to the next Conference scheduled to meet, the Lord<br>1574 willing, in Cardiff, Wales in 2013;<br>1575 3. to seek ways to organize regular regional conferences of the ICRC members in North<br>1576 America, doing this, if possible, in co-operation with the North American Presbyterian and<br>1577 Reformed Council (NAPARC).<br>1578 4. to encourage both the Free Reformed Churches in Australia and the Reformed Churches in<br>1579 Quebec to apply for membership in the ICRC. |
|--|

1580  
1581  
1582  
1583  
1584  
1585

1586 V. **REVIEWING OUR APPROACH**

1587

1588 **Note:** The material below has been sent to the Committee for Contact with Churches in North  
1589 America (CCCNA) for their reflection and input. The CCCNA has indicated that it will send a  
1590 response to the CRCA. No later than February 1, 2010, the CRCA hopes to issue a  
1591 Supplemental Report which will incorporate the viewpoint and suggestions of the CCCNA.

1592

1593 A. **NEW NAMES**

1594

1595 The Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad would like to draw the attention of the  
1596 churches and General Synod Burlington 2010 to our existing approach to other churches and the  
1597 rules that govern these relations.

1598

1599 At present, and for some time now, our approach has been to weigh carefully all requests for an  
1600 official relationship with our churches, taking into account the confessional basis, history, church  
1601 government and practices of such a church. Once everything has been found to be in good order,  
1602 we officially declare such a church to be a true church of our Lord and offered it an official  
1603 relationship. We call this relationship “Ecclesiastical Fellowship” and the rules that govern it -  
1604 “Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship.” The precise content of these rules can be found at the  
1605 beginning of our report.

1606

1607 What this indicates is that as Canadian Reformed Churches we have one set of rules which we  
1608 apply to all churches. We have no preamble or introductory set of rules governing churches  
1609 whose request for “Ecclesiastical Fellowship,” we are still weighing. We have no designation or  
1610 rules governing churches that are fellow members with us in the International Conference of  
1611 Reformed Churches (ICRC) or in the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council  
1612 (NAPARC). Finally, we have no rules for dealing with churches in “Ecclesiastical Fellowship”  
1613 which are departing from Scripture and the Reformed confessions. Currently, our approach can  
1614 be characterized as “all or nothing.”

1615

1616 The CRCA has reflected often on this situation and now we come to the churches and to General  
1617 Synod Burlington 2010 with a request to re-examine and refine our current approach. As such we  
1618 would like you to weigh carefully our proposal, namely that in the future our relations with  
1619 churches abroad, and even in North America, be approached in the following manner:

1620

1621 **1. Contact Churches**

1622

1623 Whenever other churches approach us requesting a formal relationship, or whenever our  
1624 churches decide to approach another church requesting a relationship with them, such churches  
1625 should received a particular designation.

1626

1627 This means that when a General Synod of our churches has decided that there is sufficient  
1628 evidence to indicate that another church should be considered a candidate for the more

1629 permanent relationship called “Ecclesiastical Fellowship,” the said church will fall under the  
1630 designation - “Contact Church.”

1631  
1632 Under this designation the CRCA would be instructed to

- 1633 a) obtain additional information on this church;
- 1634 b) meet with representatives of this church at either a committee, synod or assembly level;
- 1635 c) prepare a report as soon as feasible, along with the required recommendations.

1636  
1637 The advantage of this approach and designation is that it indicates to an applying church, or to a  
1638 church that we are approaching, that we are serious in our efforts. In addition, it does not leave  
1639 them guessing and wondering about whether or not their request is being given due  
1640 consideration.

1641  
1642 Possible Churches Under This Designation

- 1643
- 1644 a) the Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia (CRCI);
- 1645 b) the Independent Reformed Church of Korea (IRCK);
- 1646 c) the Reformed Churches in Indonesia (RCI);
- 1647 d) the Reformed Church of Korea (RCK);
- 1648 e) the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA).

1649 (see: **Acts 2007 Synod Smithers** about these churches)

## 1650 1651 **2. Fellowship Churches**

1652  
1653 With respect to those churches with which we currently maintain a relationship of “Ecclesiastical  
1654 Fellowship,” we are making no proposal to alter the approach, name or rules. The current name  
1655 and rules would continue to apply.

1656  
1657 Churches Under This Designation

- 1658
- 1659 a) the Free Church of Scotland (FCS);
- 1660 b) the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA);
- 1661 c) the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa (FRCSA);
- 1662 d) the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC);\*
- 1663 e) the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK);
- 1664 f) the Reformed Churches of Brazil (RCB);
- 1665 g) the Reformed Churches of Quebec (RCQ, *was* ERQ);\*
- 1666 h) the Reformed Churches in New Zealand (RCNZ);
- 1667 i) the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN);
- 1668 j) the Reformed Churches in the United States (RCUS);\*
- 1669 k) the United Reformed Churches of North America (URCNA);\*

## 1670 1671 **3. Associate Churches**

1672  
1673 Currently we have, as mentioned above, only one category, one name and one set of rules that  
1674 we apply to other churches which we recognize. Nevertheless, the reality is that we have *de facto*

1675 or indirect relations with a host of other churches, namely those churches who are fellow  
1676 members with us in the ICRC and NAPARC.

1677  
1678 What is the status of these churches? What should we do with these churches? How do we regard  
1679 them and approach them?

1680  
1681 As such the CRCA is not proposing that all of these other churches be placed under the umbrella  
1682 of “Ecclesiastical Fellowship.” We have neither the manpower nor the time to expand our  
1683 mandate in such a way. In addition, we would also question the value of such an expansion.

1684  
1685 Yet such reticence on our part does not solve the problem as to the **status** of these churches and  
1686 our relations with them. Therefore, the CRCA would like to recommend that churches which  
1687 have been received as members of the ICRC and NAPARC be placed under the designation of  
1688 “Associate Churches.”

1689  
1690 This means that we would

- 1691
- 1692 a) recognize them as churches of our Lord Jesus Christ in view of their membership in the  
1693 International Conference of Reformed Churches and the North American Presbyterian  
1694 and Reformed Council;
  - 1695 b) express a willingness to work together with them in the areas of mission and theological  
1696 training, should this prove feasible and helpful;
  - 1697 c) greet and meet one another at the meetings and conferences of the ICRC and NAPARC.
- 1698

1699 Churches Under This Designation:

1700  
1701 **ICRC Churches:**

- 1702
- 1703 a) the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC);\*
  - 1704 b) the Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (CRCN);
  - 1705 c) the Confessing Reformed Church in Congo (CRCC);
  - 1706 d) the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales (EPCEW);
  - 1707 e) the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland (EPCI);
  - 1708 f) the Free Church of Scotland - Continuing (FCC);
  - 1709 g) the Free Church in Southern Africa (FCSA);
  - 1710 h) the Free Reformed Churches of North America (FRCNA);\*
  - 1711 i) the Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC);\*
  - 1712 j) the Independent Reformed Church in Korea (IRCK);
  - 1713 k) the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (PCEA);
  - 1714 l) the Presbyterian Free Church of India (PFCI);
  - 1715 m) the Reformed Churches in South Africa (RCSA);
  - 1716 n) the Reformed Churches of Spain (RCS);
  - 1717 o) the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland (RPCIre);
  - 1718 p) the Reformed Presbyterian Church of India (RPCInd);
  - 1719 q) the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North East India (RPCNEI)
- 1720

1721 **NAPARC Churches:**

1722

1723 a) the Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC);

1724 b) the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA).

1725

1726 \* also members churches in NAPARC.

1727

#### 1728 **4. Churches Raising Concern**

1729

1730 This in turn brings us to another matter, namely what do we do when a church, with which we  
1731 currently maintain “Ecclesiastical Fellowship,” makes decisions and adopts practices that we  
1732 deem to be placing it at odds with the Reformed faith? At present we have two largely unwritten  
1733 approaches. The first is that we may decide to keep the relationship going, all the while gritting  
1734 our teeth, so to speak, as well as praying and hoping for improvement. The second is to terminate  
1735 the relationship altogether and immediately cut off all contact. Needless to say, the first approach  
1736 is rather disquieting and the second is rather abrupt.

1737

1738 As a result of this, the CRCA would propose that consideration be given to a new designation  
1739 called “Churches Raising Concern.” This designation would come into force whenever a general  
1740 synod has serious concerns about whether or not the current relationship of “Ecclesiastical  
1741 Fellowship” should be continued, but is not yet prepared to sever all ties.

1742

1743 While not wanting to dictate in any way what the relationship with such a church would look  
1744 like, we can envisage a situation in which a general synod may advise the churches to deny  
1745 access to the pulpit to visiting ministers from that church, refuse to seat their delegates as  
1746 advisors to our synods, and declare that the practice of receiving attestations without reservation  
1747 is no longer in force

1748

#### 1749 **Recommendations:**

1750

- 1751 1. Churches being considered for Ecclesiastical Fellowship be designated as “Contact  
1752 Churches”;
- 1753 2. Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship with us be designated as “Fellowship Churches”;
- 1754 3. Churches that are fellow members with us in the ICRC and NAPARC be designated as  
1755 “Associate Churches”;
- 1756 4. Churches currently in Ecclesiastical Fellowship with us but who give reason for serious  
1757 concern may be placed under the designation “Churches Raising Concern”.

1758

#### 1759 **B. CONSOLIDATION and REORGANIZATION**

1760

1761 Your Committee would also like to address you on another matter. It has to do with the manner  
1762 in which we are currently regulating our relations with other churches, both in North America  
1763 and abroad.

1764

1765 If you take a step back in our history you would see that for many years all of the relations with  
1766 other churches whom we recognized as sister churches (now also called “Churches in

1767 Ecclesiastical Fellowship”) were channeled through the Committee of Relations with Churches  
1768 Abroad (at one time called “The Committee for Correspondence with Churches Abroad”).  
1769

1770 But then in 1998 Synod Fergus decided that a re-structuring was necessary and appointed a  
1771 Committee for Contact with Churches in the Americas (CCCA). It was made responsible for  
1772 contact with the Reformed Churches in Quebec, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the  
1773 Reformed Churches in the United States.  
1774

1775 The result of this re-structuring is that at present there are two committees dealing with other  
1776 churches. Both are to investigate requests for entering into Ecclesiastical Fellowship. Both are to  
1777 attend Assemblies, Synods and or meeting of other churches. Both write reports and  
1778 recommendations to general synod. (See: *Acts Fergus 1998*, Article 132).  
1779

1780 The result is that we have two committees doing the same thing. The only thing that sets us apart  
1781 is geography. Thus we currently have a situation of duplication.  
1782

1783 Yet not only do we have a situation of duplication, but we also have a situation of some  
1784 confusion. At the recent 2009 ICRC in Christchurch, New Zealand, the delegates from the  
1785 Canadian Reformed Churches (who were members of the Committee on Relations with  
1786 Churches Abroad) met with the delegates from almost all of the churches with which we have  
1787 Ecclesiastical Fellowship.  
1788

1789 But then among those delegates were also delegates from the OPC and the RCUS. Yet the  
1790 CRCA had never had any official meetings with these churches because our contact with these  
1791 churches flows through the CCCA.  
1792

1793 An interesting note to this is that delegates from the OPC and RCUS asked us, “who are we  
1794 supposed to be dealing with when it comes to inter-church relations, with the CCCA, with the  
1795 CRCA, or with both?” It has to be said that inter-church relations are complicated enough, but  
1796 that Synod Fergus 1998 by implementing a well-meant re-organization managed to make inter-  
1797 church relations even more complicated.  
1798

1799 But there are further complexities as well. There is the fact that the CRCA is based in the Fraser  
1800 Valley of BC, a part of the CCCA is based in MB and a part of the CCCA is based in ON. So not  
1801 only do we have two committees doing the same work, we also have two committees located in  
1802 three provinces doing the same work.  
1803

1804 Further to that we have two committees evaluating requests for ecclesiastical fellowship, sending  
1805 delegates to assemblies and synods, attending ecumenical gathers (such as the UCRC and  
1806 NAPARC), writing reports and holding countless meetings. In short, a great deal of time, money  
1807 and manpower is currently going into inter-church relations.  
1808

1809 All in all, it leaves us to wonder whether or not too much attention is being paid to this area of  
1810 our church life. At the same time there is the fact that so much attention leads to so many more  
1811 reports and these in turn consume a great deal of time at the broadest assemblies of our churches.  
1812



1813 **C. The Way Ahead**

1814

1815 After this lengthy preamble you will no doubt see where we are heading. The CRCA is of the  
1816 opinion that some sort of re-structuring is necessary.

1817

1818 Only what should this re-structuring look like? After considering a number of different scenarios  
1819 we would like you to consider the following

1820

1821 **Recommendation:**

1822

1823 1. That both the Committee for Contact with Churches in the Americas (CCCA) and the  
1824 Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) be disbanded;

1825

1826 2. That in their place one new committee be appointed called - **The Committee on Inter-**  
1827 **church Relations (CIR);**

1828

1829 3. That this new Committee be composed of **three sections:** a BC section, a Manitoba  
1830 section and an Ontario section;

1831

1832 4. That Synod designate a **convener** for each section;

1833

1834 5. That the current list of contact and fellowship churches be **re-aligned;**

1835

1836 6. That the **BC section** becomes responsible for the churches in Asia, namely:

1837

1838 a. Fellowship Churches:

1839

1840 The Free Reformed Churches in Australia

1841 The Presbyterian Church in Korea

1842 The Reformed Churches in New Zealand

1843

1844 b. Contact Churches:

1845

1846 The Independent Reformed Church in Korea

1847 The Reformed Churches in Indonesia - NTT

1848 The Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia NTT;

1849

1850 7. That the **Manitoba section** becomes responsible for the churches in the Americas,  
1851 namely:

1852

1853

1854

1855 a. Fellowship Churches:

1856

1857 The Orthodox Presbyterian Church

1858 The Reformed Churches in the US

- 1859 The Reformed Churches in Brazil  
 1860  
 1861 b. Contact Churches:  
 1862  
 1863 The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America;  
 1864  
 1865 8. That the **Ontario section** becomes responsible for the churches in Eastern Canada,  
 1866 Europe and Africa, namely:  
 1867  
 1868 a. Fellowship Churches:  
 1869  
 1870 The Free Church of Scotland  
 1871 The Free Reformed Churches in South Africa  
 1872 The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands  
 1873 The Reformed Churches in Quebec  
 1874  
 1875 b. Contact Churches:  
 1876  
 1877 The Free Church of Scotland - Continuing;  
 1878  
 1879 9. That each section consist of **four** members, two of which shall be ministers, for a total  
 1880 committee strength of **twelve** members;  
 1881  
 1882 10. That each section is required to share its minutes with the members of the other two  
 1883 sections;  
 1884  
 1885 11. That the Conveners of the three sections meeting together annually;  
 1886  
 1887 12. That the entire Committee meets together once every three years to finalize its report to  
 1888 the General Synod and to discuss matters of mutual concern;  
 1889  
 1890 13. That General Synod 2010 make the following appointments:  
 1891  
 1892 BC Section - H. Leyenhorst  
 1893 R. Schouten ©  
 1894 J. Vanderstoep  
 1895 W. Wielenga  
 1896  
 1897 MB Section - P.H. Holtvluwer  
 1898 J. Kuik  
 1899 A.J. Pol ©  
 1900 H. vanDelden  
 1901 ON Section - R. Faber ©  
 1902 E.Kampen  
 1903 J. Moesker  
 1904 C. Poppe

- 1905  
1906 14. That General Synod refrain from setting retirement dates for the members of the  
1907 CIR seeing that continuity is crucial and instead instruct the Committee to come  
1908 up with a retirement schedule as needed and that best suits the work of the Committee;  
1909  
1910 15. That when delegates are selected to attend the meetings of the International Conference  
1911 of Reformed Churches (ICRC) and the North American Presbyterian and Reformed  
1912 Council (NAPARC), as much as possible one delegate be chosen from each section;  
1913

1914 Comments:

1915  
1916 The above recommendation means that

- 1917  
1918 • the CIR will consist of 12 members and thereby bring about a reduction from the current  
1919 16 members (8 on the CRCA and 8 on the CCCA);  
1920 • both Fellowship and Contact will be dealing in the future with one committee;  
1921 • a proper line of communication has been established between all committee members  
1922 dealing with both fellowship and contact churches;  
1923 • when meetings of the ICRC and NAPARC take place all sections of the Committee will  
1924 be properly represented.  
1925

1926 **VI. Appendices**

1927  
1928 **A. Address of delegates of CRCA at Synod Zwolle:**

1929  
1930 Mr. Chairman, Members of General Synod Zwolle-Zuid 2008 of the Reformed Churches in The  
1931 Netherlands

1932  
1933 It is an honour to be in your midst today and to bring you greetings and best wishes from your  
1934 sister churches in Canada, namely the Canadian (American) Reformed Churches.

1935  
1936 Rev. J. Moesker and I, as delegates from the Canadian Reformed Churches, as well as Rev. F.  
1937 Dong, missionary among the Chinese for the Canadian Reformed Churches of Cloverdale and  
1938 Langley, would like to thank you for your hospitality and warm reception.  
1939

1940 Let me begin by saying that the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands continue to occupy a  
1941 unique place in the life and history of the Canadian Reformed Churches. Many of our older  
1942 members were born in this country and emigrated from here to North America. As well, many of  
1943 them were shaped by church life in the Netherlands, both before and after the Second World  
1944 War. Hence they hold dear the Reformed faith that was taught to them here in church, home and  
1945 school. There are these special ties of race, language, culture and confession between us.  
1946

1947 Yet time and geography does create changes. For in addition to an older generation that still  
1948 remembers its roots in Europe, there have arisen younger generations in Canada that no longer  
1949 consider themselves to be Dutch, but rather Canadian or American. The Dutch language is

1950 foreign to them, and many aspects of Dutch culture are strange to them as well. More and more  
1951 they identify with North American culture, are at home in it.

1952  
1953 At present there are 56 churches in our federation, with 53 of them being in Canada and 3 in the  
1954 USA. The total membership stands at 16,500. As well there are 70 ministers, including 6  
1955 professors of theology, 12 retired ministers, 4 foreign missionaries and 3 home missionaries.  
1956 Special mention should be made of the excellent work being done at the Theological College in  
1957 Hamilton, Ontario. The Canadian Reformed Churches have been richly blessed by this institution  
1958 which continues to educate men for the ministry of the gospel.

1959  
1960 In addition, there is also a network of Christian schools across our land. Currently the members  
1961 of our churches support 20 elementary schools, as well as 7 high schools and one teachers  
1962 college.

1963  
1964 Also, homes for the handicapped and the elderly have sprung up in different places.

1965  
1966 Obviously, in comparison to your numbers and structures, ours are small and insignificant.  
1967 Nevertheless, there is a sense among our people that the basic elements of church life are in  
1968 place, and that we have become well-established on the North American continent.

1969  
1970 Now, all of this represents a rich blessing from the Lord. Since the days of the institution of the  
1971 first Canadian Reformed Church in 1950, a lot has been accomplished. God has been good to us.  
1972 But along with blessing and privilege comes responsibility, with the result that already very early  
1973 on in our history, there existed a strong desire to bring the gospel to other parts of the world. Led  
1974 by the Church of Toronto, the churches in the east decided to do mission work in Irian Jaya,  
1975 Indonesia. Some time later the churches in the West decided to target the country of Brazil.

1976  
1977 In more recent times this missionary activity has increased with the result that currently the  
1978 Canadian Reformed Churches are also at work doing mission and/or mission aid work in China,  
1979 Haiti, Indonesia, Mexico, Papua, and Russia.

1980  
1981 There is also a growing attempt to make an impact on Canadian society. At present many of our  
1982 churches support the efforts of the Reformed Churches in Quebec to bring the gospel to the  
1983 French-speaking citizens of our land. In Ontario mission work is being done among the inner  
1984 city people of Hamilton, as well as among Portuguese immigrants in Toronto. Out west any  
1985 number of our churches support the work of outreach being done among the native people of  
1986 northern British Columbia and the Chinese people living in the greater Vancouver area and  
1987 elsewhere.

1988  
1989 Politically too, efforts are being made to let our light shine as members support the efforts of the  
1990 ECP Center, a political action group. In various places associations that promote reformed  
1991 political thinking and witnessing have been established and are hard at work.

1992  
1993 What this shows you is that in our churches there is an awareness that now that we have  
1994 established ourselves in this land called Canada, we must not allow ourselves to become smug  
1995 and complacent. A failure to keep on contending for the faith will result in our churches and

1996 members succumbing to the prevailing culture. In that connection these last decades have not  
1997 been good to Canada as a spirit of secularism, materialism and mindless hedonism has invaded  
1998 our society.

1999  
2000 At the same time the cause of the Christian faith has not fared well either. The older, more  
2001 established churches have long ago opted for a liberal approach to the Scriptures, lost their  
2002 distinctiveness and are in steady decline. Evangelical churches of many kinds have to some  
2003 extent stepped into the breach but their muddled approach when it comes to theology and  
2004 worship has not halted the decline. In short, our nation needs the Reformed faith.

2005  
2006 But enough said for the moment about us, we are here to speak with you on behalf of our  
2007 churches. In that respect it should be noted by you that our last synod, the General Synod of  
2008 Smithers 2007, has changed our committee as well as its mandate. With respect to our  
2009 Committee on Relations With Churches Abroad (CRCA), its membership has been revamped  
2010 and expanded. With respect to its mandate, in the past the CRCA was limited in its ability to  
2011 react to what the sister churches were doing. Official comment was restricted to the decisions  
2012 made by the major assemblies of the churches with which we maintain ecclesiastical fellowship.  
2013 Synod Smithers, however, has instructed the CRCA to become more pro-active. This means that  
2014 the CRCA is now charged to give its feedback, if necessary, not only to **decisions** made but also  
2015 to **reports** that have been commissioned by and submitted to the major assemblies of our sister  
2016 churches.

2017  
2018 In addition to revising our mandate, Synod Smithers has also instructed us to acknowledge with  
2019 respect to your churches that certain matters that were previously of some concern to us have  
2020 been put to rest. Furthermore, it has ordered us to monitor various other developments relating to  
2021 liturgy and ethical issues. Finally, it has charged us to pay particular attention to hermeneutical  
2022 matters and how they are being dealt with in your churches.

2023  
2024 What all of this illustrates is that as churches that are in ecclesiastical fellowship with one  
2025 another, we are trying to take our commitment to be a hand and a foot to one another seriously.  
2026 This involves being open and honest with one another. It also involves listening to one another  
2027 and, if need be, admonishing one another. But above it involves doing everything in a spirit of  
2028 love.

2029  
2030 In connection with this, let it be said openly and honestly here that we do have a number of  
2031 serious concerns that we have already discussed with you over these last two days. These  
2032 concerns arise in particular out of the two reports submitted to us, the one dealing with church  
2033 unity discussions with the NGK on the role of the confessions and the other dealing with the role  
2034 of men and women in the church.

2035  
2036 With regard to the first report on church unity and subscription, we have mentioned already that  
2037 we perceive there is a distinct difference between your hermeneutical approach and that of the  
2038 NGK. This difference is highlighted by the manner in which the NGK defends their decision of  
2039 opening all of the offices in the church to women.

2040

2041 The other report dealing with the role of men and women in your churches also raises some  
2042 concerns relating to both content and the procedure that is recommended. We have relayed those  
2043 concerns to you and there is no need to repeat them now.  
2044

2045 A different concern, but one that needs to be mentioned, arises out of some deplorable and  
2046 erroneous statements reported by the press in your country and made by a brother who occupies  
2047 a position of leadership in your churches. While this matter has been dealt with by you already  
2048 and put to rest perhaps, it continues to cause dismay and distrust among our members in Canada.  
2049 We wonder why he was not asked to retract his offensive statements.  
2050

2051 Be assured that in all of these discussions we are also aware that these are difficult days for you  
2052 in the Netherlands. What used to be the homeland of many of us in Canada has changed a great  
2053 deal in the last fifty years, and let us admit that it has not all been for the better. The rise of a  
2054 militant form of Islam in the Netherlands, in Europe and elsewhere is deeply troubling. The  
2055 emergence of a generation that worships itself and has little or no regard for the Lord and His  
2056 Word in such areas as marriage and divorce, sexual relations and other ethical matters, is equally  
2057 troubling. In addition, the fact that many who once professed to be Reformed in doctrine and life  
2058 but seem to have forgotten what this means in reality, is disappointing, to say the least. And then  
2059 there are those who think that a broad evangelicalism which mixes Arminian humanism and  
2060 Pentecostal emotionalism is to be preferred over the Reformed faith - now that is really  
2061 astonishing.  
2062

2063 Still, none of this should actually surprise us. Did the apostle Jude, and others, not warn us  
2064 already ages ago? “But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ  
2065 foretold. They said to you, ‘In the last times there will be scoffers who follow their own ungodly  
2066 desires.’ These are men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the  
2067 Spirit. But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy  
2068 Spirit. Keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring  
2069 you to eternal life.” (Jude 17 – 21)  
2070

2071 As delegates from the Canadian Reformed Churches, we would urge you to continue to join with us, as  
2072 well as with your other sister churches abroad and with the member churches of the International  
2073 Conference of Reformed Churches around the world, as we seek to stand fast in our “most holy faith.”  
2074 Such a faith is grounded in the Word of God and is bold in its defense. Such a faith loves and promotes  
2075 the confessions of the church. Such a faith adheres to biblical principles worked out in the Church Order  
2076 of Dordt.  
2077

2078 Let it also be said that such a faith must exercise the utmost care that it does not base itself more on  
2079 culture than on Scripture. All around us we see churches surrendering their principles and practices due to  
2080 the pressure exerted on them by members who want to be culturally relevant at all costs. Of course, as  
2081 churches we need to be sensitive and aware of the surrounding culture, but when the demands of culture  
2082 clash with the Word of God, we need to put the Word first and dare to speak prophetically. In the words  
2083 of the apostle Paul to Timothy, we need to “guard the good deposit ... guard it with the help of the Holy  
2084 Spirit who lives in us” (II Tim 1: 14).  
2085

2086 In short, this should not be a time in which we compromise the Reformed faith or let the  
2087 influences of the world sap its vitality. Rather it should be a time in which we are vigorous and

2088 outspoken in our adherence to the Reformed faith as we wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus  
2089 Christ to bring (us) to eternal life” and as we work, pray and march towards that great day.

2090  
2091 Brothers, may our Lord Jesus Christ, the Head and King of the church, bless your discussions  
2092 and deliberations in such a way that they glorify Him, build up your churches and promote your  
2093 ties with faithful churches everywhere.

2094  
2095 Thank you.

2096  
2097 Jack Moesker  
2098 James Visscher

2099  
2100 **B. Address of delegates of CRCA to the 2008 General Assembly of the**  
2101 **PCK, September 23, 2008.**

2102  
2103 Dear brothers in our one Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,

2104  
2105 We consider it an honour to be here in your midst for the gathering of the 58<sup>th</sup> General  
2106 Assembly. This is only the second time that a delegate or delegates from the Canadian Reformed  
2107 Churches have been able to do this. My fellow delegate, br. Harold Leyenhorst was privileged to  
2108 attend your jubilee celebrations in 2002. Our churches send their greetings and we pray that the  
2109 Lord of heaven and earth may bless your deliberations and decisions. May they serve the up  
2110 building of His church gathering work throughout the world, in unity of faith.

2111  
2112 We thank you for the invitation and the hospitality accorded us. We very much appreciated the  
2113 presence of your delegation to our 2007 Synod in Smithers, British Columbia. It is these kinds of  
2114 exchanges that will assist us in the communications that are so critical for churches that live in  
2115 ecclesiastical fellowship. We ought to be available to assist one another, when that is desired.

2116  
2117 Briefly, we are a relatively small federation of some 54 churches, with a total membership of  
2118 approx. 16,500 members, of which 9400 are communicant members. For the most part, our  
2119 members are of reformed, Dutch origin, the result of vigorous immigration in the 1950's.  
2120 Understandably, as time progresses, a growing proportion of the current members has been born  
2121 in Canada and considers itself Canadian. Furthermore, we have an increasing number of  
2122 members that have come into the church from outside this Dutch/Canadian core. An increasing  
2123 proportion of our ministers has been trained in North America, predominantly at our own  
2124 Theological College. This institution has been a real blessing for our federation and we give  
2125 thanks to the Lord for it.

2126  
2127 In addition to taking part in some of the proceedings of your General Assembly, we also hope to  
2128 meet with your Fraternal Relations Committee. It is our hope that we may learn more about you  
2129 and you about us. We wish to exchange information about the relations that we respectively  
2130 exercise and how these might be enhanced in a manner that will be mutually beneficial. From  
2131 our part, we increasingly come in contact with Koreans that pass through, or stay for periods of  
2132 time in, Canada. We welcome this and wish to be better equipped to assist them in their desire to  
2133 exercise their Christian duties. We invite you and any members of your churches who find

2134 themselves in Canada, to worship with us. Our website (www.CANRC.org) provides a fairly  
2135 complete directory of the local congregations.

2136  
2137 In closing, allow me to express the wish that you may continue to be faithful to God and His  
2138 Word in all that you do, both as a church and as individual members of it. We are extremely rich  
2139 through the saving work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, imparted to us by the Holy Spirit.  
2140 Once again, thank you for your kind hospitality.

2141  
2142 Dr. J. Vanderstoep  
2143 Mr. H. Leyenhorst

2144  
2145 **C. Points for discussion with the Fraternal Relations Committee of the Presbyterian Church**  
2146 **of Korea, September 23, 2008, as suggested by the delegates of the Canadian Reformed**  
2147 **Churches.**

2148  
2149 *This discussion document was presented to and discussed with the FRC of the PCK on Tuesday,*  
2150 *September 23, 2008. Observations and comments in (**bold, italicized** print) were added*  
2151 *subsequently and the whole presented to the CRCA at its meeting on October 9, 2008.*

2152  
2153 **Introductory Comment:**

2154  
2155 The intent of the following points, and the discussion that will hopefully follow them, is to better  
2156 acquaint one another. That after all is the point of having Committees on fraternal relations.

2157  
2158 **1. Good Relations and Communications:**

2159  
2160 In the past this has been difficult, even to the point of the suggestion being made that the  
2161 CANRC terminate the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship. The communication, while still  
2162 difficult because of the language barrier, has improved a great deal. This has been helped by the  
2163 visits that have been made, both by you and us, and the opportunities taken by delegates to meet  
2164 on other occasions, such as meetings of the ICRC.

2165  
2166 We certainly appreciated the commitment made by you, when you sent a delegation of three to  
2167 Synod Smithers in 2007. As you have a General Assembly each year, it would be difficult for us  
2168 to reciprocate. As such we have endeavoured, in conjunction with two of our sister church  
2169 federations, to attend each year. The Free Reformed Churches of Australia delegated Rev.  
2170 Huzinga in 2007, and we hope that the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN) will be  
2171 present in 2009.

2172  
2173 One way to keep in touch with one another is by the sharing of the acts of major assemblies,  
2174 especially Synods/General Assemblies. While the matter of language makes that more difficult  
2175 for us, we do appreciate the efforts of Prof. Haemoo Yoo, in providing us with English  
2176 translations about some of the important decisions made by your General Assembly. Also, his  
2177 availability to act as a translator has and should continue to facilitate more meaningful  
2178 communications.

2179



2180 *In discussions with the Fraternal Relations Committee (FRC), it became clear that, while we*  
2181 *officially send our Acts to the PCK, we do so to the Office of the General Assembly (General*  
2182 *Secretary). They likely do not make it to the FRC. We committed to trying to direct a copy to*  
2183 *the FRC and also to make an English summary of the main points (of particular importance*  
2184 *to our relationship with the PCK) for the FRC. We agreed that continued communication as*  
2185 *has been the case in the last couple of years, by way of summaries translated by Prof. Yoo, and*  
2186 *our commitment to try to do the same, will be most helpful.*

2187

## 2188 **2. Confessional and Church Polity Differences:**

2189

2190 On a number of occasions, mention has been made of differences between our federations  
2191 concerning a number of confessional and polity matters, particularly fencing of the Lord's  
2192 Supper and confessional membership. These matters have not been resolved. Our synod 2007  
2193 charged our committee (CRCA) to share with you a Statement of Agreement reached between  
2194 the OPC and us, which led to the establishment of Ecclesiastical Fellowship, and ask for your  
2195 reaction (Synod 2007, Acts, Art. 86, Recomm. 4.3.3, p 67).

2196

2197 The text of this agreement can be found in the Acts of Synod 2007, p. 316, as part of a synopsis  
2198 of past discussions with the OPC. For ease of access, it is reproduced here:

2199

2200 *“Concerning Admittance to the celebration of the Lord’s Supper:*

2201

2202 *The churches of the Reformation confess that the Lord's Supper should not be profaned*  
2203 *(1 Cor. 11:27, see Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 30, Q&A 82; Westminster*  
2204 *Confession ch. 29,8). This implies that the celebration of the Lord’s Supper is to be*  
2205 *supervised. In this supervision the Church exercises discipline and manifests itself as true*  
2206 *church. This supervision is to be applied to the members of the local church as well*  
2207 *as to the guests. The eldership has a responsibility in supervising the admission to the*  
2208 *Lord's Supper.*

2209

2210 *Concerning Confessional Membership:*

2211

2212 *The churches of the Reformation believe that they have to contend for the faith which was*  
2213 *once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3) and are called to watch out for those who*  
2214 *cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have*  
2215 *learned (Rom. 16:17). Anyone who answers the membership vows in the affirmative is*  
2216 *bound to receive and adhere to the doctrine of the Bible. The patristic church has*  
2217 *summarized this teaching in the Apostles' Creed and the churches of the Reformation*  
2218 *have elaborated on this in their confessions. Every confessing member is bound to this*  
2219 *doctrine and must be willing to be instructed in it. It may be added that these statements*  
2220 *are not intended to prevent further discussions. Rather it is agreed that there is a need to*  
2221 *continue to discuss the differences in confession and church policy which can take place*  
2222 *within the relation of Ecclesiastical Fellowship. The intention of such discussions will be*  
2223 *mutual upbuilding in the faith to “maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”*  
2224 *(Eph.4:3).”*

2225

2226 While our Synod 2007, spoke of having you consider, reacting and possibly agreeing, we place it  
2227 before you for discussion. Maybe you can give us your thoughts.

2228

2229 *We gave a detailed background to the history of the concerns dealt with in this section. We*  
2230 *also explained our discussions with the OPC and referred the members of the FRC to the*  
2231 *synopsis of these discussions with the OPC, as found in Appendix 1 of the Report of the*  
2232 *Committee for Contact with Churches on the Americas to Synod 2007 (Acts, Append. 5,*  
2233 *pp306-316). We also mentioned the concern of some members of the CANRC that these*  
2234 *matters are not concluded and the need to have further discussion with the PCK.*

2235

2236 *The reaction of the FRC to this matter was that there is agreement with the first point (fencing*  
2237 *of the Lords Supper). It is recognized, certainly by a number of prominent members of the*  
2238 *PCK, that the matter of more involvement of elders in church government is needed. While,*  
2239 *this is acknowledged, it was also stated that given the culture of Korea and the busyness of*  
2240 *individuals appointed/ordained as elders, makes the reality of this requirement difficult.*

2241

2242 *With respect to the matter of Confessional Membership, it was stated that this in fact is*  
2243 *contained in the Constitution of the PCK. A letter from the FRC, clarifying this matter was*  
2244 *promised.*

2245

2246

### 2247 **3. Church Relations in Canada:**

2248

2249 It is not our intent to discuss in detail the relationships that the Canadian Reformed Churches  
2250 have, but rather to provide an overview of these relations and how these are maintained. It would  
2251 be useful for this purpose to remind you of the **Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship** adopted by  
2252 our General Synod Lincoln 1992 (*Acts Lincoln 1992*, Article 50, p. 33):

2253

2254 *1. The churches shall assist each other in the maintenance, defence and promotion of the*  
2255 *Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline, and liturgy, and be watchful for*  
2256 *deviations.*

2257

2258 *2. The churches shall inform each other of the decisions taken by their broadest*  
2259 *assemblies, if possible by sending each other their Acts or Minutes and otherwise, at least*  
2260 *by sending the decisions relevant to the respective churches (if possible, in translation).*

2261

2262 *3. The churches shall consult each other when entering into relations with third parties.*  
2263 *4. The churches shall accept one another's attestations or certificates of good standing,*  
2264 *which also means admitting members of the respective churches to the sacraments upon*  
2265 *presentation of that attestation or certificate.*

2266

2267 *5. The churches shall in principle open their pulpits for each other's ministers in*  
2268 *agreement with the rules adopted in the respective churches.*

2269

2270 *In exercising these relations, the churches shall strive to implement also the following:*  
2271 *6. When major changes or additions are being considered to the confessions, church*  
2272 *government or liturgy, the churches shall be informed in order that as much consultation*  
2273 *can take place as possible before a final decision is taken.*

2274

2275 *7. The churches shall receive each other's delegates at their broadest assemblies and*  
2276 *invite them to participate as much as local regulations permit.*

2277

2272  
2273 The Canadian Reformed Churches are in ecclesiastical fellowship with the Reformed Churches  
2274 in the Netherlands - Liberated (RCN), the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, the Free  
2275 Reformed Churches of South Africa, The Free Church of Scotland, The Presbyterian Church of  
2276 Korea, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Church in the United States and the  
2277 Igreja Reformadas do Brasil (IRB). Synod 2007 also decided to accept the invitation of the  
2278 Reformed Churches of New Zealand (RCNZ) to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with them  
2279 and to do the same with l'Eglise reforme du Quebec (ERQ). We are currently in phase 2 of a  
2280 staggered process designed to lead to full federative unity with the United Reformed Churches in  
2281 North America.

2282  
2283 We have had overtures and requests to enter into relationships with other church federations,  
2284 some closer, others further from home. While Synod did not make a definitive decision on the  
2285 matter of how to deal with these requests, it did express a sense that when we have relations with  
2286 a church federation in a country in which another federation requests a relationship, we depend  
2287 initially on the insight and experience of the federation with which we already have a  
2288 relationship.

2289  
2290 *This section did not engender much discussion. It was intended to relate to the members of the*  
2291 *FRC, the approach we take wrt church relations. We did mention the fact that the IRCK had*  
2292 *requested relationship, but that we were not ready to enter into such. Our Synod felt the need*  
2293 *for more information, and we indicated that in the first instance that some of this information*  
2294 *needed to come from the PCK. The further matter of establishing relations with a second*  
2295 *federation in a country where we already have a relationship was mentioned.*

2296 *It was acknowledged by the FRC that we should in fact be relying, at least in part, on them for*  
2297 *this additional information. The FRC expressed appreciation for our position of consultation*  
2298 *as expressed in the final paragraph above. At this point we did go over to the next point, the*  
2299 *matter of church relations within Korea.*

2300  
2301 *During our discussions with the FRC, a Dr. Samuel Park was present. He is the Vic-President*  
2302 *of the California Graduate School of Theology in La Habre, California. He is a member of the*  
2303 *PCK America. He was interested to learn a bit about the Canadian Reformed Churches and*  
2304 *committed to communicating something about us to their General Assembly, which is held in*  
2305 *October. We were able to give to him copy of the Acts of Synod 2007, plus to point him to our*  
2306 *website for further information. We also committed to pass on to our Committee for Contact*  
2307 *with Churches in the Americas, his name as a possible contact. He spoke about hoping to*  
2308 *arrange for a visit by the CANRC to their General Assembly next year and possibly a visit to*  
2309 *our next Synod by a representative of the PCKA.*

2310  
2311 **4. Church Relations in Korea**

2312  
2313 We very much would like to hear something about the relationships that you have with other  
2314 federations and how you manage these. From contacts that we have with Koreans that either visit  
2315 or in some cases stay for extended periods, we hear of other church federations in your own  
2316 country. We understand that some of the members of these federations originated in the PCK.  
2317 How do you relate to them? We ask this because, as you know, we did receive a request from the

2318 Independent Reformed Church in Korea (IRCK) to enter into a sister church relationship. This  
2319 was not acceded to, in part because insufficient information was available, but also the  
2320 consideration provided in the last paragraph of the previous section (seeking guidance from our  
2321 sister church in the country in question).

2322  
2323 We hope that by discussing this matter with you, we may be better equipped to deal with such  
2324 matters in the future.

2325  
2326 *We were told that there is virtually no contact between the PCK and the IRCK, at least in any*  
2327 *official way. There were a number of reasons given, such as they (IRCK) are so small, and*  
2328 *they do respect the PCK seminary (implication – they are not different?). There was a*  
2329 *commitment made by the FRC to give some attention to this matter, especially in light of our*  
2330 *position about consulting the federation that we already have a relationship with. The FRC*  
2331 *did question why the IRCK approached the ICRC for membership before having discussions*  
2332 *with the PCK.*

2333  
2334 *In personal discussions, we learned quite a bit more about the IRCK as well as the more*  
2335 *recent Reformed Church in Korea (RCK). With this “insight” into these two “groups” we will*  
2336 *be able to do more investigation of them. See further comments in the concluding section of*  
2337 *this report.*

## 2338 2339 **5. Korean Presbyterian Church in America (KPCA)**

2340  
2341 The membership of this church lives in North America. As such it seems that we should have  
2342 some contact with these churches. However, our attempts at having meaningful contact with  
2343 them has proven unsuccessful. We would like to hear you on what should be our approach to this  
2344 federation.

2345  
2346 *As indicated under point 3 above, we did make what will hopefully be a useful contact with the*  
2347 *PCK America. The PCKA was established when Koreans moved to the USA. They are*  
2348 *identical to the PCK and membership and ordained ministers interchange freely. We were told*  
2349 *that the two are “identical”, although operate as independent federations. Dr. Park suggested*  
2350 *that he would forward their constitution to us. The PCKA currently do not have relations with*  
2351 *any federations other than the PCK. Dr. Park did express some interest in contact with the*  
2352 *OPC. They also do use predominantly the Korean language, and as such will present to us*  
2353 *somewhat the same challenges as the PCK.*

## 2354 2355 **6. How Can We Help?**

2356  
2357 According to the first article of our rules for ecclesiastical fellowship (Section 3, above), the  
2358 churches are “to assist each other in the maintenance, defence and promotion of the Reformed  
2359 faith.....”. Certainly in our own country this is often a daunting task/challenge. We assume that  
2360 this is no different here. Are there ways that we can be of assistance to each other? Undoubtedly  
2361 there are – let’s commit to doing so to the best of our ability!

2362 *This last point did not receive much attention during our meeting with the FRC. However,*  
2363 *upon reflection by us, we deem it important that we be somewhat proactive in this matter. We*

2364 *can provide them with some specific instances oh how we might be able to assist them. One*  
2365 *example might be the “exchange” or visits by some of our professors to the Korean*  
2366 *Theological Seminary.*

2367  
2368 **7. Conclusions**

2369  
2370 *The visit and discussions were very positive, instructive and also revealing of the difficulty of*  
2371 *maintaining good relations when we do not understand the language. The PCK does show*  
2372 *signs of struggling to stay reformed. This may be caused by the blending of the Presbyterian*  
2373 *polity into the Korean culture. They have approximately the same number of elders as*  
2374 *ministers in their federation. Parents, teachers and ministers are highly respected in Korea.*  
2375 *This results in the ministers having too much influence (power). There seems to be little*  
2376 *appetite for the western reformed consistory structure, as we know it.*

2377  
2378 *In private discussions, some issues of concern were discovered concerning IRCK and the*  
2379 *RCK. These include a Bishop as head of the church, different levels of acceptance of the*  
2380 *confessions, two levels of membership (primarily in the IRCK) and lack of organized church*  
2381 *government. There has also been limited growth.*

2382  
2383 *The IRCK and the RCK have received advice from Prof. Yoo and Dr. Hur, two strong voices*  
2384 *for reformed doctrine and church polity. The greeting letter from the FRCA, to the PCK on*  
2385 *the occasion of the 58th GA gives more information on these churches and also illustrates the*  
2386 *need for us to have discussions with the FRCA. This letter is appended as it was shared with*  
2387 *us by a member of the FRC.*

2388  
2389 Respectfully submitted,  
2390 Harold Leyenhorst  
2391 John Vanderstoep

2392  
2393 Submitted to Synod Burlington 2010 by the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad,

2394  
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2403  
2404 November 24 , 2009