

ACTS
OF
GENERAL SYNOD 2010
OF THE
CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

BURLINGTON, ONTARIO
MAY 11-26, 2010



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from

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List of Acronyms in the Acts

Since various names occur frequently throughout the Acts of Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010, the following acronyms will be used. Some names have changed in the course of time. The list below will be used also when quoting from various documents in order to avoid the confusion that could be caused by different references that mean the same thing.

BBK	Betrekkingen met Buitenlandse Kerken (the Dutch Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad)
BC	Belgic Confession
CanRC	Canadian Reformed Churches
CBT	Committee on Bible Translations
CCCNA	Committee for Contact with Churches in North America
CCU	Committee for Church Unity
CEIR	Committee on Ecumenical and Interchurch Relations (of the OPC)
CERCU	Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity (of the URCNA)
CO	Church Order
CRCA	Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad
CRCI	Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia (known in Indonesian as the Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Calvinis di Indonesia / GGRC)
EF	Ecclesiastical Fellowship
ERQ	Église Réformée du Quebec
FCS	Free Church of Scotland
FCC	Free Church Continuing
FRCA	Free Reformed Churches of Australia
FRCSA	Free Reformed Churches of South Africa
ICRC	International Conference of Reformed Churches
IPB	Presbyterian Church of Brazil

IRCK	Independent Reformed Church in Korea
NAPARC	North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council
NRC	Netherlands Reformed Churches (Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken)
OPC	Orthodox Presbyterian Church
OCRC	Orthodox Christian Reformed Church
PCK	Presbyterian Church of Korea (Kosin)
PJCO	Proposed Joint Church Order
PTP	Pastoral Training Program
RCB	Reformed Churches of Brazil
RCI	Reformed Churches of Indonesia (Gereja-Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia – Nusa Tenggara Timur / GGRI-NTT)
RCK	Reformed Church of Korea
RCN	Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland)
RCR	Reformed Churches – Restored (Gereformeerde Kerken [hersteld] / GKH, a group of churches that has separated from the RCN)
RCNZ	Reformed Churches of New Zealand
RCUS	Reformed Church of the United States
RPCNA	Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America
SCPB	Standing Committee for the Publication of the <i>Book of Praise</i>
URCNA	United Reformed Churches of North America

Note to the Reader

In the Acts you will find references to various reports. The reports are available online at www.canrc.org. If you do not have access to the internet, it may be possible to borrow a printed copy from your consistory or church library.



ACTS
General Synod Burlington-Ebenezer
of the Canadian Reformed Churches
May 11 - 26, 2010

Day 1 — Morning Session
Tuesday, May 11, 2010

Article 1 – Opening of Synod on behalf of the Convening Church

On behalf of the convening church the Rev. Dr. Gijsbert Nederveen called the meeting to order. He requested all who were present to sing Psalm 93 and then read Psalm 93. After giving a meditation on this passage he led the assembly in prayer. A word of welcome was extended to all present, especially the delegates to synod and those representing churches with which the Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC) have ecclesiastical fellowship (EF) or contact. Rev. Nederveen's opening address can be found in *Appendix I* of these Acts.

Article 2 – Credentials

The credentials were examined and found to be in good order. All the primary delegates were present and signed the attendance list.

From Regional Synod East:

Ministers: Douwe G.J. Agema, Jan DeGelder, Jacob Moesker, Peter G. Feenstra, John J. VanWoudenberg, Richard A. Wynia.

Elders: Adrianus J. Bax, William F. Horsman, Johannes Jonker, Cornelis Poppe, Lambert P. Stulp, Harpert M. Vanderwel.

From Regional Synod West:

Ministers: Richard Aasman, Peter H. Holtvlüwer; John D. Louwerse; Andrew J. Pol; Robert A. Schouten; James Visscher.

Elders: Cornelis DeHaas, Richard Klaver; Jacob C.J. Kuik; W.S. (Bill) Raap; Aren Van Dyke; Wayne A. Weidenhammer.

Article 3 – Election of Officers and Constitution of Synod

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

Chairman:	R. Aasman
Vice-chairman:	P. Feenstra
First Clerk:	A. Pol
Second Clerk:	D. Agema

On behalf of the convening church, Rev. Nederveen declared synod constituted. The elected officers took their places. Rev. Aasman thanked the assembly for the confidence expressed by voting for the officers of synod. He expressed appreciation to the convening church for all the work done in preparation for synod, in particular the work done by br. Gerard Nordeman. The chairman then called for a break to give the officers the opportunity to come with proposals in regard to the proceedings of synod and the division of tasks among the various members of synod.

**Day 1 — Afternoon Session
Tuesday, May 11, 2010**

Article 4 – Reopening

Synod reopened in plenary session. Roll call was held and all members were present. The assembly then sang Psalm 121:1 and 4.

Article 5 – Housekeeping Matters

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

1. *Presence on the Internet:* Synod will publish the Acts of Synod on the church website as they become available. However, as the Acts are adopted, Synod will decide whether there are any decisions which should not be immediately posted on the Internet.
2. *Privileges of the floor:* Synod will give the floor to all official representatives of the churches in ecclesiastical fellowship.
3. *Time Schedule:* Monday to Friday
morning session – 9:00 - 12:00
afternoon session – 2:00 - 5:00
evening session – 7:00 - 9:00
4. *Devotions:* Synod shall begin and close each day in plenary session with Scripture reading, a short meditation, prayer and singing. A schedule will be handed out.
5. *Press Release:* A press release will be published after synod has been closed.
6. *Committees:* Advisory committees shall provide each delegate with a copy of their reports before they are dealt with in plenary sessions.
7. *Synod Documents:* Copies of synod documents are available only to members of synod and fraternal delegates and observers.
8. *Guidelines:* For all procedures the Guidelines for Synod will apply.
9. *Travel expenses:* Expenses are to be submitted, with receipts, to br. H. Sloots and M. Kampen. Delegates are to be reimbursed for travel costs at 40 cents per km. This amount is not to exceed the cost of flying.

Article 6 – Advisory Committees of Synod

The following committees were appointed:

Committee 1

Members: C. DeHaas, J. Kuik, J. Louwerse, J. Visscher (convener), W. Weidenhammer
Topics: CCU and Appeals
Agenda Items: 8.2.a,b,c,d; 8.3.a,b,c,d; 8.4.a; 8.5.d,e

Committee 2

Members: J. VanWoudenberg, R. Schouten (convener), W. Horsman, B. Stulp, R. Klaver
Topics: CCCNA, Pastoral Training Program, Official Website, Bible Translation, Appeals
Agenda Items: 8.2.f,h,i,k; 8.3.f,h,i,k; 8.5.f,k,l,m,t,u,z

Committee 3

Members: J. Moesker (convener), D. Wynia, A. Bax, J. Jonker, H. Vanderwel
Topics: *Book of Praise*, Appeals
Agenda Items: 8.1.e,g; 8.2.j; 8.3.j; 8.5.b,c,h,j,n,o,p,q,r,y

Committee 4

Members: J. DeGelder (convener), P. Holtvlüwer, C. Poppe, W. Raap, A. VanDyke
Topics: Theological College, Theological Training Subcommittee, Women's Voting, Appeals
Agenda Items: 8.1.d,f,h,i,l,m,n,o,q,t,u; 8.2.e,g,l; 8.3.b.20; 8.3.e,g,l; 8.4.b; 8.5.a,i,s,v,w

Committee 5

Members: R. Aasman, D. Agema, P. Feenstra (convener), A. Pol
Topics: CRCA, Appointment of Professors, General Appointments, Address Church, Archive Church, Churches Appointed to Proclaim Day of Prayer, General Fund Church, Miscellaneous Items
Agenda Items: 8.1.c,j,k,p,r,s; 8.2.m-q; 8.3.m; 8.5.g,x; 9

Article 7 – Late Submissions

The following letters from churches arrived late and were declared inadmissible: one from Barrhead and three from Providence-Hamilton. A letter from the SCBP re: change to Hymn 57 was declared admissible in view of its content. It is numbered 8.2.j.vi.

Article 8 – Agenda

The following agenda was **adopted**.¹

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

8.1 General Matters

- a) Letter from Regional Synod West, November 3, 2009
- Appointments and credentials delegates to General Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010
- b) Letter from Regional Synod East, November 11, 2009
- Appointments and credentials delegates to General Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010
- c) Letters from Board of Governors of the Theological College
 - i. Confidential letter dated Jan. 28, 2010 re: appointment Professor of Dogmatology
 - ii. Confidential letter dated Jan. 28, 2010 re: appointment Professor of Old Testament
- d) Recommendation for appointment to the Board of Governors Theological College
 - i. Letter from Regional Synod West, November 3, 2009
 - ii. Letter from Regional Synod East, November 11, 2009
 - iii. Letter from the Board of Governors of the Theological College, dated February 17, 2010

¹ Reference numbers derived from this agenda can be found between brackets in the lists of materials prefacing the decisions of this Synod further on in these Acts, beginning with Article 11.

Letters from various Churches:

- e) Winnipeg-Redeemer dated June 15, 2008
- re: Acts Synod Smithers 2007 Article 111, 2.6.2, - error in wording
- f) Burlington-Ebenezer dated October 27, 2008 - re: Board of Governors Appointment Temporary Lecturer
- g) Attercliffe dated December 23, 2008 - re: SCBP change made to Acts of Synod 2007
- h) Langley dated October 6, 2009 - re: proposals regarding the Theological College
- i) Burlington-Ebenezer dated January 16, 2010 - re: Langley proposal - agenda item 8.1.h
- j) Smithers dated January 11, 2010 - re: Synod Smithers 2007 Finance Committee - Financial Report
- k) Houston dated December 21, 2009 - re: Audit Report Finances Synod Smithers 2007
- l) Guelph dated February 8, 2010 - re: Langley proposal - agenda item 8.1.h
- m) Letter from the Board of Governors of the Theological College dated Feb. 17, 2010 - re: Langley proposal - agenda item 8.1.h
- n) Hamilton-Providence dated March 2, 2010 - re: Langley proposal - agenda item 8.1.h (Mission)
- o) Hamilton-Providence dated March 2, 2010 - re: Langley proposal - agenda item 8.1.h (5th professor)
- p) Chatham dated April 16, 2008 - re: General matters of concern about synod actions
- q) Flamborough, undated - re: Langley proposal - agenda item 8.1.h
- r) Langley dated March 22, 2010 - re: Publication of Acts of General Synod exclusively in electronic format.
- s) Winnipeg-Redeemer dated March 18, 2010 - re: Restricted web access to synod committee reports.
- t) Winnipeg-Redeemer dated March 18, 2010 - re: Langley proposal - agenda item 8.1.h
- u) Cloverdale dated March 22, 2010 - re: Langley proposal - agenda item 8.1.h

8.2 Committee Reports

- a) CCU Coordinators
 - i. Main Report (booklet volume 1)
 - ii. Supplementary Letter dated March 15, 2010
- b) CCU Church Order Subcommittee (booklet volume 1)
- c) CCU Common Songbook Subcommittee (booklet volume 1)
- d) CCU Creeds and Forms Subcommittee (booklet volume 1)
- e) CCU Theological Training Subcommittee (booklet volume 3)
- f) Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA)
 - i. Main Report (booklet volume 1)
 - ii. Supplementary letter dated January 9, 2010 with recommendations for committee members
 - iii. Supplementary letter dated March 26, 2010 with further recommendations for committee members
- g) Committee on Women Voting
 - i. Majority Report (booklet volume 1)
 - ii. Minority Report (booklet volume 1, revised in volume 3)
- h) Committee for Pastoral Training Program (booklet volume 1)
- i) Committee for the Official Website
 - i. Main Report (booklet volume 1)
 - ii. Confidential Letter dated March 21, 2010 - re: suggestions for appointment of new committee members. (This letter was made available at synod.)
- j) Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (SCBP) (booklet vol. 2)
 - i. Cover letter October 2009 - re: SCBP Report and Ad Hoc Committee Report
 - ii. Letter dated September 2009 requesting "Privilege of the Floor"
 - iii. Confidential letter regarding Remuneration Dr. Helder. (This letter will be made available at synod.)
 - iv. Letter dated February 2010, - re: corrigenda for the Psalm section of the report
 - v. Letter dated February 2010, - re: improvements to the Music Notation for Hymns
 - vi. Letter dated April 20, 2010 - re: change to Hymn 57
- k) Committee on Bible Translation (CBT)
- l) Board of Governors of the Theological College
- m) Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA)

- i. Main Report
- ii. Supplementary Report dated February 15, 2010
- iii. Addendum to the Report of the CRCA dated March 6, 2010
- n) Address Church - Burlington-Ebenezer
 - i. Report dated March 17, 2010
- o) Archive Church - Burlington-Ebenezer
 - i. Report dated March 2, 2010
 - ii. Inspection of Archives by Burlington-Waterdown letter dated February 25, 2010
 - iii. Request - Letter Burlington-Ebenezer dated 26-04-2008
- p) Churches Appointed to Proclaim Day of Prayer
 - i. Report dated January 11, 2010
- q) General Fund Church - Carman East Report dated February 26, 2010

8.3 Letters from the Churches regarding:**A) CCU Coordinators**

- 1) Hamilton-Providence dated January 28, 2010
- 2) Toronto dated January 28, 2010
- 3) Burlington-Ebenezer dated February 22, 2010
- 4) Edmonton-Immanuel dated March 1, 2010
- 5) Fergus-Maranatha dated March 15, 2010
- 6) Flamborough, undated
- 7) Neerlandia, undated
- 8) Willoughby Heights dated March 8, 2010
- 9) Attercliffe dated March 16, 2010
- 10) Glanbrook dated March 1, 2010
- 11) Ancaster dated January 25, 2010
- 12) Abbotsford dated March 22, 2010
- 13) Lincoln dated March 6, 2010
- 14) Winnipeg-Redeemer dated March 18, 2010 - re: Mandate Proposal
- 15) Winnipeg-Redeemer dated March 18, 2010 - re: Proposed questions to the URCNNA
- 16) Cloverdale dated March 22, 2010
- 17) Barrhead dated March 19, 2010

B) CCU Church Order Subcommittee

- 1) Hamilton-Providence dated January 28, 2010
- 2) Toronto dated January 28, 2010
- 3) Carman East dated January 6, 2010

- 4) Guelph dated February 8, 2010
- 5) Elora dated January 21, 2010
- 6) Chatham dated February 15, 2010
- 7) Orangeville dated Mar 2, 2010
- 8) Grassie dated February 24, 2010
- 9) Grand Valley dated March 1, 2010
- 10) Coaldale dated February 8, 2010 - re: General Matters
- 11) Coaldale dated January 15, 2010 - re: PJCO Article 36
- 12) Winnipeg-Grace dated March 11, 2010
- 13) Calgary dated February 17, 2010
- 14) Chilliwack dated March 15, 2010
- 15) Edmonton-Immanuel dated March 1, 2010 - re: PJCO Article 4
- 16) Edmonton-Immanuel dated March 1, 2010 - re: Article 36, 43
- 17) Owen Sound dated March 3, 2010
- 18) Fergus-Maranatha dated March 15, 2010
- 19) Flamborough, undated
- 20) Neerlandia, undated
- 21) Willoughby Heights dated March 8, 2010 - re: PJCO Article 5
- 22) Willoughby Heights dated March 8, 2010 - re: PJCO Article 43
- 23) Attercliffe dated March 16, 2010
- 24) Surrey dated March 20, 2010
- 25) Carman West dated March 4, 2010
- 26) Neerlandia, undated
- 27) London dated March 16, 2010
- 28) Langley dated March 22, 2010
- 29) Glanbrook dated March 10, 2010
- 30) Fergus North dated March 20, 2010 - re: PJCO Article 3
- 31) Fergus North dated March 20, 2010 - re: PJCO Article 7
- 32) Fergus North dated March 20, 2010 - re: PJCO Article 8
- 33) Fergus North dated March 20, 2010 - re: PJCO Article 13
- 34) Ancaster dated March 25, 2010
- 35) Yarrow dated January 25, 2010
- 36) Abbotsford dated March 22, 2010
- 37) Lincoln dated March 15, 2010
- 38) Winnipeg-Redeemer dated March 18, 2010
- 39) Cloverdale dated March 22, 2010 - re: PJCO Article 8
- 40) Cloverdale dated March 22, 2010 - re: PJCO Article 21
- 41) Cloverdale dated March 22, 2010 - re: PJCO Article 43
- 42) Cloverdale dated March 22, 2010 - re: PJCO Article 45

- 43) Dunnville, undated
 - 44) Aldergrove dated March 25, 2010
 - 45) Lyndon dated February 3, 2010
 - 46) Barrhead dated March 19, 2010 - re: PJCO Article 6 and 43 (see 8.3.A.17 for letter)
- C) CCU Songbook Subcommittee**
- 1) Hamilton-Providence dated January 28, 2010
 - 2) Burlington-Fellowship dated February 27, 2010
 - 3) Edmonton-Immanuel dated March 1, 2010
 - 4) Flamborough, undated
 - 5) Neerlandia, undated
 - 6) Carman West dated December 9, 2009
 - 7) Ancaster dated January 25, 2010
 - 8) Lincoln dated March 6, 2010
- D) CCU Creeds and Forms Subcommittee**
- 1) Hamilton-Providence dated January 28, 2010
 - 2) Edmonton-Immanuel dated March 1, 2010
 - 3) Owen Sound dated March 3, 2010
 - 4) Flamborough, undated
 - 5) Neerlandia, undated
 - 6) Carman West dated January 5, 2010
 - 7) Lincoln dated March 6, 2010
- E) CCU Theological Training Subcommittee**
- 1) Guelph dated February 8, 2010
 - 2) Orangeville dated February 26, 2010
 - 3) Burlington-Ebenezer dated March 3, 2010
 - 4) Hamilton-Providence dated March 2, 2010
 - 5) Coaldale dated February 8, 2010
 - 6) Edmonton-Immanuel dated March 1, 2010
 - 7) Owen Sound dated March 3, 2010
 - 8) Fergus-Maranatha dated March 15, 2010
 - 9) Glanbrook dated March 23, 2010
 - 10) Ancaster dated January 25, 2010
 - 11) Yarrow dated January 25, 2010
 - 12) Abbotsford dated March 22, 2010
 - 13) Neerlandia, undated

F) Committee Contact Churches North America

- 1) Hamilton - Providence dated January 28, 2010 - re: NAPARC
- 2) Toronto dated February 3, 2010 - re: RCPNA
- 3) Smithers dated February 10, 2010 - re: RCPNA
- 4) Guelph dated February 8, 2010 - re: RCPNA
- 5) Burlington-Ebenezer dated March 2, 2010 - re: RCPNA
- 6) Grand Valley dated March 1, 2010 - re: RPCNA
- 7) Coaldale dated February 8, 2010 - re: RCPNA
- 8) Orangeville dated March 6, 2010 - re: RPCNA
- 9) Edmonton-Immanuel dated March 1, 2010 - re: RCPNA
- 10) Owen Sound dated March 3, 2010 - re: RCPNA
- 11) Fergus-Maranatha dated March 15, 2010 - re: RCPNA
- 12) Flamborough, undated
- 13) Neerlandia, undated - re: RCPNA
- 14) Willoughby Heights dated March 8, 2010 - re: RCPNA
- 15) Attercliffe dated March 9, 2010 - re: RCPNA
- 16) Attercliffe dated March 9, 2010 - re: RCUS
- 17) Surrey dated March 20, 2010 - re: RPCNA
- 18) London dated March 16, 2010 - re: OPC
- 19) London dated March 16, 2010 - re: RPCNA
- 20) Glanbrook dated March 15, 2010 - re: RPCNA
- 21) Fergus-Maranatha dated March 15, 2010 - re: NAPARC
- 22) Ancaster dated March 8, 2010 - re: NAPARC
- 23) Ancaster dated January 25, 2010 - re: ERQ, RPCNA
- 24) Lincoln dated March 6, 2010 - re: RPCNA
- 25) Cloverdale dated March 22, 2010 - re: RPCNA
- 26) Dunnville, undated - re: RPCNA
- 27) Barrhead dated March 19, 2010 - re: RPCNA
(see 8.3.A.17 for letter)

G) Committee on Women Voting

- 1) Smithers dated February 10, 2010
- 2) Guelph February 8, 2010
- 3) Elora dated February 18, 2010
- 4) Chatham dated February 15, 2010
- 5) Orangeville dated February 26, 2010
- 6) Burlington-Ebenezer dated March 2, 2010
- 7) Hamilton-Providence dated March 2, 2010
- 8) Grand Valley dated February 17, 2010

- 9) Coaldale dated February 8, 2010
- 10) Carman East dated March 3, 2010
- 11) Calgary dated February 17, 2010
- 12) Chilliwack dated March 15, 2010
- 13) Edmonton-Immanuel dated March 1, 2010
- 14) Owen Sound dated March 3, 2010
- 15) Fergus-Maranatha dated March 15, 2010
- 16) Flamborough, undated
- 17) Neerlandia, undated
- 18) Willoughby Heights dated March 8, 2010
- 19) Attercliffe dated February 28, 2010
- 20) Taber, undated
- 21) Tintern dated March 17, 2010
- 22) Surrey, undated
- 23) Vernon dated March 8, 2010
- 24) London dated March 16, 2010
- 25) Glanbrook dated March 15, 2010
- 26) Ancaster dated March 22, 2010
- 27) Yarrow dated March 22, 2010
- 28) Smithville dated March 23, 2010
- 29) Abbotsford dated March 22, 2010
- 30) Lincoln dated March 2, 2010
- 31) Winnipeg-Redeemer dated March 18, 2010
- 32) Cloverdale dated March 22, 2010
- 33) Dunnville, undated
- 34) Lynden dated March 29, 2010

H) Committee for Pastoral Training Program

- 1) Burlington-Fellowship dated March 8, 2010
- 2) Flamborough, undated

I) Committee for the Official Website**J) Report: Standing Committee for Publication of the *Book of Praise* (SCBP)**

- 1) Elora dated November 24, 2009
- 2) Carman East dated February 3, 2010 - re: Proposed Hymns
- 3) Carman East dated February 3, 2010 - re: Augment
- 4) Guelph dated February 8, 2010

- 5) Orangeville dated February 2, 2010 - re: Revised Psalms
- 6) Orangeville dated February 2, 2010 - re: Proposed Hymns
- 7) Grassie dated February 27, 2010
- 8) Letter from church at Hamilton-Providence dated March 2, 2010
- 9) Grand Valley dated March 3, 2010 - re: Revised Psalms
- 10) Grand Valley dated February 10, 2010 - re: Hymn Section
- 11) Coaldale dated February 8, 2010
- 12) Winnipeg-Grace dated March 11, 2010 - re: Revised Psalms
- 13) Carman East dated March 11, 2010 - re: Revised Psalms
- 14) Chilliwack dated March 10, 2010 - re: Expanded Hymns
- 15) Chilliwack dated March 10, 2010 - re: Current Hymns
- 16) Chilliwack dated March 10, 2010 - re: Revised Psalms
- 17) Calgary dated March 2, 2010
- 18) Burlington-Fellowship dated February 27, 2010
- 19) Edmonton-Immanuel dated March 8, 2010
- 20) Owen Sound dated March 3, 2010
- 21) Fergus-Maranatha dated March 18, 2010
- 22) Flamborough, undated
- 23) Neerlandia, undated
- 24) Willoughby Heights dated March 8, 2010
- 25) Attercliffe dated March 15, 2010
- 26) Burlington-Ebenezer dated March 13, 2010
- 27) Taber, undated
- 28) Tintern dated March 17, 2010
- 29) Surrey, undated
- 30) London dated March 16, 2010
- 31) Langley dated March 24, 2010
- 32) Glanbrook dated March 15, 2010
- 33) Fergus North dated March 23, 2010 - re: Proposed Hymn 30
- 34) Fergus North dated March 23, 2010 - re: Proposed Hymn 58
- 35) Fergus North dated March 23, 2010 - re: Proposed Hymn 66
- 36) Ancaster dated March 8, 2010 - re: Augment
- 37) Abbotsford dated March 22, 2010
- 38) Lincoln dated March 2, 2010 - re: Revised Psalms
- 39) Cloverdale dated March 22, 2010 - re: Testing of Revised Psalms
- 40) Cloverdale dated March 22, 2010 - re: General Matters
- 41) Winnipeg-Redeemer dated March 18, 2010
- 42) Aldergrove dated March 22, 2010
- 43) Kerwood dated March 26, 2010

- 44) Lynden dated February 8, 2010 - re: General Matters
- 45) Barrhead dated March 19, 2010 (See 8.3.A.17 for letter.)
- 46) Hamilton-Cornerstone dated March 30, 2010 - re: Hymns
- 47) Ancaster dated January 25, 2010 - re: Prose section with NIV Bible references

K) Committee on Bible Translation (CBT)

- 1) Hamilton-Providence dated March 2, 2010
- 2) Burlington-Fellowship dated March 8, 2010
- 3) Glanbrook dated March 10, 2010
- 4) Winnipeg-Redeemer dated March 18, 2010

L) Board of Governors of the Theological College

- 1) Elora dated February 19, 2010
- 2) Coaldale dated February 8, 2010
- 3) Winnipeg-Grace dated March 11, 2010
- 4) Chilliwack dated February 15, 2010
- 5) Fergus-Maranatha dated March 18, 2010
- 6) Neerlandia, undated
- 7) Willoughby Heights dated February 1, 2010
- 8) Attercliffe dated March 16, 2010
- 9) Fergus North dated February 22, 2010
- 10) Abbotsford dated March 22, 2010
- 11) Lincoln dated March 6, 2010

M) Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA)

- 1) Toronto dated February 3, 2010 - re: FCS, RCN, and General Matters
- 2) Guelph dated February 8, 2010 - re: RCN and General Matters
- 3) Hamilton-Providence dated March 2, 2010 - re: RCN, Indonesia, and General Matters
- 4) Grand Valley dated March 3, 2010 - re: FCS, FRCA, and Indonesia
- 5) Grand Valley dated February 17, 2010 - re: RCN
- 6) Grand Valley dated March 3, 2010 - re: General Matters
- 7) Coaldale dated February 8, 2010 - re: General Approach to Ecclesiastical Fellowship and Ecclesiastical Relations
- 8) Coaldale dated February 8, 2010 - re: FCC, FRCA, Indonesia, Korean Churches, ICRC, and General Matters
- 9) Carman East dated March 3, 2010 - re: RCN
- 10) Grassie dated March 12, 2010 - re: General Matters

- 11) Edmonton-Immanuel dated March 1, 2010 - re: GKH
- 12) Edmonton-Immanuel dated March 1, 2010 - re: RCN
- 13) Fergus-Maranatha dated March 15, 2010 - re: General Matters
- 14) Fergus-Maranatha dated March 15, 2010 - re: (F)RCNZ
- 15) Fergus-Maranatha dated March 15, 2010 - re: FCS/FCC
- 16) Fergus-Maranatha dated March 15, 2010 - re: PCK
- 17) Fergus-Maranatha dated March 15, 2010 - re: RCK
- 18) Fergus-Maranatha dated March 15, 2010 - re: ICRK
- 19) Fergus-Maranatha dated March 15, 2010 - re: RCN
- 20) Fergus-Maranatha dated March 15, 2010 - re: GKH
- 21) Fergus-Maranatha dated March 15, 2010 - re: ICRC
- 22) Flamborough, undated - re: General Matters
- 23) Neerlandia, undated - re: General matters
- 24) Neerlandia, undated - re: RCN
- 25) Willoughby Heights dated March 8, 2010 - re: General matters
- 26) Attercliffe dated February 28, 2010
- 27) Taber, undated - re: FCS/FCC, RCN, Indonesia, General
- 28) Tintern dated March 17, 2010 - re: General Matters
- 29) Burlington-Ebenezer dated March 18, 2010 - re: FCC, RCN, General Matters
- 30) London dated March 16, 2010 - re: RCNZ
- 31) London dated March 16, 2010 - re: GKH
- 32) London dated March 16, 2010 - re: General Matters
- 33) Glanbrook dated March 10, 2010 - re: FCS/FCC, RCN,GKH, General Matters
- 34) Yarrow dated March 24, 2010 - re: PCK
- 35) Abbotsford dated March 22, 2010 - re: FCC, RCN, Indonesia, General Matters
- 36) Lincoln dated March 2, 2010
- 37) Winnipeg-Redeemer dated March 22, 2010 - re: PCK, RCN, IRCK, RCK, General Matters
- 38) Cloverdale dated March 22, 2010 - re: FCS/FCC
- 39) Lynden dated February 8, 2010 - re: General Matters
- 40) Yarrow dated March 25, 2010 - re: RCN

8.4 Overtures

- a) Regional Synod East of November 11, 2009 - Overture regarding Nine Points of URCNA Synod Schererville 2007
- b) Regional Synod East of November 11, 2009 - Overture regarding appointing church or committee for funding theological students

8.5 Appeals

- a) Church at Grassie dated March 31, 2009 - Article 103, 4.4.1.3 Acts Synod Smithers 2007, Theological Education Committee
- b) Church at Hamilton-Cornerstone dated June 15, 2009 (May 21, 2009) - Article 110 Acts Synod Smithers 2007. Restore Apostles Creed into the Forms for Baptism
- c) Church at Toronto dated January 28, 2010 - Article 96 Acts Synod Smithers 2007- Administering the Lord's Supper to shut-ins
- d) Church at Burlington-Fellowship dated October 26, 2009 (October 28, 2009) - Article 10 Acts Regional Synod East Chatham 2008 - Article 6 Classis Central Ontario June 3, 2008, Implementation of Women's voting
- e) Church at Owen Sound dated February 14, 2010 - Article 11 Acts Regional Synod East 2007 - re: announcement of withdrawal,
- f) Church at Carman East appeal December 2, 2009 - Article 74.4.1.3.3 Acts Synod Smithers 2007 - Restricted access to Committee Reports
- g) Church at Grand Valley dated February 10, 2010 - Article 143 Synod Smithers 2007 - Reformed Churches in the Netherlands - Restored. (Gereformeerde Kerken Hersteld)
- h) Rev. Ralph F. Boersema dated March 1, 2010 - Article 5.b. Acts Regional Synod West November 3, 2009 dealing with appeals to Classis Pacific West October 6, 2009 and underlying decisions of the church at Surrey
- i) Church at Fergus-Maranatha dated March 15, 2010 - Article 136 Acts Synod Smithers 2007 - Decision to appoint a committee to study Women's Voting.
- j) Church at Willoughby Heights dated March 8, 2010 - Article 5.a Acts Regional Synod West, November 3, 2009. Manner in which RSW arrived at its decision in light of Article 76 CO
- k) Church at Attercliffe dated March 9, 2010 - Article 83 Acts Synod Smithers 2007 that denied Attercliffe's - re: OPC
- l) Church at Attercliffe dated March 9, 2010 - Article 75 Acts Synod Smithers 2007 - Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the ERQ
- m) Church at Attercliffe dated March 9, 2010 - Article 140 Acts Synod Smithers 2007 - Membership in NAPARC
- n) Church at Burlington-Ebenezer dated March 15, 2010 - Article 96 Acts Synod Smithers 2007 - Objections to procedure and contents of

- o) this article - re: Administration Lord's Supper to Shut-ins
Mr. Maurice Vantil dated January 9, 2010 - Article 5.c Acts Regional Synod West November 4, 2008 - re: appeal decision Article 6 Acts Classis Pacific East September 1, 2006
- p) Mr. Maurice Vantil dated January 18, 2010 - Article 5.d Acts Regional Synod West November 4, 2008 - re: appeal decision Article 9 Acts Classis Pacific East September 16, 2008
- q) Mr. Maurice Vantil dated January 8, 2010 - Article 5.e Acts Regional Synod West November 4, 2008 - re: appeal decision Article 8 Acts Classis Pacific East September 16, 2008
- r) Church at Surrey appeal, undated - Article 166 Acts Synod Smithers 2007 - Capitalization of Pronouns
- s) Church at Surrey dated March 20, 2010 - Article 103 Acts Synod Smithers 2007 decision - re: Federational Seminary
- t) Church at Coaldale dated March 12, 2010 - Article 140 Acts Synod Smithers 2007 - re: decision to join NAPARC
- u) Church at Langley dated March 22, 2010 - Article 74 Acts Synod Smithers 2007 - Restricted access to Committee Reports
- v) Church at Fergus North dated March 24, 2010 - Article 136 Acts Synod Smithers 2007 - Decision to appoint a committee to study Women's Voting
- w) Church at Kerwood dated March 26, 2010 - Article 136 Acts Synod Smithers 2007 - Decision to appoint a committee to study Women's Voting
- x) Church at Kerwood undated - Articles 133 and 143 Acts Synod Smithers 2007 - Decisions regarding relationships with the RCN and the GKH in the Netherlands
- y) Br. Henry Voorhorst dated March 24, 2010 - Article 5.a. Acts Regional Synod West November 3, 2009 dealing with appeals to Classis Pacific West October 7, 2008 --re: singing revised versification of Psalms in the worship services
- z) Mr. Theodore Kingma dated March 23, 2010 - Various decisions consistory of the church at Lynden - re: deposition and excommunication
9. Appointments
10. Censure ad Article 34 CO
11. Publication of the Acts
12. Financial Matters

13. Preparation of next general synod
14. Adoption of the Acts
15. Approval of Press Release
16. Closing

Article 9 – Welcoming Fraternal Delegates and a Speech by the Delegate from the PCK

The chairman welcomed the following fraternal delegates: brs. Wayne Pleiter and Willem VanderVen of the Free Reformed Church of Australia (FRCA); Rev. John A. Bouwers of the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA); the Revs. Jonathan Merica and Lee Johnson of the Reformed Church of the United States (RCUS); and the Rev. Dr. Kyon Ho KWON of the Presbyterian Church of Korea - Kosin (PCK). Rev. DongSup Song of the Reformed Church of Korea (RCK) was welcomed as observer.

Rev. Moesker then introduced Dr. KWON, noting improved interaction between the CanRC and the PCK. After this Dr. KWON addressed the assembly. He greeted all who were present, indicating his pleasure at being able to attend Synod and also that delegates from Canada have been able to attend the Assembly of the PCK. Despite differences between the churches, there is unity as brothers and sisters who have one heavenly Father. He noted the PCK's agreement with the principles brought forward by the CanRC in regard to supervising attendance at the Lord's Supper. He gave some statistics about the PCK and described efforts to instruct the young people and new members to embrace the Reformed faith, mentioning also the use of the Heidelberg Catechism as a teaching tool. In conclusion he wished Synod God's blessings. The full text of his address can be found in *Appendix 2*. Rev. Aasman responded with words of thanks and led in prayer for the PCK. Synod then adjourned for committee work.

Day 1 — Evening Session
Tuesday, May 11, 2010

Article 10 – Reopening

Synod reopened in plenary session. All members were present. In view of the items coming up for discussion, Synod went into closed restricted session, meaning that only the members of Synod were there for the discussion.

Article 11 – Appointment of a Professor of Old Testament

1. Material

- 1.1 Letter with appendices from the Board of Governors of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches with a proposal to fill the vacancy in the department of Old Testament (8.1.c.ii).
- 1.2 Report Board of Governors to General Synod 2010 (8.2.1).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The Board of Governors informs General Synod that it granted Dr. C. Van Dam's request to retire upon the completion of the 2010-2011 academic year.
- 2.2 The Board appointed a Search Committee for a new professor and received input from many churches as well as from the Faculty.
- 2.3 Having investigated several possibilities the Board now requests General Synod 2010 to give leave to the Board to appoint Dr. Jannes Smith of Albany, Australia, as professor of Old Testament.
- 2.4 The Board has supplied Synod with information about Dr. Smith as well as letters of reference.

3. Consideration

Based on the information supplied by the Board of Governors, General Synod deems Dr. Jannes Smith to be well qualified for this position.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To approve the retirement of Dr. C. Van Dam and express deep gratitude for his thirty years of faithful and diligent service to the College and the Churches as professor of Old Testament.
- 4.2 To direct the Board of Governors to appoint Dr. Jannes Smith of Albany, Australia as professor of Old Testament.

ADOPTED

Members of the Board of Governors abstained from voting. The same applies to other decisions involving the Board of Governors.

Article 12 – Appointment of a Professor of Dogmatology

1. Material

- 1.1 Letter with appendices from the Board of Governors of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches with a proposal to fill the vacancy in the department of Dogmatology (8.1.c.i).
- 1.2 Report of Board of Governors to General Synod 2010 (8.2.1).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The Board of Governors informs General Synod that Dr. N.H.Gootjes has been unable to fulfill his professorial duties due to medical issues. On April 21, 2008, he was placed on indefinite sick leave and on December 11, 2008, the Board declared a vacancy in the department of Dogmatology.
- 2.2 The Board of Governors requests General Synod 2010 to give leave to the Board to appoint Dr. Jason P. Van Vliet as professor of Dogmatology.
- 2.3 The Board has supplied Synod with information about Dr. Van Vliet as well as letters of reference.

3. Consideration

Based on the information supplied by the Board of Governors, General Synod deems Dr. Jason Van Vliet to be well qualified for this position.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To express deep gratitude for the work that Dr. N.H.Gootjes was able to accomplish at the Theological College since he began his work in 1990. Synod asks that the churches continue to remember the needs of Dr. Gootjes and his family before the throne of God.
- 4.2 To direct the Board of Governors to appoint Dr. Jason P. Van Vliet, as professor of Dogmatology.

ADOPTED

Rev. Nederveen, chairman of the Board of Governors, and br. Nordeman as

member of the Board of Governors were invited to hear the outcome of the decision.

Synod then went into open session.

Article 13 – Omitting from the Acts Proposals that have been Defeated

1. Material

Proposal by a delegate to omit reference to proposals which have been defeated.

2. Observation

Omitting defeated proposals makes the Acts shorter and easier to read.

3. Consideration

Defeated proposals are Acts of Synod.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to reject the proposal.

ADOPTED

Article 14 – Closing Devotions and Adjournment

Rev. Agema led in closing devotions, reading John 21. He invited the assembly to sing Psalm 33:6 and led in closing prayer. The meeting was then adjourned.

Day 2 — Morning Session Wednesday, May 12, 2010

Article 15 – Opening Devotions and Roll Call

The chairman, Rev. Aasman, reopened Synod by reading Joel 2:1-14 and giving a meditation on it. He requested that Psalm 105:1,2 be sung. After announcing that Dr. Jason Van Vliet has accepted the appointment as professor of Dogmatology at the Theological College, he led the assembly in prayer.

After the roll call, Rev. Aasman welcomed all who were present, including the fraternal delegates, br. Pleiter and br. VanderVen from the FRCA, the Revs. Peter J. Vellenga and Harry Zekveld from the URCNA, and br. Klaas Wezeman from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN). He also acknowledged the presence of Rev. DongSup Song from the RCK as observer.

Synod then adjourned for Committee work.

Day 2 — Evening Session Wednesday, May 12, 2010

Article 16 – Reopening

Rev. Aasman opened the meeting by asking that Psalm 62:1,3 be sung. Roll call took place and all members of Synod were present.

Article 17 – Letter from Churches, Speeches by Various Fraternal Delegates and by an Observer

A letter from the Free Church of Scotland (FCS) was read. They were unable to send a delegation but expressed their appreciation for the relationship with the CanRC.

A letter from the Reformed Church of New Zealand (RCNZ) was read as well. This church was also unable to send a fraternal delegate, but extended warm greetings, commending the brothers at synod to the Lord. They were delighted at the various contacts with delegates from the CanRC and encouraged by cooperation in mission work in Papua New Guinea.

Rev. R. Schouten introduced the delegates from the FRCA, br. Pleiter and br. VanderVen. He commented on the vibrant bonds with these churches and the many things in common with them, including cooperation in support for the Theological College.

Br. Pleiter then addressed the assembly, bringing greetings from the FRCA. He emphasized the various connections with the CanRC and the need to continue to spend time together, strengthening the bond that unites us. The FRCA enjoys growth, also from immigration. There are now fourteen congregations and prospects for further development. Mission work also continues in different parts of the world. Br. Pleiter devoted some time to various questions and concerns and concluded by wishing the CanRC the blessings of the Lord. The full text of his speech can be found in *Appendix 3*. Rev. J. VanWoudenberg introduced the delegates from the URCNA, the Revs. J. Bouwers, P. Vellenga, and H. Zekveld.

Rev. Bouwers gave a speech on behalf of the URCNA. He mentioned statistics in regard to these churches, touching on the fact that many of them are in the United States. There are challenges and difficulties in regard to the unity process. He called for fortitude and commitment in continuing efforts to pursue unity, mentioning as examples of some obstacles the lingering fears in the URCNA of hierarchy as well as tendencies toward congregationalism. Unity may come at the cost of some uniformity among the Canadian Reformed Churches. However, there can be a scriptural multiformity that is

different from a sinful pluriformity. The unity process so far has already been deeply beneficial for both federations as interaction between the churches has heightened. He stressed the importance of face to face dialogue also at the level of Synod, which is to be preferred to communication by “pen and ink.” His speech can be found in *Appendix 4*.

Rev. P. Holtvlüwer introduced the Revs. L. Johnson and J. Merica of the RCUS, giving an overview of the history of various contacts between the RCUS and the CanRC.

Rev. Merica then gave a speech, indicating appreciation for the bonds with the CanRC. He spoke in particular of the faithfulness of the CanRC to the Rules for EF, highlighting the various items that were agreed upon together. The interchurch relationship is very functional and he commended the CanRC for diligence in this, also by challenging the RCUS to self-examination in various ways. In the midst of difficulties, together with Christians of the past, we may confess that “the LORD reigns” (Psalm 93) and in him we have the victory. He expressed the desire of the RCUS to continue to be fellow labourers in the service of the Lord. After reading Titus 2:1-8, he emphasized that the RCUS recognizes the need for their own seminary. In closing, he urged the delegates to remain focused on God’s glory and his Kingdom. The full text of his speech can be found in *Appendix 5*.

Br. J. Kuik introduced Rev. DongSup Song, who came as an observer from the RCK.

Rev. Song then gave an address, describing various factors contributing to the separate existence of the RCK as Reformed Churches. He closed with the prayer that the Lord would enable us to help each other for his name’s sake and for the upbuilding of his people.

Article 18 – Closing Devotions and Adjournment

Rev. DeGelder led in closing devotions, reading Romans 14:1-19, led in closing prayer, and invited the assembly to sing Psalm 84:1,3, and 5. The meeting was then adjourned.

Day 3 — Morning Session Thursday, May 13, 2010

Article 19 – Opening Devotions and Roll Call

Rev. Aasman opened the meeting by requesting that Psalm 33:1 be sung. He then read Joel 2:23-32, gave a meditation on it and led in prayer. Roll call was held and all were present.

Article 20 – Adoption of the Articles 1-14 of the Acts of Synod

Articles 1-14 of the Acts were corrected and adopted. After some discussion on a committee proposal, Synod adjourned for further committee work.

Day 3 — Afternoon Session Thursday, May 13, 2010

Article 21 – Reopening

Rev. Aasman reopened the meeting and asked the assembly to sing Psalm 68:1. All were present for the roll call.

Article 22 – Requests from the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (SCBP)

Committee 3 presented its proposal in regard to requests from the SCBP for “privilege of the floor” and for half an hour to demonstrate some of the revised tunes proposed for the *Book of Praise*. The question was divided and put to a vote.

1. Material

- 1.1 Letter from the SCBP dated September 2009 (8.2.j.ii).
- 1.2 Letter from the SCBP dated February 2010 (8.2.j.iv).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The SCBP in its letter dated September 2009 asks that synod grant the privilege of the floor to representatives of the SCBP that they may participate in the discussion of their proposals.
- 2.2 The SCBP in its letter dated February 2010 asks that synod grant representatives of the committee half an hour of its time to demonstrate the proposed new melodies for Hymns 31 and 46.

3. Consideration

To expedite the work of synod, it would be beneficial to have the representatives of the SCBP respond to questions concerning their report, as well as to demonstrate the proposed new melodies for Hymn 31 and 46.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to grant these requests.

ADOPTED

One member of synod who is a member of the SCBP abstained from voting. To avoid unnecessary repetition it is noted here that he continued to abstain in regard to all subsequent decisions concerning the *Book of Praise*.

**Day 3 — Evening Session
Thursday, May 13, 2010**

Article 23 – Closing Devotions

Rev. Aasman reopened the meeting. He thanked the fraternal delegates from the RCUS for coming and wished them the Lord's blessings in their travels and further work.

Rev. Feenstra gave a meditation on the ascension of Jesus Christ after reading Luke 24:50-53. The assembly then sang Hymn 31:1-3 after which the meeting was adjourned.

**Day 4 — Morning Session
Friday, May 14, 2010**

Article 24 – Opening Devotions and Roll Call

Rev. Aasman opened the meeting by reading Amos 1:1-8 and giving a meditation. He then led in prayer and asked all present to sing Psalm 73:1 and 8. Roll call was held and all were present. He noted that the ash clouds arising above Iceland are hampering air travel. As a result a second delegate from the RCN, Rev. P. Waterval, will not be coming.

Article 25 – Synod Guidelines re: Voting Procedure

Synod Guidelines I.1 stipulates that “The chair shall call the roll (in any order) when a vote is taken.” Given how long this takes, the chairman proposed that voting take place by show of hands to speed up the process. The proposal was put to a vote by roll call and **ADOPTED**.

Article 26 – Adoption of Articles 15-22 of the Acts of Synod

Articles 15-22 of the Acts of Synod were presented and adopted after some corrections.

Article 27 – Appeal from Attercliffe re: Article 83 of Synod Smithers 2007

1. Material

Appeal from Attercliffe against Article 83 of Synod Smithers 2007 (8.5.k).

2. Observations (history of the appeal)

In order to understand the appeal of Attercliffe the following history should be mentioned:

- 2.1 Synod Fergus 1998 (Article 130)
 - 2.1.1 The Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church submitted to Synod Fergus a “Proposed Agreement” for opening the way to EF. This agreement had two sections: one concerning Fencing of the Lord’s Table; the other concerning Confessional Membership (Synod Fergus, Article 130 IV. B).
 - 2.1.2 Synod Fergus added some words to this “Proposed Agreement” before adopting it (Synod Fergus, Article 130 VI).
- 2.2 Synod Neerlandia 2001 (Article 45)
 - 2.2.1 The OPC did not accept the “Proposed Agreement” as revised by Synod Fergus, and thus the matter came to Synod Neerlandia 2001.
 - 2.2.2 Synod Neerlandia decided to establish EF with the OPC on the basis of the original agreement as suggested by the CCOPC to Synod Fergus 1998 (Synod Neerlandia, Article 45).
- 2.3 Synod Chatham 2004 (Article 86)
 - 2.3.1 As can be gathered from the Acts of Synod Chatham 2004 (Attercliffe did not enclose its 2004 submission as part of its current appeal) Attercliffe requested Synod:
 - [3.1.1] To decide that Synod Neerlandia erred in the decision to come to Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the OPC by deleting the words agreed upon by Synod Fergus and doing so without scriptural grounds;
 - [3.1.2] To charge the Committee for Contact with the OPC (CCOPC) to as yet fulfill Synod Fergus’ mandate, namely, “To adopt the proposed agreement as amended... as the basis for Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the OPC, and to instruct the CCOPC to pass it on to the CEIR for adoption by the General Assembly.”
 - 2.3.2 Synod Chatham did not accede to this request from Attercliffe (nor to similar requests from other churches), giving lengthy considerations for this decision.

- 2.4 Attercliffe appealed to Synod Smithers 2007 (cf. Article 83) to reverse Chatham's decision to uphold Synod Neerlandia's decision. Attercliffe was convinced that Synod Neerlandia did indeed err in making its decision about the OPC, and asked that Neerlandia's decision to remove the words Synod Fergus (Article 130) inserted in the agreed statements for the OPC be reinstated. Attercliffe based this appeal on the ground that our practices (re: Lord's Supper) are based on the Church Order, which is in turn based on the Word of God. In Consideration 4.3 of Article 86, Synod Chatham quoted with approval a sentence lifted from the report of the CCOPC: "the amendment inserted by Synod Fergus goes beyond the wording found in the Reformed Confessions." Attercliffe terms this quotation "a false assumption."
- 2.5 Synod Smithers 2007 denied Attercliffe's appeal based on the following considerations:
- [3.1] Attercliffe bases this appeal on its conviction that the *how* of supervising guests at the Lord's table must be a condition for EF. The churches, however, have said years ago that the *how* of supervising guests at the Lord's table "cannot in the end be made a condition for EF" (Abbotsford 1995, Article 106, V.B.3). Appeals against this decision have been denied, and Attercliffe now brings up no new grounds to revisit this decision.
 - [3.2] Synod Chatham correctly notes that a Church Order expresses how churches have agreed to carry out biblical principles in practical church life (Article 86, 4.5). That the Canadian Reformed Churches have bound themselves to a specific Church Order (and hence a certain practice re: supervising guests at the Lord's table) does not mean that the practices described in this Church Order are the only way any church of God could ever supervise the table.
 - [3.3] Attercliffe does not prove that the statement, "the amendment inserted by Synod Fergus goes beyond the wording found in the Reformed Confessions" is, in fact, a false assumption.
- 2.6 Attercliffe now appeals this decision of Synod Smithers on the basis of the following:

- 2.6.1 Though Synod Smithers dealt with the matter of the supervision of the Lord's Supper, it ignored the matter of confessional membership.
- 2.6.2 The Acts of Synod Fergus contain the scriptural and confessional proof for both amended insertions.
- 2.6.3 The amended agreement as adopted by Synod Fergus 1998 has been the historic continental Reformed position for establishing EF that has up until lately been maintained by our churches, while the decisions from 1992 on amount to a foundational shift. If churches wish to make such a shift, then they must appeal previous decisions of Synod concerning the phrase in the baptism and public profession of faith forms which states "summarized in the confessions and taught here in this Christian Church" (Attercliffe references Article 145 of Synod Cloverdale 1983, Article 144 of Synod Burlington 1986, Article 161 of Synod Winnipeg 1989, and Article 122 of Synod Lincoln 1992).
- 2.6.4 A quotation from a Church Order Commentary by I. VanDellen and M. Monsma, stating that a Church cannot remain Reformed without confessing the Reformed fundamentals.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Synod Smithers 2007 indeed did not deal with the issue of confessional membership. However, this matter was dealt with extensively by Synod Chatham 2004. Attercliffe did not bring up any new grounds for revisiting this decision.
- 3.2 To simply state that the Acts of Synod Fergus contain the scriptural and confessional proof for both amended insertions is not an interaction with the considerations of Synod Chatham 2004, and thus cannot be considered "new grounds."
- 3.3 To speak about a "historic continental Reformed position" is nebulous and not helpful. While Attercliffe speaks about the "burden of proof" lying with others, the decisions of Synod Neerlandia were based on lengthy considerations with which Attercliffe did not interact.
- 3.4 Using quotations from authors has its place but does not negate the necessity to interact with the lengthy considerations of Synod Neerlandia.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to declare the appeal inadmissible on the basis of Article 33 of the Church Order.

ADOPTED

Article 28 – Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS)

1. Material

- 1.1 Report of the CCCNA re: the RCUS (Report 5) (8.2.f.1).
- 1.2 Letter from Attercliffe (8.3.F.16).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Smithers 2007 gave the CCCNA the following mandate in regard to the RCUS (Acts 2007, Article 107):
 - [4.2] To continue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship (EF) with the RCUS under the adopted rules. As the CCCNA fulfills its mandate according to these rules, matters of concern raised by the churches (see Observations 2.7-2.11) may continue to be raised when appropriate.
 - [4.3] To endeavour to meet with the RCUS Interchurch Relations Committee at least once a year.
- 2.2 The CCCNA met with the RCUS Interchurch Relations Committee at NAPARC in 2007 and again in 2008.
- 2.3 Dr. A.J. Pol and br. A. Poppe attended the 263rd Synod of the RCUS in 2009
- 2.4 The CCCNA notes with gratitude that the RCUS followed the committee's suggestions regarding the Church Unity Paper to ensure that the language was consistent with the Three Forms of Unity.
- 2.5 The RCUS is seriously considering implementing a system of church visitation.
- 2.6 The RCUS draws its ministers from a variety of seminaries. To date, they have not sent any students to our Theological College in Hamilton.
- 2.7 The CCCNA has responded to the concerns of the RCUS about our position on "Federal Vision" by referring to the Three Forms of Unity.
- 2.8 The church at Attercliffe questions whether the RCUS is serious about following the Rules for EF and suggests that the mandate given to the CCCNA by Synod Smithers is incomplete and allows

matters of concerns described by previous synods to be glossed over. These matters of concerns include Lord's Supper to shut-ins, the fencing of the Lord's Table, Lord's Day observance, and confessional membership.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The CCCNA has fulfilled its mandate to the best of its ability.
- 3.2 Some matters of concern have been addressed.
- 3.3 Consultation with RCUS delegates at General Synod 2010 revealed that RCUS congregations expect all members to abide by and uphold the doctrines confessed in the Three Forms of Unity.
- 3.4 Synod 2004 considered that "it would be beneficial for the churches if the committee (the CCCNA) could share more information" concerning discussions it had with the Inter-Church Relations Committee of the RCUS regarding observance of the Lord's Day and admission to the Lord's Supper (Acts 2004, Article 24, Consideration 4.3).
- 3.5 Consultation with RCUS delegates at General Synod 2010 indicates that a recent RCUS Synod adopted the concept of a denominational seminary.
- 3.6 Although various matters of concern highlighted by previous synods have been discussed both before and after the establishment of EF, there is good reason to continue the dialogue. As Synod Smithers stated in regard to the RCUS: "It is not necessary to state that discussion on particular topics is completed. In the dynamic of church life, opportunities to speak about differences between our federations will remain beneficial" (Article 107, Consideration 3.2). Working toward a more unified position on these significant matters ought to be one of the goals of being churches in EF. This would also address the concerns of Attercliffe mentioned in Observation 2.8.
- 3.7 Synod 2007 also stated: "As churches in EF, we are obliged to 'assist each other in the maintenance, defence and promotion of the Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline, and liturgy, and to be watchful for deviations' (Rule 1). As the CCCNA carries out the CanRC's responsibility towards the RCUS according to this rule, attention can continue to be given to the topics mentioned by the churches when necessary and appropriate" (Acts 2007, Article 107, Consideration 3.3).

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To thank the CCCNA for its work in our relationship with the RCUS.
- 4.2 To mandate the CCCNA as follows:
 - 4.2.1 To continue the relationship of EF with the RCUS under the adopted rules.
 - 4.2.2 To endeavour to meet at least once a year to discuss matters of mutual concern and edification.
 - 4.2.3 To share more detailed information with the churches about the nature and the development of its dialogue with the RCUS.

ADOPTED

Article 29 – Église Réformée du Québec (ERQ)

1. Material

- 1.1 Report of the CCCNA re: the ERQ (8.2.f).
- 1.2 Letter from the church at Ancaster (8.3.F.23).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Smithers 2007 decided to enter into a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship (EF) with the ERQ under the adopted rules and to mandate the CCCNA as follows (Acts 2007, Article 74, Recommendations 4.3.1 - 4.4):
 - [4.3.1] To convey this decision to the next ERQ Synod via the Interchurch Committee (CICR).
 - [4.3.2] To actively engage in the relationship of EF under the adopted rules.
 - [4.3.3] To express to the Interchurch Committee a willingness to provide encouragement and assistance in the adoption of the liturgical forms and in other such matters.
 - [4.3.4] To respond if specific requests for assistance and advice are made on further matters of confession, church polity, liturgy and mission, as per the Rules of EF.
 - [4.3.5] To continue the discussion when appropriate on existing differences in confession and practice with a particular focus on admission to Lord's Supper and the supervision of the pulpit.
 - [4.3.6] To meet and have contact with the ERQ Interchurch Committee and synods if and when invited.

[4.3.7] To encourage the churches to continue supporting the ERQ prayerfully and financially when needed.

[4.4] To encourage the churches to seek out ways and means to develop contacts with individual ERQ churches as is done between Owen Sound and St. Georges.

- 2.2 The CCCNA communicated the decisions of Synod 2007 by letter to the Synod of the ERQ held June 1-2, 2007. In this letter, the Rules for EF were reviewed and the ERQ was requested to consider areas in which the CanRC might assist them financially.
- 2.3 The material provided by the CCCNA indicates that there has been active engagement by the CCCNA with the ERQ in the form of letters, meetings between the CCCNA and the CICR and attendance of ERQ Synods.
- 2.4 The CCCNA discussed with the ERQ the nature and status of liturgical forms among their churches.
- 2.5 The CCCNA learned that the ERQ has adopted a Form for the Public Profession of Faith that is "thoroughly Reformed in character."
- 2.6 The CCCNA has discussed with the ERQ the growing number of ecumenical contacts of our respective federations and discussed the state of relations with third parties.
- 2.7 The CICR of the ERQ requested and received input from the CCCNA in regard to the proposed adoption of a Form for the Baptism of Infants.
- 2.8 The material provided by the CCCNA indicates that there has been considerable discussion at different meetings with the ERQ on the Reformed understanding of supervision of the Lord's Supper and of the pulpit.
- 2.9 The CCCNA states that the ERQ has not yet reached a consensus regarding "a common principle and practice of admission to the Lord's Supper." Instead, a diversity of opinions exists among the minister and elders.
- 2.10 The CCCNA considers that "it would not be wise to continue a mandate that focuses explicitly on these two matters, which should not be belabored unnecessarily."
- 2.11 In light of discussions with the ERQ, the CCCNA considers closer ecclesiastical ties between individual congregations of the ERQ and the CanRC on the model of Owen Sound and St. Georges to be impractical and undesirable at this time.
- 2.12 The CCCNA recommends that Synod decide:

- [6.1] The CCCNA has fulfilled its mandate regarding the ERQ. The CCCNA also recommends that Synod mandate the committee to:
- [6.2] Continue actively engaging in the relationship of EF with the ERQ under the adopted rules;
- [6.3] Continue discussion when appropriate on existing differences in confession and practice, keeping in mind Consideration 5.4. (summarized in Observation 10 above).
- 2.13 The church at Ancaster writes that it finds the report of the CCCNA regarding discussion about the supervision of the Lord's Supper with the ERQ to be vague. While observing that there is "diversity" in the ERQ on this matter, the report does not give any specifics. Because there is little in the way of specific information, Ancaster requests General Synod 2010 to renew the mandate of Synod 2007, namely, "to continue discussion when appropriate on existing differences in confession and practice with a particular focus on admission to the Lord's Supper."

3. Considerations

- 3.1 In accordance with the directives of Synod 2007, the CCCNA has been diligent in implementing and maintaining a relationship of EF with the ERQ. The CCCNA has dialogued extensively with the ERQ in regard to one of the matters highlighted by Synod 2007, namely admission to the Lord's Supper. However, it does not indicate that the same dialogue has occurred in regard to the supervision of the pulpit.
- 3.2 While the CCCNA is correct that the CanRC should not unnecessarily belabor the issues of admission to the Lord's Supper and supervision of the pulpit, these matters are sufficiently important that they should be discussed purposefully and vigorously in the context of Rule 1 of EF. As Synod Smithers stated in regard to the RCUS: "It is not necessary to state that discussion on particular topics is completed. In the dynamic of church life, opportunities to speak about differences between our federations will remain beneficial" (Article 107, Consideration 3.2). Working toward a more unified position on these significant matters ought to be one of the goals of being churches in EF.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To thank the CCCNA for its work in our relationship with the ERQ.
- 4.2 To mandate the CCCNA as follows:
- 4.2.1 To continue the relationship of EF with the ERQ under the adopted rules.
- 4.2.2 To share information about the nature and development of its dialogue with the ERQ.

ADOPTED

Article 30 – Free Reformed Churches of North America (FRCNA)

1. Material

Report of the CCCNA re: the Free Reformed Churches of North America (FRCNA) (8.2.f).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Smithers 2007 gave the CCCNA the following mandate in regard to the FRCNA (Acts 2007, Article 105, Recommendation 4):
- [4.1] To cease from pursuing discussions with the FRCNA
- [4.2] To ask the CCCNA to send a letter to the FRCNA informing it of this decision and expressing the desire to resume contact when there is an interest from their side.
- 2.2 The committee reports that:
- 2.2.1 It communicated to the FRCNA the decisions of Synod Smithers 2007.
- 2.2.2 The Interchurch Relations Committee of the FRCNA:
- 2.2.2.1 Expressed the hope to meet with the CCCNA at venues such as NAPARC and ICRC.
- 2.2.2.2 Requested that future discussions focus on "getting to know each other, e.g. in our various ministries and doctrinal distinctives..."
- 2.2.2.3 Expressed the hope that future talks would "lead to re-establishment of the *Limited Contact* relationship."
- 2.2.3 As response to this, the CCCNA listed the seven meetings held between the respective committees from 1999-2005, along with the topics discussed. The committee also indicated that it did not wish to duplicate previous

discussions, and requested the Interchurch Relations Committee to indicate how to move forward.

- 2.2.4 The Interchurch Relations Committee suggested a meeting of representatives at the next scheduled meeting of NAPARC, and proposed that “we begin by expressing our perception of each other” and “perhaps some misconceptions can be corrected.”
- 2.2.5 The CCCNA reports that brotherly discussions were held during a NAPARC conference, but nothing new came to the fore that had not been discussed before. The brothers of the FRCNA have recommended to their committee to continue further meetings in an informal way at gatherings such as NAPARC.
- 2.2.6 The CCCNA concludes that the FRCNA is not interested at this time in resuming meeting as committees except through informal contacts at such gatherings as NAPARC.
- 2.2.7 The CCCNA recommends that Synod decide:
- [5.1] The CCCNA has fulfilled the mandate regarding the FRCNA;
- [5.2] The CCCNA utilize NAPARC to meet with brothers from the FRCNA within the framework of the basis of the Council.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 On the basis of its report the recommendations of the CCCNA regarding the FRCNA appear to be well founded.
- 3.2 This in effect means that our churches have no formal ecclesiastical relations with the FRCNA.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 That the CCCNA:
- 4.1.1 Has fulfilled the mandate regarding the FRCNA.
- 4.1.2 Utilize NAPARC to meet with brothers from the FRCNA within the framework of the basis of the Council.
- 4.2 To conclude regretfully that our churches at this time have no formal ecclesiastical relations with the FRCNA.

ADOPTED

After various committees requested and received input in developing their proposals, Synod adjourned for further committee work.

Day 4 — Evening Session Friday, May 14, 2010

Article 31 – Reopening

The meeting was reopened in plenary session. The chairman asked all present to sing Psalm 42:1 and 5.

Article 32 – Letter from Attercliffe re: SCBP change to the Acts of Synod 2007

1. Material

Letter from Attercliffe dated Dec. 23, 2008 re: change made to the Acts of Synod Smithers 2007 (8.1.g).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The SCBP observed an obvious error in the published Acts of Synod Smithers 2007, Article 111, 2.6.2, regarding the Form of Subscription for use by consistories.
- 2.2 The SCBP verified the correct wording and used this correct information to fulfil their mandate to revise the Form in the *Book of Praise*.
- 2.3 Attercliffe believes that it is improper for standing committees to take it upon themselves to change the Acts of a previous synod.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 A standing committee cannot and may not make changes to the Acts of a previous synod.
- 3.2 The SCPBP did not make an actual change in the Acts of Synod Smithers 2007, but corrected an obvious clerical error in a Form that it was mandated to revise and distribute to the churches.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide that the SCBP did not make an actual change in the Acts of Synod Smithers 2007.

ADOPTED

Article 33 – Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA)**1. Material**

- 1.1 Report from the CRCA (8.2.m).
- 1.2 Letters from Grand Valley and Attercliffe (8.3.M.6,26).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The CRCA recommends that Synod Burlington-Ebenezer decide:
 - [1.] To maintain the existing sister church relationship 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.
- 2.2 The church of Grand Valley notes that Synod Legana 2009 mandated their deputies “to seek clarification about and discuss the changing manner in which they (the Canadian Reformed Churches) deal with significant differences with other federations in their unity discussion.” The CRCA report does not indicate this matter was discussed. Grand Valley suggests this point be addressed at Synod with the fraternal delegates.
- 2.3 The church at Attercliffe expresses thankfulness for the good relationship with the FRCA and expresses the hope that efforts will be made to intensify our contacts.
- 2.4 Synod Legana 2009 (Article 40) mandated their deputies:
 - 2.4.1 To stay informed on developments concerning the pending merger between the CanRC and the URCNA. [Cf. IV.2.b].
 - 2.4.2 To encourage the CanRC to maintain the principle that the churches maintain a theological college on the basis that the Australian churches use our college. [Cf. IV.2.d].
 - 2.4.3 To encourage the CanRC to continue supporting the FRCA as much as possible in their discussions with the RCNZ. [Cf. IV.2.e].

3. Considerations

- 3.1 From the report and the address of the fraternal delegate at Synod it is evident that the FRCA remain true and faithful churches of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- 3.2 Synod endorses the recommendations of the CRCA.
- 3.3 In his address to Synod the fraternal delegate explained the matter highlighted by the church at Grand Valley. The text of this address is in *Appendix 3* of the Acts.
- 3.4 The sentiment expressed by the church of Attercliffe is in line with the recommendations of the CRCA.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To maintain the existing relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the FRCA under the adopted rules.
- 4.2 To thank the FRCA for its continued and increased support for the Theological College in Hamilton.
- 4.3 To mandate the CRCA as follows:
 - 4.3.1 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.
 - 4.3.2 To keep the FRCA informed on developments regarding our relationship with the URCNA and in particular developments regarding theological education.
 - 4.3.3 To continue supporting the FRCA as much as possible in its discussions with the RCNZ.
 - 4.3.4 To send a delegate to the next synod of the FRCA in 2012.

ADOPTED**Article 34 – Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)****1. Material**

- 1.1 The CCCNA report re: OPC (8.2.f.i).
- 1.2 Overture from the church at London dated March 16, 2010 (8.3.F.18).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The CCCNA report re: OPC serves as observations.
- 2.2 Synod Smithers gave the CCCNA the following mandate regarding the OPC (Acts, Article 131):
 - [4.3] To continue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship (EF) with the OPC under the adopted rules. As the CCCNA fulfils

- its mandate according to these rules, the outstanding matters of confessional membership and supervision of the Lord's Table are to be raised when appropriate;
- [4.4] To endeavour to meet with the CEIR at least once a year.
- 2.3 Among other items in its report the CCCNA indicates that the IPB (Brazil) was invited into a corresponding relationship with the OPC.
- 2.4 The CCCNA recommends that Synod decide:
- [6.1] To thank the Lord for the way in which the OPC actively seeks to provide a faithful Reformed witness in this world, by spreading the gospel in faithfulness to the Reformed Confession.
- [6.2] To mandate the CCCNA to continue the relationship of EF with the OPC under the adopted rules, dealing with outstanding matters as appropriate, and continuing to meet with the CEIR annually.
- 2.5 London suggests that the CCCNA's mandate with regard to the discussions on confessional membership and supervision of the Lord's Table be more strongly worded than suggested by the committee. London states the following, "In making this request, our concern is that these 'outstanding divergencies' have been matters of concern for many, many years now, and that the continued lack of clarity and resolution about these topics has resulted in a degree of unrest within the CanRC federation. Thus, we would urge Synod 2010 to restate this call to continued discussion of the divergencies in a more concrete and forceful way, and in so doing urge CCCNA to bring these matters to the forefront of their interaction with the CEIR in order that these matters might be laid to rest once and for all."

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The report of the CCCNA indicates that the relationship of EF is functioning well.
- 3.2 Regarding the matter of the OPC inviting the IPB (Brazil) into a corresponding relationship, the report does not indicate if this was mutually discussed with our committee (as per the Rules of EF). Mutual discussion on this matter could prove beneficial particularly considering how the Reformed Churches of Brazil (RCB) have for the time being suspended contact with the IPB (CRCA committee report to General Synod 2010, p. 17).
- 3.3 Synod Smithers specifically included in the mandate to the committee a directive regarding the matters of confessional

- membership and supervision to the Lord's Table. In its recommended mandate the committee does not specifically include this.
- 3.4 Since Synod Neerlandia 2001 established EF with the OPC, it is not proper to speak of the topics of confessional membership and supervision of the Lord's Table as "outstanding divergencies." Neither would it be proper to belabour these issues in discussions with the OPC. At the same time it is important that matters of concern highlighted by previous synods not be put aside simply because they have been discussed on several occasions. Instead, in the context of Rule 1 of EF, they should be discussed purposefully and vigorously. Working toward a more unified position on these significant matters ought to be one of the goals of being churches in EF. As Synod Smithers stated in regard to the RCUS: "It is not necessary to state that discussion on particular topics is completed. In the dynamic of church life, opportunities to speak about differences between our federations will remain beneficial" (Article 107, Consideration 3.2).

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To thank the CCCNA for its work in our relationship with the OPC.
- 4.2 To thank the Lord for the way in which the OPC actively seeks to provide a faithful Reformed witness in this world, by spreading the gospel in faithfulness to the Reformed Confession.
- 4.3 To mandate the CCCNA as follows:
- 4.3.1 To continue the relationship of EF with the OPC under the adopted rules.
- 4.3.2 To discuss with the OPC its decision to establish corresponding relations with the IPB.
- 4.3.3 To share information about the nature and development of its dialogue with the OPC.

ADOPTED

Article 35 – Appeal from Burlington-Ebenezer re: Administering the Lord's Supper to Shut-ins

1. Material

Appeal from Burlington-Ebenezer dated March 15, 2010 re: Procedure – Article 96, Acts of Synod Smithers 2007 (8.5.n).

2. Observations

- 2.1 In its appeal, Burlington-Ebenezer addresses two aspects. This letter deals with procedure as well as content and the content will be dealt with separately.
- 2.2 Burlington-Ebenezer observes that Synod Smithers received an overture from Regional Synod West 2006 that sought a revision to several Church Order articles.
- 2.3 Burlington-Ebenezer observes that the churches of Regional Synod East did not have the opportunity to interact with the overture.
- 2.4 Burlington-Ebenezer suggests that all the churches of the federation should have opportunity to interact with overtures that will appear on the agenda of general synod.
- 2.5 Burlington-Ebenezer asks Synod 2010 to judge that Synod 2007 erred in dealing with and deciding on the overture because not all the churches had the opportunity to interact with the overture.
- 2.6 Burlington-Ebenezer further requests that General Synod 2010 decide:
- [1.] That any overture adopted by a regional synod for submission to general synod must also be sent to the churches in the other regional synod(s) for input;
 - [2.] That if the churches in the other parts of the country have not seen the overture, general synod declares the submission inadmissible;
 - [3.] To make this decision part of the General Synod Guidelines.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 There is currently no regulation that requires that overtures adopted by a regional synod be distributed to all the churches of the federation.
- 3.2 Since the matters on the agenda of general synod involve the churches in common, it would be appropriate for regional synods to distribute copies of adopted overtures to all the churches in the federation.
- 3.3 Since regional synods meet in November, six months prior to the convening of a general synod, it would be appropriate to require that the overtures be sent to all the churches no later than five months prior to the convening of a general synod.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 That Synod Smithers 2007 did not err in dealing with and deciding on the overture in question.
- 4.2 That any overture adopted by a regional synod for submission to a general synod be distributed to all the churches no later than five months prior to the general synod.
- 4.3 To add this provision to the Guidelines for Synod under the new heading, Overtures, between sections 3 and 4.
- 4.4 To instruct the clerk of Synod to notify the next Regional Synod East and Regional Synod West of this change in the Guidelines for Synod.

ADOPTED**Article 36 – Closing devotions**

Rev. J. Moesker read Hebrews 7:23-28 and the assembly then sang Psalm 110:1 and 4. He closed the meeting in prayer and the meeting was adjourned.

**Day 5 — Morning Session
Monday, May 17, 2010**

Article 37 – Opening Devotions and Roll Call

Rev. Aasman opened the meeting by requesting all present to sing Psalm 97:1 and 5, reading Amos 9, and giving a meditation. He then led in prayer. Roll call was held and all were present. After some general discussion, Synod was adjourned for committee work.

**Day 5 — Evening Session
Monday, May 17, 2010**

Article 38 – Reopening

Rev. Aasman reopened the meeting and after noting that all members of Synod were present, welcomed the guests, noting in particular the arrival of Rev. Ben Westerveld of l'Église Réformée du Québec (ERQ), Rev. Dirk M. Boersma of the Free Reformed Churches of South Africa (FRCSA), and the Revs. Jack Sawyer and Everett Henes of the OPC.

Article 39 – Presentation by the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise*

Opportunity was given to Rev. G.Ph. van Popta to give a presentation on various aspects of the music of the *Book of Praise*, with musical accompaniment by Dr. A.J. de Visser.

Article 40 – Addresses by Dr. J.P. Van Vliet and Dr. C. Van Dam

Rev. Aasman briefly outlined the developments leading to the appointment of Dr. J.P. Van Vliet to the position of professor of Dogmatology and then gave him the opportunity to give a speech to the assembly. After this, he invited Dr. C. Van Dam to address all who were present. Their speeches can be found in *Appendices 6 and 7* of the Acts.

Rev. Aasman thanked Dr. Van Dam for his many contributions for the benefit of the Theological College and the life of the churches. He also indicated that as a visible sign of appreciation for faithful service rendered, a gift would be given on behalf of the churches: a high quality reproduction of a painting to be chosen by Dr. Van Dam.

Article 41 – Meeting with delegates of the URCNA

1. Material

- 1.1 The main report of the Ecclesiastical Unity Coordinators submitted to General Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 (8.2.a.i).
- 1.2 Supplementary Letter of the Coordinators Church Unity of the Canadian Reformed Churches (8.2.a.ii).
- 1.3 Letters from the Churches at Hamilton-Providence (8.3.A.1), Toronto-Bethel (8.3.A.2), Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.A.5), Flamborough (8.3.A.6), Neerlandia (8.3.A.7), Ancaster (8.3.A.11), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.A.3), Edmonton-Immanuel (8.3.A.4), Glanbrook (8.3.A.10), Abbotsford (8.3.A.12), Barrhead (8.3.A.17), and Cloverdale (8.3.A.16).

2. Observations

- 2.1 In their main report, the Coordinators mention that the members of the ecumenical relations committees of both churches met together from Oct. 30-31, 2008 in Hamilton. They state that this was “the second time the two committees sat around the table together.” Furthermore, they remark that “the meeting was characterized by a warm, frank, and brotherly exchange of questions and answers.” They add: “it is helpful for brothers in the Lord to come face-to-face.”

- 2.2 In their main report, the Coordinators refer to a proposal from the church at Lincoln about “face to face meetings between the delegates of our respective synods and representatives of our respective federations, where the concerns and questions could be presented, and responses could be received.” The Coordinators recommend in 7.3 of their report that this proposal of Lincoln be implemented.
- 2.3 In their Supplementary Report the Coordinators report that they were invited to a face-to-face meeting by Classis Southwest of the URCNA meeting in Escondido, CA on January 19-20, 2010. In their stead, Dr. J.P. Van Vliet and Dr. G.H. Visscher visited this Classis and answered quite a number of outstanding questions. The Coordinators attach both the questions asked and the answers given to their report.
- 2.4 The following churches express their agreement with *all* the recommendations of the coordinators report: Hamilton-Providence, Toronto-Bethel, Fergus-Maranatha, Flamborough, Neerlandia, and Ancaster.
- 2.5 The following churches express their agreement with the recommendations of the coordinators report, with the exception of Recommendation 7.3 (the proposal of Lincoln): Attercliffe, Burlington-Ebenezer, Edmonton-Immanuel, Glanbrook, Abbotsford, Barrhead and Cloverdale.
- 2.6 The church at Winnipeg-Redeemer endorses Recommendation 7.3.
- 2.7 Burlington-Ebenezer does not support this recommendation for two reasons:
 - [1.] Ecclesiastical unity should only be sought and implemented on the basis of Scripture and the Confessions.
 - [2.] Such face to face meetings are impractical given the nature of synods and, especially for the URCNA, the limited time available.
- 2.8 Edmonton-Immanuel does not support the same for the following reasons. Given the short time frame before General Synod, the proposal of Lincoln would not be a practical solution as many churches would not have time or take the opportunity to respond. The problem is that either federation may not be well represented using this model. We should strive to have discussions at the formal (written) level rather than informally between a select few representatives and members of synod.
- 2.9 Glanbrook does not support the same for the following reason. Their concern is that the proposal from Lincoln is premature considering this statement from the committee on page 15 of their report: “it

would be more beneficial to deal with these matters in light of the decisions of the next Synod of the URCNA (London).”

- 2.10 Attercliffe questions the wisdom of Recommendation 7.3 stating that its validity is countered by Consideration 6.4 where the committee doubts the value and status of face-to-face meetings.
- 2.11 Barrhead expresses concern about the recommendation of 7.3 to implement the proposal of Lincoln, as they find the idea of a “public discussion” at this stage of our communication with the URCNA open to being volatile and counter-productive.
- 2.12 Abbotsford suggests that Synod seriously consider the option of having a session together with the URCNA Synod which is to meet a few months later in London. The reasons for this suggestion are: costs are not prohibitive, a combined session purely for the purposes of understanding each other better (asking the questions Lincoln is asking for) could give more clarity on what the URCNA as a federation wants, and while the written word is important, face to face meetings have their own value (2 John 12; 3 John 13-14.)

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The Coordinators Report indicates that the face-to-face meetings that our ecumenical committee had in the past with the URCNA committee have been helpful and not at all impractical, volatile or counter-productive. Furthermore, from the URCNA representatives present at Synod Burlington-Ebenezer, plus the address of the Rev. J.A. Bouwers of the URCNA, we learned that the Escondido face-to-face meeting at which Dr. J.P. Van Vliet and Dr. G.H. Visscher were present was extremely helpful in answering outstanding questions and clearing up misunderstandings.
- 3.2 In view of the success of these previous face-to-face meetings, there is value in Synod Burlington-Ebenezer giving serious consideration to taking the same approach.
- 3.3 No proof is given that such an approach undermines the fact that unity is ultimately based on Scripture and confession.
- 3.4 While the Coordinators believe that an official reaction to the Nine Statements of Schererville should wait until after Synod London, they support a face-to-face meeting on other outstanding issues.
- 3.5 A number of churches submitted a list of questions which would make a face-to-face meeting at this time beneficial.
- 3.6 While it is true that the time frame we are working with is limited, there are sufficient questions from both sides for such a meeting to

prove beneficial. At the same time it may be possible in the future to have more face-to-face meetings in various places to answer questions and clear up misunderstandings. All of this does not come in the place of formal or structured discussions.

- 3.7 The church at Attercliffe misunderstands the thrust of the Coordinators remarks for while they are reluctant to speak on behalf of the whole federation, they see the merit of a face-to-face meeting and thus support the proposal of Lincoln.
- 3.8 The church at Abbotsford strongly supports a face-to-face meeting; however, it suggests that Synod adjourn and meet again later. The costs and time commitments, however, make such a meeting impractical, especially at this late juncture.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To support the proposal of the church at Lincoln, taken over by the Coordinators, for a face-to-face meeting between the members of Synod and delegates from the United Reformed Churches.
- 4.2 To set aside at least one hour on Wednesday evening, May 19, 2010 for delegates from the United Reformed Churches to answer questions submitted to them by the churches and delegates.
- 4.3 To delegate the coordinators along with Dr. J.P. Van Vliet and Dr. G.H. Visscher to represent the Canadian Reformed Churches at a similar session proposed for the Synod of the United Reformed Churches that will meet in London, Ontario in July of 2010.

ADOPTED

Article 42 – Orthodox Christian Reformed Church (OCRC)

1. Material

Report from the CCCNA re: the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church (OCRC) (8.2.f).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Smithers gave the CCCNA the following mandate in regard to the OCRC (Acts 2007, Article 106, Recommendation 4.1): “to send a letter to the OCRC asking if there is interest in further discussions.”
- 2.2 The CCCNA reports that:
- 2.2.1 The mandated letter was sent.
- 2.2.2 The OCRC accepted an invitation to join the URCNA.

- 2.3 The CCCNA recommends that Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 decide:
- [4.1] The CCCNA has fulfilled the mandate regarding the OCRC.
- [4.2] No further efforts need to be undertaken as many churches of the OCRC are now part of the URCNA.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The CCCNA has indeed fulfilled its mandate regarding the OCRC.
- 3.2 Since the OCRC as a federation has dissolved, and since most churches have joined the URCNA, no further efforts need to be undertaken on a federative level.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide the CCCNA has fulfilled the mandate regarding the OCRC.

ADOPTED

Article 43 – Appeal from Attercliffe re: NAPARC

1. Material

Appeal from the Attercliffe consistory against the decision of Synod Smithers 2007 re: NAPARC (8.5.m).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Attercliffe appeals the decision of Smithers 2007 to join NAPARC.
- 2.2 Attercliffe received NAPARC's "Golden Rule Comity Agreement" subsequent to Synod 2007 and believes that this document gives evidence of a defective, denominationalist view of Christ's church.
- 2.3 Attercliffe received NAPARC's "Agreement on Transfer of Members and Congregations" subsequent to Synod 2007 and believes that this document works with what it considers the invalid assumption that all member churches of NAPARC are in a relationship of EF.
- 2.4 Attercliffe is concerned that the "Agreement on Transfer of Members and Congregations" allows for geographically overlapping member churches without any sense that these churches ought to seek organic unity or EF.
- 2.5 Attercliffe states that had the implications of membership in NAPARC as set forth in the "Golden Rule Comity Agreement" and the "Agreement on Transfer of Members and Congregations" been known prior to Synod 2007, this would have "alerted the churches to the wrong consequences of NAPARC membership."

- 2.6 Attercliffe objects to the word "distinctives" used in the CCCNA Report to Synod regarding NAPARC. Attercliffe asserts that the term "distinctive" may only be used to show how some churches are faithful in comparison to those which are not.
- 2.7 Attercliffe believes that the decision of Smithers to join NAPARC conflicts with Article 145 of Synod Cloverdale 1983, Article 144 of Synod Burlington 1986, Article 161 of Synod Winnipeg 1989 and Article 122 of Synod Lincoln 1992.

3. Consideration

The self-described "appeal" of Attercliffe is more like an overture than an appeal in that it challenges the decision of Smithers 2007 not in terms of the stated grounds of that decision but in terms of information that came to light subsequent to Synod 2007. For this reason, the appeal should be denied but the relevant content of Attercliffe's submission can be considered along with other letters from the churches relating to the CCCNA Report on NAPARC.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to deny the appeal of Attercliffe.

ADOPTED

Article 44 – Appeal from Coaldale re: NAPARC

1. Material

Appeal from the church at Coaldale re: Article 140 of the Acts of Synod Smithers 2007 (8.5.t).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Coaldale appeals the decision of Synod Smithers to join the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council.
- 2.2 Coaldale informs Synod that some months before March 12, 2010, it received from the CCCNA a document which set forth some of the implications of membership in NAPARC.
- 2.2.1 In the first place, the CCCNA informed Coaldale that membership in NAPARC means agreement with a statement entitled "The Golden Rule Comity Agreement."
- 2.2.1.1 Point 4 of this "Comity Agreement" stipulates that member churches of NAPARC "will encourage our regional

- home missions leadership to develop good working relationships.”
- 2.2.1.2 Coaldale mentions that there is both a PCA and a FRCNA congregation in its geographical area. Both of these federations are members of NAPARC.
- 2.2.1.3 Coaldale goes on to write: “If we were to honour this agreement locally, this would mean that we have a duty to try to develop good working relationships with the home mission leadership of the local PCA and FRCNA. This implies that we ought to also work together. This seems odd to us since we do not have EF with the PCA nor the FRCNA. We have never heard anyone in our federation suggest that we ought to pursue EF with the PCA and our last synod specifically decided that we ‘Cease from pursuing discussions with the FRCNA’ (Synod Smithers 2007, Article 104, 4.1.)”
- 2.2.1.4 Coaldale also states: “We believe that prior to working together on the level of church planting, we ought to first establish EF with one another.”
- 2.2.2 Coaldale also communicates to Synod that it was informed by the CCCNA that in becoming a member church of NAPARC the CanRC have also agreed to the “NAPARC Agreement on Transfer of Members and Congregations.”
- 2.2.2.1 This document stipulates “that in the regular transfer of membership between NAPARC churches, the session/consistory or presbytery/classis not receive a member until appropriate document of transfer is in the hands of the receiving church.”
- 2.2.2.2 Coaldale considers that the stipulation mentioned in 2.2.2.1 amounts to an agreement to receive each other’s members on the basis of an attestation which Coaldale considers improper since some

- member churches of NAPARC are not in a relationship of EF with the CanRC.
- 2.2.2.3 Coaldale also points out that should it not receive a member of a NAPARC church on the basis of an appropriate “document of transfer,” or refuse to grant an attestation to a NAPARC-affiliated Church, the “NAPARC Agreement on Transfer of Members and Congregations” provides for a “Recourse and Appeal” under which NAPARC-affiliated churches could appeal to the CCCNA or to a classis or a Synod that Coaldale acted inappropriately.
- 2.3 Coaldale expresses concern that the churches were not informed about the implications of membership in NAPARC until after Synod Smithers made the decision to join this body.
- 2.3.1 Coaldale recognizes that the CCCNA report to Synod Chatham 2004 did inform the churches that one of the purposes and functions of NAPARC is to “promote cooperation wherever possible and feasible on the local and denominational level in such areas as missions, relief efforts, Christian schools and church education.” However Coaldale considers that the implications of this statement were not spelled out for the churches.
- 2.3.2 Coaldale is concerned that the churches were never given any indication about the contents of the “NAPARC Agreement on Transfer of Members and Congregations” until after we had agreed to join NAPARC,” which means that the churches never had opportunity to discuss these documents prior to taking this decision.

3. Consideration

The self-described “appeal” of Coaldale is more like an overture than an appeal in that it challenges the decision of Smithers 2007 not in terms of the stated grounds of that decision but in terms of information that came to light subsequent to Synod 2007. For this reason, the appeal should be denied but the content of Coaldale’s submission can be considered along with other letters from the churches relating to the CCCNA Report on NAPARC.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to deny the appeal of Coaldale.

ADOPTED

Article 45 – Appeal from Burlington-Ebenezer re: Administering the Lord’s Supper to Shut-ins

1. Material

Appeal from Burlington-Ebenezer re: Article 96 of the Acts Synod Smithers 2007 re: Administering the Lord’s Supper to shut-ins (8.5.n – Contents – part 1).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Smithers 2007 dealt with an overture from Regional Synod West 2006 (RSW) asking that Article 56 of the CO be changed to accommodate the administration of the Lord’s Supper to shut-ins.
- 2.2 Burlington-Ebenezer observes that “in Article 96 Synod Smithers 2007, Observation 2.2, synod lists the argument of RSW 2006 that administering the Lord’s Supper to shut-ins is a matter living in the churches.”
- 2.3 Burlington-Ebenezer makes the following comments:
- 2.3.1 The term “it is living in the churches” is an undefined term. Such a blanket statement is not necessarily a correct statement.
- 2.3.2 The suggestion that something is living in the churches is a non-argument but one that, sadly, is given credence. Over the years it has taken on a life of its own. Previous synods have used the argument for not dealing with a matter because it supposedly does not live in the churches. Here we have a suggestion that it does live in the churches. In either case such a statement should never have an impact on a synod’s consideration or decision. Synods need to come to a decision based on the merits of the case and whether the grounds for seeking a change are right or not. Whether something is living or not living in the churches is immaterial and should be flagged as such by synod or, better still, not be mentioned at all in the observations as it has no bearing on the case.
- 2.4 Burlington-Ebenezer therefore requests that General Synod 2010 decide:

“That any suggestion to synod that something is living or not living in the churches is deemed immaterial to the case and should be flagged as such by synod or not be listed in the observations as it has no bearing on the case.”

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The observation that a particular matter is “living in the churches” is simply a way of indicating that interest or concern about this particular matter exists among the churches, and thus, may be worthy of consideration by synod.
- 3.2 As found in Observation 2.2 of Article 96 of the Acts of Synod Smithers 2007, the expression merely indicates that this was one of the grounds of the overture presented to RSW 2006 by the church at Smithers.
- 3.3 Though the expression in itself is somewhat indefinite, the presence or absence among the churches of interest or concern about a particular matter may indeed form part of the rationale for synod in deciding how to deal with that matter.
- 3.4 The weight given to such a ground must be left to the wisdom of synod.
- 3.5 It would be improper for a synod to make the judgment “that any suggestion to synod that something is living or not living in the churches is deemed immaterial to the case and should be flagged as such by synod or not be listed in the observations as it has no bearing on the case.”

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to deny the appeal of Burlington-Ebenezer.

ADOPTED

Article 46 – Closing devotions

Rev. J. VanWoudenberg gave a meditation on Revelation 12:13 – 13:1, after which he led in closing prayer. The assembly then sang Psalm 35:1 and 4, and the meeting was adjourned.

Day 6 — Morning Session
Tuesday, May 18, 2010

Article 47 – Opening Devotions and Roll Call

Rev. Aasman opened the meeting by requesting all present to sing Psalm 95:1-5. He read Obadiah and gave a meditation, after which he then led in prayer. Roll call was held and all were present.

Article 48 – Adoption of the Articles 23-36 of the Acts of Synod

Articles 23-36 of the Acts were adopted following minor changes. After some general discussion on the revised *Book of Praise*, Psalm 96:1,2 was sung and Synod was adjourned for further committee work.

Day 6 — Evening Session
Tuesday, May 18, 2010

Article 49 – Reopening

Rev. Aasman opened the meeting by asking everyone to sing Psalm 63:2,3. All the members of Synod were present.

Article 50 – Adoption of Articles 37-46 of the Acts of Synod

Articles 37-46 of the Acts were adopted after minor changes.

Article 51 – Committee for the Funding of the Pastoral Training Program

1. Material

- 1.1 Report from the Pastoral Training Program Funding Committee (PTP): the church at Guelph (8.2.h).
- 1.2 Letters from the churches of Burlington-Fellowship (8.3.H.1) and Flamborough (8.3.H.2).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Smithers 2007 appointed the church at Guelph as the PTP funding committee (Acts, Article 159) with the following mandate (Acts, Article 78):
 - [4.11.1.1] To look after all internship-related funding matters.
 - [4.11.1.2] To determine a reasonable compensation for an internship, and to develop guidelines for such a compensation.

[4.11.1.3] To assess the churches each year based on the anticipated funding required for a particular summer.

[4.11.1.4] To report about their activities to the next General Synod, which report shall be sent to all the churches.

- 2.2 Synod Smithers appointed as liaison between the College and this committee the PTP Coordinator (Acts, Article 78).
- 2.3 The church at Guelph appointed its own committee to do this work.
- 2.4 This committee formulated a document entitled “The Committee for Pastoral Training Program Funding,” describing its mandate, membership, duties of its members, the manner of appointment of Committee members, auditors of the financial records, and the requirement to prepare triennially a report for submission to the churches prior to general synod.
- 2.5 In connection with the second item of its mandate above, the committee:
 - 2.5.1 Considered that the Pastoral Training Program is an educational program that endeavours to equip students more fully for their future task among God’s people.
 - 2.5.2 Developed guidelines regarding compensation of students in the PTP, assessment of the churches, how to help foreign students in fulfilling the requirements of the PTP, and how to assist the churches with advice regarding employment of students and payroll deductions.
 - 2.5.3 Submitted a report of its activities to the churches.
- 2.6 The committee reports which students were funded by the program in the summers of 2008 and 2009.
- 2.7 The committee reports that one student, although being an Australian citizen and therefore a foreign student, was able to obtain a work permit from the Canadian Department of Immigration and Citizenship. The committee noted that this may constitute an implicit recognition by the Canadian government of the PTP as a Co-op Student Program of Studies commonly administered by Canadian Universities.
- 2.8 The committee reports that Dr. A.J. de Visser composed an outline for the churches employing students regarding the funding of summer internships which emphasized that a summer internship ideally has a length of 12 weeks. In line with this the committee

- decided to provide funding for a 12 week training period. It also decided to pay travel costs to students employed in western Canada
- 2.9 The committee reports that its books were audited and its records were found to be in good order.
- 2.10 The committee reports that it received a request for information about the PTP funding from the Deputies for Training for the Ministry of the FRCA. Synod Legana 2009 of the FRCA decided to adopt an Australian adaptation of the guidelines for the PTP and to charge the deputies with the task to monitor the practical implications of including the Australian Churches in the PTP of the College and to collect and disburse funds for this purpose in accordance with its guidelines.
- 2.11 Burlington-Fellowship expresses appreciation for the report but also comes to the conclusion that “it is unfortunate that Synod 2007 did not stick to the original plan to have this administered by the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches as was clearly intended by decisions made at previous Synods.” While agreeing that remuneration of students should be taken care of by the employing church rather than the Theological College, Burlington-Fellowship believes the program and funding process should simply be included in the regular activity of the College. In this way “the churches would avoid extra resources to administer.” Burlington-Fellowship therefore recommends that Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010:
- [1.] Rescind Synod 2007 decision to set up separate Pastoral Training Program Funding Committee.
 - [2.] Dissolve current committee, and pass all their good work and processes on to the Theological College.
 - [3.] Instruct the Theological College to adopt and assume responsibility for funding mechanism developed by the Guelph committee by including this in their general per communicant member assessment.
 - [4.] Instruct the Theological College to implement process for formation of a simple agreement with Churches who make use of the program to ensure that Churches assume legal liability of their hired student Pastor.
- 2.12 Flamborough recommends that the current PTP Funding Committee continues to look after all internship related funding matters according to the developed guidelines.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The committee appears to have done its work very well, and the funding program appears to be working very well.
- 3.2 Synod Smithers 2007 (Article 78) explained why the Fund needed to be administered by one of the churches.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To express gratitude to the Emmanuel Canadian Reformed Church at Guelph and its committee for the work done.
- 4.2 To reappoint the Emmanuel Canadian Reformed Church as the PTP funding committee with the following mandate:
- 4.2.1 To look after all internship-related funding matters.
 - 4.2.2 To assess the churches each year based on the anticipated funding required for a particular summer.
 - 4.2.3 To report about their activities to the next general synod, which report shall be sent to all the churches.

ADOPTED

The members of Synod who belong to the church at Guelph abstained from voting.

Article 52 – North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC)

1. Material

- 1.1 Report of the CCCNA re: NAPARC – Report 7 (8.2.1).
- 1.2 Letters from Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.F.21), Ancaster (8.3.F.22), as well as appeals from Attercliffe (8.5.m), and Coaldale (8.5.t).

2. Observations

- 2.1 General Synod 2007 decided to instruct the CCCA (now the CCCNA) to “apply for membership in NAPARC” (Acts 2007, page 155).
- 2.2 Members of the CCCNA attended the annual meetings of NAPARC in 2007 and 2008.
- 2.3 The application of the CanRC for membership was submitted to the 2007 meeting of NAPARC. The CanRC delegates were seated as observers.
- 2.4 At the 2008 meeting of NAPARC, it was made known that the

- application of the CanRC for membership had been ratified by the member churches. The CanRC were officially welcomed as full members and were seated as such.
- 2.5 The CCCNA states that attending NAPARC meetings has been beneficial in gaining insight into churches with whom we have EF or contact.
- 2.6 The CCCNA has taken advantage of the NAPARC meetings to organize their own meetings with the Inter-Church Relation Committees of the ERQ, RCUS, OPC and the RPCNA.
- 2.7 Dr. A.J. Pol of the CCCNA has been appointed to be involved in the work of the interim committee of NAPARC which prepares the agenda for the plenary sessions of this Council and comes with recommendations for the decision-making process.
- 2.8 The CCCNA recommends that Synod mandate the CCCNA to continue representing the CanRC at NAPARC.
- 2.9 The Report of the CCCNA to Synod includes two appendices with detailed information about the 2007 and 2008 meetings of NAPARC.
- 2.10 Fergus-Maranatha expresses concern about the “Golden Rule of Comity Agreement” (GRCA) and the “NAPARC Agreement on Transfer of Members.” This church considers that these documents are at odds with the assurance provided by the CCCNA to Synod 2007 in regard to NAPARC that “all actions and decisions taken are advisory in character and in no way curtail or restrict the autonomy of the member bodies” (Acts 2007, Article 140, Consideration 3.2). In addition, Fergus-Maranatha considers that the aforesaid documents of NAPARC restrict the autonomy of local consistories of the CanRC in doing church gathering work and in admitting members from churches with which there is no official relationship in that they compel CanRC consistories to acknowledge the members and the work of churches with whom there is no synodically established EF. Fergus-Maranatha recommends that:
- [1.] Synod Burlington 2010 . . . recognize that the concept of pluriformity has been put into practice by applying for membership in NAPARC and that the dangers of pluriformity are clearly evident in the rules associated with membership.
- [2.] Synod Burlington 2010 reaffirm the decisions of past synods, that NAPARC has no ecclesiastical status.
- [3.] Synod Burlington 2010 revoke the membership in NAPARC

- unless the “NAPARC Agreement on Transfer of Members” and the “GRCA” are removed.
- 2.11 The church at Ancaster expresses concern that the GRCA essentially compels the CanRC to acknowledge, e.g., the Presbyterian Church in America as a true church while no Synod of the CanRC has ever made such a judgment. Ancaster requests Synod 2010 to review the GRCA in light of the above mentioned concern and, if necessary, to instruct the CCCNA to deal with this matter at the next meeting of NAPARC.
- 3. Considerations**
- 3.1 The CCCNA has fulfilled the mandate given to it by Synod 2007 and has been diligent in representing the CanRC at NAPARC.
- 3.2 The CCCNA has served the churches well by providing lengthy reports of the NAPARC meetings.
- 3.3 The GRCA and the “NAPARC Agreement on Transfer of Members” were not available to Synod Smithers 2007 and were not evaluated by the CCCNA. These documents do appear to have some binding applications to member churches of NAPARC which would seem to contradict the information supplied by the CCCNA to Synod Chatham 2004 as follows: “The committee reports on the history, membership, basis, purpose and function of NAPARC. It also addresses the authority of this Council, stating that it is understood that all actions and decisions taken are advisory in character and in no way curtail or restrict the autonomy of the member bodies” (Acts of Synod Chatham 2004, Article 30, Observation 3.2). Therefore, the concerns expressed by Fergus-Maranatha and by Ancaster merit further investigation.
- 4. Recommendation**
- That Synod decide:
- 4.1 To thank the CCCNA for the work it has done in relation to NAPARC.
- 4.2 To mandate the CCCNA:
- 4.2.1 To continue to represent the CanRC at NAPARC.
- 4.2.2 To investigate the status and the implications of the “Golden Rule Comity Agreement” and the “NAPARC Agreement on Transfer of Members and Congregations” in order to determine whether or not these agreements interfere with

the independence of the CanRC in regard to establishing relationships of EF with other federations.

- 4.2.3 To serve the next synod with a report to be sent to the churches at least six months prior to the beginning of synod.

ADOPTED

Article 53 – Closing Devotions

Rev. D. Wynia read Ephesians 5:15-17 and the assembly then sang Psalm 1:1-3. He closed in prayer, after which the chairman adjourned the meeting.

Day 7 — Morning Session Wednesday, May 19, 2010

Article 54 – Opening Devotions and Roll Call

Rev. Aasman opened the meeting by asking everyone to sing Psalm 146:1-3. He read Jonah 1, gave a meditation, and then led in prayer. Roll call was held and all were present.

Article 55 – Adoption of Articles 47-53 of the Acts of Synod

Articles 47-53 of the Acts were adopted.

Article 56 – Appeals re: Administering the Lord’s Supper to Shut-ins

1. Material

Letters from Toronto-Bethel (8.5.c) and Burlington-Ebenezer (8.5.n, Contents – Part 3) .

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Smithers 2007 dealt with an overture from Regional Synod West 2006 (RSW) asking that the CO Article 56 be changed to accommodate the administration of the Lord’s Supper to shut-ins.
- 2.2 In Article 96, Consideration 3.1, General Synod Smithers 2007 agreed with four considerations of RSW 2006, listed earlier in Article 96:
- [2.6.1] It is not the numbers of attendees nor the venue that constitutes a “public worship service,” but the presence of office bearers together with congregation members (the ‘form of the church’).

[2.6.2] The current recognition of the form of the church in multiple places can by extension be applied to extraordinary circumstances in the congregation, in the sense that the consistory could have a worship service for those who cannot come to the normal gathering. In principle this does not differ from a consistory calling the congregation at two times (e.g., because the building is too small, necessitating two services back to back) or calling the congregation together at two locations (e.g., because members live too far apart).

[2.6.3] Consistories are responsible for the pastoral care of the members. If in a consistory’s judgment a shut-in member requires the encouragement contained in the Lord’s Supper, consistory ought to do what it can to provide that encouragement.

[2.6.4] Even if an alteration to the Church Order is not deemed necessary, a decision on the topic by synod may be beneficial for the churches.

- 2.3 Synod Smithers 2007 decided that no change to the Church Order was necessary.
- 2.4 Toronto-Bethel requested advice from Classis Ontario North on the matter of administering the Lord’s Supper to shut-ins.
- 2.5 Classis Ontario North December 11, 1987 advised Toronto-Bethel as follows:
- 2.5.1 The churches have agreed that private celebrations of the Lord’s Supper will not be conducted (Article 56 CO), but that the administration of the Lord’s Supper shall take place in the normal gathering, at the place where the congregation ordinarily meets.
- 2.5.2 From the information presented by the church at Toronto it appears that such a private celebration is considered for the benefit of one member.
- 2.5.3 Classis advises the church at Toronto “not to proceed in this direction.”
- 2.6 Toronto-Bethel has since held this advice as settled and binding.
- 2.7 Toronto-Bethel questions “whether the incidental meeting of a minister and elders at the home of an individual member could be considered a ‘public worship service’ that can be compared to an officially organized and temporary house congregation

(under the weekly supervision of the elders) or a second worship service in a church that has become too large for a single service of its members.” (Cf. Acts of Synod Smithers 2007, Article 96, Consideration 2.6.2).

- 2.8 Toronto-Bethel further believes that “General Synod Smithers’ Observation 2.6.3 leaves the matter open to subjective interpretations and varying applications by the churches. Such an observation also gives rise to arbitrary judgments that could cause confusion among the churches in general and with the members individually.”
- 2.9 Toronto-Bethel observes that in Consideration 2.6.5, Synod Smithers 2007 states that “a decision on the topic by synod may be beneficial for the churches.”
- 2.10 Burlington-Ebenezer disputes the claim of Synod Smithers 2007 that, “The current recognition of the form of the church in multiple places can, by extension, be applied to extraordinary circumstances in the congregation, in the sense that the consistory could have a worship service for those who cannot come to the normal gathering.” (Acts of Synod Smithers 2007, Article 96, Consideration 2.6.2).

3. Considerations

- 3.1 By agreeing to the Considerations 2.6.1 – 2.6.4 of RSW 2006 in coming to its decision in Article 96, Synod Smithers 2007 did make a decision on this topic. Thus, it is not necessary to reconsider Article 96, or to appoint a study committee to prepare a recommendation on the matter.
- 3.2 The reasoning of RSW 2006, as taken over by Synod Smithers 2007 and disputed by Burlington- Ebenezer, namely, that it isn’t the place that determines a public worship service; it isn’t the number of people which determines a public worship service, but the presence of office bearers and members; that therefore consistory could have a public worship service in a separate place for those who cannot come to the normal gathering (“the form of the church”); and that therefore the administration of the Lord’s Supper to shut-ins is allowed by the present Article 56 of the CO, is not faulty.
- 3.3 Synod Smithers 2007, in agreeing with Considerations 2.6.1 – 2.6.4 of RSW 2006, correctly judged that the administration of the Lord’s Supper to shut-ins, conducted according to the provisions of Article 52 of the CO, is to be seen as a legitimate way for consistories to address a need within the congregation.

- 3.4 Synod Smithers 2007 correctly judged therefore, that the administration of the Lord’s Supper to shut-ins, conducted according to the provisions of Article 52 of the CO, is not in fact a “private celebration of the Lord’s Supper,” but rather, constitutes a public worship service, and thus is allowed under Article 56 of the CO.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide: to deny the appeal of Toronto-Bethel and the appeal of Burlington-Ebenezer (8.5.n, Contents – Part 3).

ADOPTED

Br. A. Bax requested that his negative vote be recorded.

Article 57 – Appeal from Mr. Theodore Kingma

1. Material

Appeal from Mr. Theodore Kingma dated March 23, 2010 (8.5.z).

2. Observations re: Admissibility

- 2.1 Mr. Theodore Kingma appeals his deposition (March, 2003) and excommunication from Lynden American Reformed Church.
- 2.2 Mr. Kingma states that he is “appealing his deposition and excommunication from the Lynden ARC understandably denied or declared inadmissible at all previous assemblies of the CARCs in that Article 91 of General Synod 1977 and a strange doctrine of Christ... was by all our assemblies **not yet refuted** as doctrine that conflicts with the Word of God and Church Order of the CARCs per its Article 31” (Appeal, p. 1).
- 2.3 In 2007, the appellant submitted an appeal to Synod Smithers. Synod Smithers declared the appeal inadmissible (Article 19).
- 2.3 The appellant states that he now gives a “new ground” for appealing his deposition and excommunication, namely that “his person was locally both deposed and excommunicated (or crucified) for ‘*exerting*’ himself in holding fast (Rev. 3:11) the Scriptural Subscription Form of the CARCs...” (Appeal, p. 2).

3. Considerations re: Admissibility

- 3.1 The prose of the appeal lacks clarity to the point that much of it is beyond understanding.
- 3.2 It appears that the appellant himself admits that his appeal of his

deposition and excommunication from the Lynden was “denied or declared inadmissible at all previous assemblies of the CARCs...” (see Observation 2.2 above). Hence he himself must realize that his appeal contravenes Article 33 of the CO.

- 3.3 When someone has been excommunicated, then his right of appeal pertains only to the excommunication.
- 3.4 While the appellant states that he appeals on new grounds, he prefaces this statement by saying, “Brothers..., you may know that this your brother... ha[s] appealed Article 91 of General Synod 1977 since 1980 without his... arguments quoted from **the Subscription Form** of the CARCs... being heeded by a previous General Synod. He **therefore** (emphasis ours) herein... again appeals his case yet once more...” In line with this, his appeal argues extensively with Article 91 of General Synod 1977. Hence he does not come with new grounds (contra Article 33 of the CO).

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to declare the appeal inadmissible.

ADOPTED

Synod was then adjourned for further committee work.

Day 7 — Afternoon Session Wednesday, May 19 2010

Article 58 – Reopening

Rev. Aasman opened the meeting. All members of Synod were present.

Article 59 – Report from CRCA re: Reviewing Approach

1. Material

- 1.1 Report of CRCA (8.2.m).
- 1.2 Letters from Churches at Guelph (8.3.M.2), Hamilton-Providence (8.3.M.3), Grand Valley (8.3.M.6), Coaldale (8.3.M.7 and 8), Grassie (8.3.M.10), Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.M.13), Neerlandia (8.3.M.23), Willoughby Heights (8.3.M.25), Taber (8.3.M.27), and Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.M.29).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad draws attention to the fact that in our relations with other churches we only have the relationship known as “Ecclesiastical Fellowship.” There is no designation or rules governing churches that are fellow members with us in the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) or in the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC). Also, there are no rules for dealing with churches in “Ecclesiastical Fellowship” which are departing from Scripture and the Reformed confessions. The CRCA proposes establishing four kinds of relationships:
- 2.1.1 Contact Churches (Churches being considered for EF)
- 2.1.2 Fellowship Churches (Churches in EF with us)
- 2.1.3 Associate Churches (Churches that are fellow members with us in the ICRC and NAPARC)
- 2.1.4 Churches Raising Concern (Churches currently in EF with us but who give reason for serious concern)
- 2.2 The CRCA prefaces the above-mentioned recommendation with this comment: “The material below has been sent to the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA) for their reflection and input. The CCCNA has indicated that it will send a response to the CRCA. No later than February 1, 2010, the CRCA hopes to issue a Supplemental Report which will incorporate the viewpoint and suggestions of the CCCNA.” In the Supplemental Report that was subsequently sent to the churches there is no mention of a reaction by the CCCNA.
- 2.3 Of the ten churches that addressed the matter of “Reviewing Approach,” not one agrees with the CRCA’s proposal to establish four kinds of relationships. One church states it is inadvisable for Synod to deal with the CRCA’s proposal because the promised Supplemental Report dealing with this matter was not sent to the churches. Another church mentions it is unfortunate that there is no joint recommendation by the CRCA and the CCCNA. One church says the CRCA should consult with the ICRC to see if there is a standard convention for names of the committee and various relationship stages. Several churches express grave reservations about the category “Associate Churches” because it may lead to using the ICRC and NAPARC to form and maintain new official church contacts or relationships. There are also reservations about

the fourth category “Churches Raising Concern” since application of the Rules for EF should adequately address any problems that may arise within sister churches. One church proposes to work with only two groups: first, the churches with which the CanRC have EF, and second, the churches with which the CanRC have contact through ICRC and NAPARC. This church adds that if there are concerns with any of the church federations in either the first or the second group, that can be dealt with it appropriately either directly or through the ICRC or NAPARC.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The CRCA would like to establish four new kinds of relationships in place of “Ecclesiastical Fellowship.” Unfortunately no response from the CCCNA has been forwarded to the churches. Since the proposal of the CRCA involves the CCCNA it is, as one church pointed out, inadvisable for Synod to make a decision on this matter.
- 3.2 Not one of the churches expressed favour for the new structure of four kinds of relations; others disagreed with some of the categories.
- 3.3 It is true that the category “Associate Churches,” which would include churches in the ICRC and NAPARC, may lead to using the ICRC and NAPARC to form and maintain new official church contacts or relationships and thereby neglect the responsibility to seek EF.
- 3.4 It is also true that there is no need for the category “Churches Raising Concern” because churches raising concern are covered by the Rule 1 of EF: “The churches shall assist each other in the maintenance, defence and promotion of the Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline and liturgy, and be watchful for deviations.”

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide not to accept the proposal of the CRCA

ADOPTED

Article 60 – Report from CRCA re: Consolidation and Reorganization

1. Material

- 1.1 Report of CRCA (8.2.m).
- 1.2 Letters from Churches at Toronto (8.3.M.1), Guelph (8.3.M.2), Hamilton-Providence (8.3.M.3), Grand Valley (8.3.M.6), Coaldale

(8.3.M.8), Grassie (8.3.M.10), Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.M.13), Flamborough (8.3.M.22), Willoughby Heights (8.3.M.25), Attercliffe (8.3.M.26), Tintern (8.3.M.28), and Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.M.29).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The CRCA observes that for many years all of the relations with other churches whom we recognized as sister churches were channelled through the CRCA. Synod Fergus 1998 decided that a re-structuring was necessary and appointed a Committee for Contact with Churches in the Americas (CCCA), now known as the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA). The result is that there are two committees maintaining contacts with other churches; the distinction is only geographical. The CRCA is of the opinion that some sort of re-structuring is necessary. Sometimes the work of these two committees overlaps and causes confusion. For instance, members of the CRCA meet delegates from the OPC and RCUS at the ICRC, but do not meet with them officially, since that is the task of the CCCNA.
- 2.2 The CRCA recommends disbanding these two committees and appointing one new committee called the Committee on Inter-church Relations (CIR). This committee is to be composed of three sections: a British Columbia section, a Manitoba section and an Ontario section. The CIR is to consist of twelve members and thereby bring about a reduction from the current sixteen members (eight on the CRCA and eight on the CCCNA). Each of the three sections is to consist of four members, two of which shall be ministers, for a total committee strength of twelve members. Each section is required to share its minutes with the members of the other two sections. The Conveners of the three sections are to meet together annually and the entire Committee once every three years. The CRCA also recommends specific appointments to the CIR and adds that General Synod refrain from setting retirement dates for the members of the CIR seeing that continuity is crucial. The CRCA recommends that Synod instruct the Committee to come up with a retirement schedule as needed and that best suits the work of the Committee.
- 2.3 Of the twelve churches that address the CRCA’s proposal re: “Consolidation and Reorganization,” one supports reorganizing in order to streamline the work, but it wants the proposal to go further so that the CanRC restrict themselves more to church relations

in the Americas. Another church states that restructuring may be necessary, but feels the mandate of the new committee is too broad for a reduced number of committee members. One church opines it is inadvisable for Synod to deal with the CRCA's proposal because the promised Supplemental Report dealing with this matter was not sent to the churches. One church points out that if there are no new categories of contact, then there is no need to appoint a new committee. Several churches are not in favour of reorganizing the current committees, suggesting that it is impractical and confusing. One of these churches feels it might be better for some of the local churches to deal directly with relations of EF. For instance, Hamilton and Surrey could maintain contact with churches in Brazil.

- 2.4 Regarding the appointments to the CIR, one church advocates including the Albertan churches within the CIR, possibly combining Manitoba and Alberta. One church urges that there be no lifetime appointments, but a six year rotation within the committee. Another church recommends appointing alternates in case committee members move away. One church observes that it is not helpful for the committee to set its own retirement dates, since members can become entrenched in their own positions. Continuity is important, but there needs to be a regular turnover and therefore staggered terms of service. Another church is not happy with the name CIR because it does not reflect the international flavour of this committee. This church also recommends that Synod should set the retirement dates of appointees.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 It is true that at times the work of the CRCA and the CCCNA overlaps.
- 3.2 Should a new committee known as the CIR be formed, delegation to this committee should include Alberta. Alberta can easily be combined with Manitoba or British Columbia so that the delegation to this committee can be drawn from any one of our churches.
- 3.3 Unfortunately no response from the CCCNA has been forwarded to the churches. Since the proposal of the CRCA involves the CCCNA, as one church pointed out, it is inadvisable for Synod to make a decision on this matter.
- 3.4 There is not broad support from the churches for the proposal of the CRCA. The present two committees have a good handle on their mandates and the churches with which they are dealing. It would

not be good for the continuity of this work to completely restructure these two committees.

- 3.5 As several churches have indicated, allowing the committee to set its own retirement dates is not wise. Continuity is important but Synod can consider that as it makes appointments with staggered retirement dates.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide not to accept the proposal of the CRCA.

ADOPTED

Article 61 – CCCNA: General Mandate

1. Material

- 1.1 Report of the CCCNA, pages 165-168 (8.2.f.1).
- 1.2 Supplementary letter dated January 9, 2010 with recommendations for committee members (8.2.f.ii).
- 1.3 Supplementary letter dated March 26, 2010 with further recommendations for committee members (8.2.f.iii).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The committee report serves as observations.
- 2.2 General Synod Smithers 2007 (Acts pp. 216-217) gave the CCCNA the following general mandate:
- [4.3.1] To continue contact with all those churches in the Americas with which we have EF according to the adopted rules, and in accordance with the mandates described in decisions taken by Synod with respect to the churches with which we have ongoing relationships.
- [4.3.2] To investigate diligently all the requests received for entering into EF in the Americas.
- [4.3.3] To respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests made to attend assemblies, synods, or meetings of other churches in the Americas.
- [4.3.4] To report on its findings with suitable recommendations to the next General Synod, and to present to the churches a report of its work six months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

- 2.3 The committee recommends that this above mandate be continued, and that it also be mandated to keep other committees appointed by Synod informed about relevant topics raised by committees of churches with which we have EF. The committee gives the following as grounds for this additional item to its mandate, “From time to time, these interchurch committees raise matters that concern the mandate of our fellow committees (e.g. CRCA, CCU).”
- 2.4 The committee divided itself into two subcommittees on the basis of the geographic distribution of its members. While maintaining contact with each other, subcommittee East (based in Ontario) took care of contacts with ERQ, OPC, FRCNA, and OCRC, and subcommittee West (based in Manitoba) took care of contacts with RCUS, RPCNA, and NAPARC.
- 2.5 Regarding committee membership, the committee recommends that:
- 2.5.1 Br. J. Jonker, Rev. A.J. Pol, br. A. Poppe, and Rev. R.E. Pot, be discharged from the CCCNA, and thanked for their years of service to the churches as members of this committee.
- 2.5.2 Suitable replacements be appointed to the CCCNA, with consideration given to the geographic distribution of committee members in East (Ontario) and West (Manitoba).
- 2.6 The committee suggests names for appointees to the committee. It realizes that this is perhaps unusual, but does so anyway so that the continuity of the committee’s work won’t be hindered by the appointment of a brother who is unable to serve on the committee, which happened in the past.
- 3. Considerations**
- 3.1 It is clear that the committee functioned well with its current structure.
- 3.2 To continue the general mandate as given by Synod Smithers 2007 makes sense.
- 3.3 To specifically mandate the CCCNA to keep other committees appointed by Synod informed about relevant topics raised by committees of churches with which we have EF appears unnecessary. The committee is already free to do this if it so finds necessary. Also, specifically mandating it to do so almost suggests that it is answerable to other synodical committees.
- 3.4 The matter of committee membership is something that ought to be recommended by the officers of synod.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To give to the CCCNA the same general mandate as given by Synod Smithers 2007, i.e.:
- 4.1.1 To continue contact with all those churches in the Americas with which we have EF according to the adopted rules, and in accordance with the mandates described in decisions taken by synod with respect to the churches with which we have ongoing relationships.
- 4.1.2 To investigate diligently all the requests received for entering into EF in the Americas.
- 4.1.3 To respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests made to attend assemblies, synods, or meetings of other churches in the Americas.
- 4.1.4 To report on its findings with suitable recommendations to the next general synod, and to present to the churches a report of its work six months prior to the convening of the next general synod.
- 4.2 To discharge Br. J. Jonker, Rev. A.J. Pol, br. A. Poppe, and Rev. R.E. Pot, from the CCCNA, and thank them for their years of service to the churches as members of this committee.

ADOPTED

Article 62 – Appeal from Kerwood re: Women’s Voting

1. Material

- 1.1 Acts of previous synods.
- 1.2 Appeal from the church at Kerwood re: Article 136 of Synod Smithers (8.5.W).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Kerwood appeals the decision of Synod Smithers 2007, Article 136 on the following grounds:
- [a.] We believe Synod 2007 erred in declaring the letter from Hamilton admissible (CO art. 30). Churches should not send overtures directly to General Synod when they have not first been dealt with by the church’s local classis and regional synod. (General Synod Neerlandia 2001, Article 101 - 2.3 “The Church at Langley brought its overture to a

classis: however, it was defeated. Therefore, this overture is declared inadmissible on the basis of CO Article 30”).

In addition, we also believe that the lack of consistency in practice when declaring material admissible/inadmissible is unwise and does not give clarity in proper procedure to other congregations and members for making overtures to General Synod.

[b.] The church at Kerwood also wishes to express concern about the fact that Synod appointed the same church that asked for a study to do a study. It certainly gives an impression of bias in a particular direction.

2.2 The *adopted* motion of Article 136 of Synod Smithers reads concerning admissibility:

[2.1] This item is admissible because it comes from one of the churches and deals with a matter that has been perceived as one belonging to the churches in common” (p.149).

2.3 One of the *defeated* motions of Article 136 of Synod Smithers reads concerning admissibility:

[2.1] This item is not admissible” (p.145).

This same motion gives as considerations for this judgment a summary of the decisions of previous synods as follows:

[3.6] General Synod 1995 was approached to establish a new committee to study the matter of women’s voting. Synod declared these requests “inadmissible on the grounds: A. that according to Article 33 CO matters once decided upon may not be proposed again unless they are substantiated by new grounds; B. a new matter which has not previously been [sic] presented to that major assembly may be put on the agenda only when the minor assembly has dealt with it (Article 30 CO).”

[3.7] General Synod 1998 received appeals from the Ebenezer church at Burlington, the Fellowship church at Burlington, as well as overtures from the church at Aldergrove and the Fellowship church at Burlington. The appeals challenged the decision of Synod 1995 and called for a new committee. The overtures go the route of arguing that this matter should not have been declared inadmissible on the ground of Article 30 CO (see Acts 1998, Arts. 109,110,111,112).”

2.4 Synod 1998 gave the following considerations in Article 110:

[B.] It is also true that previous General Synods have dealt with matters even when minor assemblies had not dealt with them. The appellants are also correct in their assertions that synods have, on occasions, defended this course of action on the basis that these matters ‘belong to the churches in common.’ This is not normative, however, because it is contrary to the adopted Church Order.

[C.] It is unfortunate that these precedents have given the appellants the impression that when matters belong to the churches in common, it is no longer necessary for the minor assembly to deal with them first. The fact that Article 30 CO was not always applied properly in the past, however, does not mean that we should violate the adopted order today.

[D.] It is also true, as the appellant observes, that the request was not within the province of a common assembly. This does not mean, however, that these minor assemblies do not have to deal with them first. On the contrary: it is first necessary that a consistory place a matter on the agenda of classis; and only if a classis is convinced of the validity of the proposal will it be placed on the agenda of Regional Synod. If Regional Synod is convinced that the proposal is valid, it will place the matter on the agenda of General Synod.

2.5 Synod 1974 received as admissible a submission from Toronto concerning the matter of women’s voting (Acts, Article 84). Synod 1977 received as admissible individual submissions from two churches on this same topic (Acts, Article 27). Synod 1992 received as admissible an overture directly from one church concerning the matter of relations with a new federation of churches (Acts, Article 36).

2.6 Article 30 of the Church Order adopted by Synod 1968 and in force until 1983 reads, “In these assemblies no other than ecclesiastical matters shall be transacted and that in an ecclesiastical manner. In major assemblies only such matters shall be dealt with as could not be finished in minor assemblies, or such as pertain to the Churches of the major assembly in common.”

2.7 Article 30 of the Church Order adopted by Synod 1983 reads, “These assemblies shall deal with no other matter than ecclesiastical matters and that in an ecclesiastical manner. A major assembly shall deal with those matters only which could not be finished in the minor assembly

or which belong to the Churches in common. A new matter which has not previously been presented to that major assembly may be put on the agenda only when the minor assembly has dealt with it.”

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Kerwood rightly highlights the inconsistency of past synods in matters of admissibility as per Article 30 CO. Synod Smithers itself was not unanimous on this point as can be seen by comparing the defeated and adopted motions under Article 136. That this gives rise to confusion and frustration within the churches is understandable and regrettable. Inconsistency, however, is not in itself a valid ground to appeal under Article 31 CO.
- 3.2. Synod 1998 was outspoken in its view that previous synods were incorrect in dealing with matters of the churches in common even though submissions on these matters had not been dealt with by the minor assemblies. Synod 1998 worked with a certain interpretation of Article 30 CO whereby all submissions or proposals on matters - whether new or not - must first travel the route of the minor assemblies before being dealt with by the major assemblies. This is clearly a reversal of how previous synods, particularly 1974, 1977 and 1992, understood this Article.
- 3.3 Synod Smithers struggled with this very matter and gives evidence of a divided opinion over it. The one opinion is that so long as the matter is already a matter of the churches in common (e.g. the *Book of Praise*, as per Article 55 CO; the Theological College, as per Article 19 CO), it is in itself not a *new* matter. As such, individual churches ought to be able to directly address general synod. The other opinion is that all proposals and submissions dealing with any matter must first be dealt with by the minor assemblies for their evaluation (appeals and interactions with committee reports excepted). Only if the minor assemblies are convinced of the validity of the proposal will it be placed on the agenda of a general synod. In the end, the majority view of Synod Smithers 2007 concluded in favour of the first view.
- 3.4 Synod Smithers did not account for its view of Article 30 CO, but neither did Synod 1998. Although Synod 1998 gave elaborate considerations on this point, those considerations amount to assertions and statements which themselves are unproven. Synod 1998 did not prove that earlier synods were wrong in their

understanding of Article 30 CO; it merely stated its opinion that they were wrong. In the same way, Synod Smithers did not prove that Synod 2001 or 1998 was wrong in its understanding of Article 30; it merely implied it with its decision to admit Hamilton’s overture. This back-and-forth battle of opinions at subsequent general synods is extremely unhelpful in establishing equity and fairness among the churches as to how matters are received and dealt with at the broadest assembly. A solution to this dilemma must be found.

- 3.5 It seems that the new sentence added to Article 30 in 1983 is the source of the difficulty. “A new matter which has not previously been presented to that major assembly may be put on the agenda only when the minor assembly has dealt with it” is to some in harmony with the pre-1983 understanding. This view takes it that “new matters” refers to *topics* or *subjects* not either historically or by way of the Church Order dealt with as matters for the churches in common. In this view, new proposals under an existing matter (topic) of the churches in common should be sent directly to general synod while only proposals of matters (topics) never dealt with by general synod before should first go through the minor assemblies. The newer view is that all proposals or submissions - whether concerning existing matters (topics) of the churches in common or not - must first be dealt with and supported by the minor assemblies before a general synod can deal with it.
- 3.6 The benefit of the older understanding of Article 30 is that every congregation has direct access to the broadest assembly on matters which are deemed to belong to the churches in common. This is desirable and healthy in our system of checks and balances whereby the autonomy of the local church is not lost (while it voluntarily binds itself to the decisions of the broader assemblies) and the threat of hierarchy at the broader assemblies is reduced. The benefit of the newer understanding of Article 30 is that it does not give undue influence to any one church who could potentially place a proposal on the agenda of a general synod without any of the other churches having seen it or studied it, much less interacted with it. The desire to have submissions first be tested, evaluated and filtered by the minor assemblies is beneficial in that it will ensure that only proposals which have won the support of a large number of churches reaches the broadest assembly. Such a check and balance helps protect the integrity of the bond of churches in the federation. A blending of

these two approaches in a clear direction from synod would serve to benefit the churches and clarify the procedure for churches to address a general synod in the future.

- 3.7 Kerwood in its second point does not prove that Synod Smithers contravened Scripture or Church Order when it appointed the church at Hamilton to be the Committee that dealt with Women's Voting. The wisdom of that appointment may be debatable but its illegitimacy according to Scripture or Church Order is not established by Kerwood.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To deny the appeal of Kerwood.
- 4.2 To add the following to the Guidelines of General Synod: For all matters of the churches in common, individual churches may address proposals or other significant submissions directly to general synod with the requirement that all such submissions are sent also to each church in the federation no later than six months prior to general synod.

ADOPTED

Article 63 – CCU: Main report

1. Material

- 1.1 Main report of the Coordinators for Church Unity (8.2.a.i).
- 1.2 Supplementary Letter of the Coordinators for Church Unity (8.2.a.ii).
- 1.3 Overture from Regional Synod East (8.4.a).
- 1.4 Letters from the following churches: Hamilton-Providence (8.3.A.1), Toronto-Bethel (8.3.A.2), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.A.3), Edmonton-Immanuel (8.3.A.4), Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.A.5), Flamborough (8.3.A.6), Neerlandia (8.3.A.7), Willoughby Heights (8.3.A.8), Attercliffe (8.3.A.9), Glanbrook (8.3.A.10), Ancaster (8.3.A.11), Abbotsford (8.3.A.12), Lincoln-Vineyard(8.3.A.13), Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.3.A.14 and 15), Cloverdale (8.3.A.16), and Barrhead (8.3.A.17).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The coordinators recommend that Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 decide:

- [7.1] To continue EF with the URCNA under the adopted rules.
- [7.2] To request the URCNA return to the agreement both federations accepted in 2001.
- [7.3] To implement the proposal of Lincoln.
- [7.4] To acknowledge that we should have consulted the URCNA before entering in relationship with third parties.
- [7.5] To address Synod London 2010 in writing, pledging our commitment to seek federative unity; asking whether the URCNA in word and deed is committed to do the same; that if the URCNA has hesitations to seeking federative unity they indicate what these are.
- [7.6] To appoint deputies for Ecclesiastical Unity and give them a clear mandate.

- 2.2 The coordinators provide, by means of a supplementary letter, answers to questions that came from Classis Southwest United States of the URCNA. Dr. J.P. Van Vliet and Dr. G.H. Visscher visited this Classis and presented to them prepared answers. These questions and answers were published in both *Clarion* and *Christian Renewal*. Further in their main report the coordinators noted that CERCUCU promised a written statement of the position of URC ministers on the Framework Hypothesis. They discussed this with CERCUCU at their meeting on October 29, 2009. CERCUCU had no written statement but promised to look into this further. They, however, stated that it is unlikely that they will give anything more than what was stated at Synod Escondido 2001 regarding creation. Before Synod Burlington-Ebenezer met, the Coordinators received an official letter from the Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity of the URCNA. This letter was passed on to Synod. It quotes Article 43 of the Acts of Synod 2001 Escondido as its official answer.
- 2.3 It is noted that the URCNA delegates who were present at General Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 expressed their great thankfulness for the face to face meeting that took place at Classis South West US, Jan. 19-20, 2010, in Escondido, relating to a number of old outstanding questions. The meeting that was held did much to clear up misunderstandings, confusion and suspicion that was present until then. The presence of Dr. G.H. Visscher and Dr. J.P. Van Vliet on behalf of the CanRC was greatly appreciated. In his address to Synod Burlington-Ebenezer, Rev. J.A. Bouwers also made mention of the great benefit of this face to face meeting.

- 2.4 Regional Synod East Nov. 11, 2009, overtures General Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 to ask that the upcoming synod of the United Reformed churches in North America (London, 2010) declare that the so-called “Nine Points of Schererville” do not have confessionally binding authority on office bearers in the federation. Regional Synod East provides considerations, grounds, and background to this overture. Neerlandia endorses this overture.
- 2.5 The following churches express their agreement with all the recommendations of the coordinators report: Hamilton-Providence, Toronto-Bethel, Fergus-Maranatha, Flamborough, Neerlandia, and Ancaster.
- 2.6 Edmonton-Immanuel proposes to revise Recommendation 7.5 of the coordinators’ report to include “expressing deep concern on the need for and the role of the 9 points of Schererville and seeking clarity on their weight and Scriptural basis.” Glanbrook proposes to accept the explanation of CERCU with respect to point 6 of the 9 statements adopted by Schererville, “that it should be read in the context of point 5,” and to give URCNA Synod London opportunities to clarify or possibly even retract the statements adopted by Schererville. At a minimum Synod should direct our deputies to confirm that the nine points do not have confessional binding status as outlined in the overture of RSE. Abbotsford feels that Synod should address the issue of the decisions taken by Synod Schererville 2007 in regards to the covenant and justification. They are concerned about the status of these decisions and cannot agree to the substance of decision 6 as it is phrased. Lincoln recommends that some steps be taken to clarify doctrinal issues that comes to the fore in working towards unity (covenant, baptism) and that we review our commitment to work together in this light. They also recommend that clarification be sought on the place of the nine points. Redeemer Winnipeg requests that the overture from Regional Synod East Nov 11, 2009, be part of the mandate of this committee: that Synod Burlington-Ebenezer ask the Synod of the URCNA, London 2010, to declare that the so-called Nine Points of Schererville do not have confessionally binding authority on office bearers in the federation. Cloverdale requests that Synod mandate the deputies for Ecclesiastical Unity to request the URCNA to retract or rescind the nine points of Schererville. Attercliffe observes that “the Nine points of Schererville contend against the main points of covenant theology which had become

- binding and caused the Liberation of 1944.” They consider them to be a binding pastoral advice as per their context and thus both a supra-scriptural and supra-confessional binding. Thus they see Point 6 as an impediment to further unity.
- 2.7 Attercliffe questions whether the adopted Rules for EF of 1992 are still in force, as neither the CanRC nor the URCNA fully adhere to them. For example Rule 3. Both federations have entered into relationships with other churches without consulting each other. Attercliffe also feels that the adoption of the nine points of Schererville goes against Rule 6 of the EF rules. The CanRC were not informed of this document at all prior to the URCNA Synod of Schererville adopting it. They recommend that now we have also come to understand that there are very different positions and views in regard to the meaning of confessional membership in a proposed new united federation that these also need to be addressed to ensure that our position is faithful to God’s Word and the three Forms of Unity, and in harmony with previous Synodical commitments made. They fully endorse asking the question “IF the URCNA has hesitations to seeking federative unity that they indicate what these are.”
- 2.8 Neerlandia requests that General Synod Burlington-Ebenezer adjourn to await the response of Synod London to our Synod’s written questions and concerns about working towards greater unity. Once Synod London has responded, they request that Synod Burlington-Ebenezer reconvene and then decide on the mandates to be given to the various unity committees.
- 2.9 Willoughby Heights expresses disappointment that the ecclesiastical unity coordinators still have not had any substantial discussions with the URC regarding Framework Hypothesis. They already voiced concern to Synod 2001 that the various committees for contact with other churches were not dealing with this issue. Synod 2001 assured that these committees would deal with this matter. In 2004 the committee reported nothing on this matter. Consequently Synod 2004 instructed the committee “to commence discussion concerning the Framework Hypothesis and the support this theory has with the URCNA and serve the next synod with information on this matter.” Three years later the CPEU reported to Synod 2007 only that their URCNA counterparts referred them to a statement of Synod 2001 which allegedly affirmed creation in six days and agreed to send a

written reply. However in 2007 the CPEU had not yet received this written reply from the CERCU. Willoughby Heights notes that the URC Synod 2001 statement is misleading: the original statement referred to “creation in six historical days.” This was defeated. This proposal was passed only after the word “historical” was removed, thereby leaving room for the Framework Hypothesis. And yet another three years later all that CPEU reports to Synod 2010 is that it is awaiting a written reply. Thus after nine years, the CPEU has still initiated no substantial discussion on this issue. Willoughby Heights concludes that since the CPEU shows little inclination to actively pursue this matter, they urge Synod 2010 to appoint men to this committee that are able and willing to address this issue which Synods 2001 and 2004 have deemed important for unity. Attercliffe asks the question: to date we have not received any answer to the questions that were presented to the URCNA on the Framework Hypothesis. Should we have any concerns in regard to the working out of this theory?

- 2.10 Attercliffe has observed the following over the past six years: a number of concessions have been made “on the matter of retaining the 150 Psalms in their entirety in the common song book,” “the principle of the theological college having to be controlled by the churches... with teaching by ordained ministers of the federation of the churches which we believe is biblically mandated,” “the practice of guests being granted admission to the Lord’s Supper on the basis of self testimony, which is deemed sufficient, contrary to principles clearly enunciated in Scripture on the need for witnesses.” Also the PJCO “allows so many exceptions that there is, in some cases, no rule left.”
- They recognize that our concessions, implicitly on allowing women’s voting (URCNA) and explicitly on the above mentioned items were incorrect and so now “request and urge Synod to reverse these concessions.” They also recognize that they “are thereby suggesting that the agreements on 2001 were premature and that we should rewrite the agreement.”
- 2.11 Ancaster expresses concern that the new guideline with respect to Phase 2 from URCNA for ecumenicity does not appear to be as strongly worded as e.g. the ninth foundational statement of the PJCO, which states that “there is a ...spiritual *obligation* (emphasis ours) to seek and maintain the federative unity of the churches by formal bonds of fellowship and cooperation.”

Attercliffe observes that in the URCNA, changes to the phases in reaching full unity with our federation truly reflects only the desirability of unity. The goal of unity seems to be more elusive than it ever has been. They also ask how is it possible to request the URCNA to return to the agreement both federations made in 2001 without taking back the concessions made by Synod Smithers 2007. They question if it is sufficient to request a return to the agreements accepted in 2001. They would like to strengthen the request into a demand to return to these agreements.

- 2.12 The coordinators suggest under Consideration 6.4 that the churches formulate questions they have concerning the doctrine and life of the URCNA. The following churches submit short lists of questions: Ancaster (three questions.) Abbotsford (three questions) Winnipeg (two questions).
- 2.13 Winnipeg-Redeemer requests that in further dialogue with the URCNA the apparent imbalance between the autonomy of the local church and the federation of churches be addressed. They cite two examples: Article 36 of the Church Order of the URCNA, and theological education in the URCNA. They request the CCU to discuss with their counterparts the role and function of ecclesiastical assemblies, specifically with respect to their desire to defend the authority of the consistory against the encroachment upon that authority by a classis or a synod; whether or not the URCNA as a matter of principle is willing to adopt the principle contained in Article 21E of the PJCO, or whether they still feel the need for local consistories to ratify the decisions of major assemblies; why theological education is deemed to be only a consistory responsibility; and why the churches in common cannot or should not cooperate together in providing theological education for men desiring to enter into the ministry.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 We note that Synod Schererville of the URCNA in Article 72 adopted a nine-point statement and presented it to the churches as “pastoral advice.” Seeing that the expression “pastoral advice” is not explained, questions have arisen in our churches as well as at Regional Synod East of the CanRC about the character of this advice. There is a need to ask General Synod London of the URCNA to clarify the nature of this decision. Is it confessionally binding

or not? It would be beneficial if Synod London at the same time would clarify Point 6. Several of our churches view this point as being directed at the CanRC. As a result they have requested Synod Burlington-Ebenezer to approach Synod London to retract or rescind the nine statements.

Further information indicates that Synod Schererville was responding to the RCUS report on justification by faith alone.

- 3.2 Attercliffe contends that Rule 3 of EF dealing with consulting each other before entering into relations with other churches, was not maintained. From the coordinators report it becomes clear that there is substance to Attercliffe's complaint. Therefore Synod Burlington-Ebenezer needs to pay close attention to this matter and give clear reminders to its committees.
- 3.3 Attercliffe also raises the matter of confessional membership with respect to the URCNA. In this regard it should be noted that the URCNA has the same approach to the confessions as the CanRC and that its forms of baptism and profession of faith are substantially the same.
- 3.4 Willoughby Heights expresses disappointment that the questions surrounding Framework Hypothesis have not been answered. Meanwhile Synod Burlington-Ebenezer has received an answer from the URCNA which gives Article 43 of the Acts of Synod Escondido 2001 as its official answer. Among other things this decision includes the following statement: "God created all things good in 6 days defined as evenings and mornings (Genesis 1 and 2, Exodus 20:11). This means we reject any evolutionary teaching, including theistic evolution, concerning the origin of the earth and of all creatures. (HC, LD IX)." This response reveals that the URCNA has made a decision on the matter of creation and evolution, which does not mention the Framework Hypothesis as such, but does accurately reflect what Scripture and the confessions teach on the matter of creation and fall.
- 3.5 Attercliffe states that over the last six years we have made far too many concessions in the areas of Psalms, Theological College, the admission of guests at the Lord's table, and so forth. These items are still under discussion and thus have not been decided upon.
- 3.6 While Ancaster notes that there are differences in various statements on federative unity made by the URCNA, it also points out that the PJCO addresses and clarifies the URCNA commitment and

obligation to church unity, thereby answering its own question.

- 3.7 The matters raised by Winnipeg-Redeemer concerning the local church and the federation are so extensive that they should be referred to the Coordinators for Ecclesiastical Unity for their consideration and possible discussion with the URCNA.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To reappoint Coordinators for Ecclesiastical Unity.
- 4.2 To continue EF with the URCNA under the adopted rules.
- 4.3 To declare that as Canadian Reformed Churches we are still committed to the goal of federative unity between our churches and to ask the URCNA whether they are still committed to this goal (see attached letter).
- 4.4 To request Synod London of the URCNA to clarify the status of the Nine Points of Schererville as a whole and to give a further explanation of Point 6 in particular.
- 4.5 To be more diligent in maintaining Rule 3 of EF dealing with relations with third parties.
- 4.6 To declare that Considerations 3.3 and 3.5 answer the concerns of the church at Attercliffe, that Consideration 3.6 answers the concerns of the church at Ancaster and that Consideration 3.7 addresses the concerns of the church at Winnipeg-Redeemer.
- 4.7 To receive the answer of the URCNA to our questions about the Framework Hypothesis, and to include it among the appendices of these Acts.²

ADOPTED

Article 64 – Access to Committee Reports on the Internet

1. Material

- 1.1 Appeals from the churches at Carman East (8.5.f) and Langley (8.5.u).
- 1.2 Letter from Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.1.s).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Each committee appointed by Synod 2007 was given a mandate to "serve Synod 2010 with a report to be sent to the churches at least six

² The document is APPENDIX 12 - URCNA Statement regarding the Framework Hypothesis..

- months prior to the beginning of synod” (Article 74, 4.1.5; cf. similar mandates in Article 134, 4.4.7; Article 142, 4.1.3; Article 173, 4.3.4 *et al*).
- 2.2 Synod 2007 mandated the Committee for the Official Website among other things, to include on the website: “Publication of the official reports of the synodical committees in a standardized format (e.g. PDF) with security measures restricting access only to consistories. These restrictions should be lifted after synod has dealt with them” (Article 74, 4.1.3.3).
- 2.3 The organizing committee for General Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010, in its correspondence regarding electronic access to the committee reports, gave the following reminder: “These credentials (i.e. username and password to the website) may be shared among the people who need access, keeping in mind that Synod intended the access to be restricted to consistories.”
- 2.4 The three churches contend that Synod reports ought to be made available to all members of all congregations, whether through the website or printed copies. Following are the considerations:
- 2.4.1 The consistent language of the general synods regarding the destination for the reports from synodically appointed committees is “the churches,” not “the consistories.”
- 2.4.2 Consistories have been recipients of these reports as overseers of the church, but the reports have never been restricted to the consistories.
- 2.4.3 Members of the congregations have long had access to these reports via their consistories (e.g. Acts of Synod 1980, Article 83 B.2; Acts of Synod 1983, Article 123 A, Article 160 A; Synod 1995, Article 72 1C and 2). Some were even published ahead of time in *Clarion*. No objections were ever raised to this practice.
- 2.4.4 Synod Chatham 2004, Article 20, made two specific considerations about the matter:
- [4.7] “...the reports of the various committees *may* be made available to the membership via the local consistory.”
- [4.3] “Individual members have opportunity to interact with these reports through their consistories.”
- 2.4.5 Committee reports are about matters in common to be considered by the churches in common (CO Article 30), and

- thus have a bearing on all individual members. Confidential matters coming from committees (e.g. names of persons suggested for various positions) are already sent by the committee directly to synod. As such individual members should not only have unfettered access to the reports, but should even be encouraged to interact with them with their local consistory. This will benefit the bond of churches.
- 2.4.6 Security measures restricting electronic access only to consistories promote a false clergy/laity distinction.
- 2.4.7 Security measures restricting electronic access only to consistories are not in force in any of our sister churches.
- 2.4.8 Committee reports ought to be readily available also for churches in EF to assist them in carrying out the first rule of EF.
- 2.4.9 Committee reports are essentially public documents, and especially in our electronic age can be made available to all members of the congregations quickly and cost effectively.
- 2.5 Carman East specifically asks that Synod 2010 decide:
- [1.] That Synod Smithers erred when, after mandating its committees to report to the *churches*, it then restricted access to those reports to the *consistories*.
- [2.] That reports by committees of Synod are, as a rule, to be considered public documents and access made available to all church members.
- [3.] That the Committee for the Official Website be mandated to make these reports available on the web site prior to the subsequent synod in a suitable electronic format with unrestricted access to all members of the churches and to the general public.
- 2.6 In the past, when churches in EF were invited to send delegates to each other’s assemblies, they were given hard copies of the synod committee reports. This is now done electronically.
- 3. Considerations**
- 3.1 The submissions from the churches, whether presented as appeals or overtures, presume the availability of reports from synodical committees to all church members.
- 3.2 It is important to understand the context of the decision of Synod Smithers, and just what Synod actually restricted:

- 3.2.1 Synod Smithers in Article 74 did not deal generally with the matter of publication of synod reports, but rather with the publication of synod reports electronically on the website.
- 3.2.2 Synod Smithers in Article 74 dealt with a new reality, namely the possibility of publishing synod committee reports also on the website. Its decision, therefore, pertained only to the matter of *electronic* publication. Synod Smithers did not restrict consistories from passing out copies of reports to members.
- 3.3 It is true that committee reports, which pertain to matters regarding the churches in common, were always sent to the churches – and that this did not mean “for the consistory only.”
- 3.4 It is important that the status of synod committee reports be kept in mind by all who review them. They are reports about which the churches (at general synod) still have to make decisions. Thus they belong to the churches in the first place. Therefore the consistories especially ought to receive these reports and deal with them. This does not, however, mean “to the exclusion of the members.” That would be contrary to the office of all believers and thus also with the considerations of Synod Chatham as listed in Observation 2.4.4 above. The members of the churches should therefore have these reports available to them and review them keeping in mind the above mentioned considerations of Synod Chatham.
- 3.5 It is true that making electronic copies of the committee reports available on the internet is a convenient and economical way of getting these reports into the hands of the delegates from these churches.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide that reports from committees appointed by synod be made available on the internet before synod also for all members of the churches.

ADOPTED

Article 65 – Correction Regarding Article 111 of the Acts of Synod Smithers 2007

1. Material

Letter from Winnipeg- Redeemer dated June 15, 2008, re: Acts of Synod Smithers 2007, Article 111, 2.6.2, error in wording (8.1.e).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Winnipeg- Redeemer observes that an error occurs in Article 111, 2.6.2 of the published Acts of Synod Smithers 2007, regarding the Form of Subscription for use at the local congregation. “This article states under 2.6.2: to change the sentence ‘during the time of appeal we will acquiesce in the decision of classis or regional synod’ in paragraph 5 of the proposed Form for use at **classis**” (8.3.1 of the report [of the SCBP]) to ‘During the time of appeal we will acquiesce in the decision of consistory or classis or regional synod.’” The wording as submitted by Winnipeg-Redeemer was actually as follows: “to change the sentence ‘during the time of appeal, we will acquiesce in the decision of classis or synod’ in paragraph 5 of the proposed Form for use at **the local congregation** (8.3.1 of the report) to ‘During the time of appeal we will acquiesce in the decision of consistory or classis or regional synod.’” (Note: The erroneous words are “for use at **classis**,” which should have been “for use at **the local congregation**”). Consequently this same error was repeated in the Recommendation 4.3 as adopted by Synod, and also occurs in the forms as distributed to the churches of the federation.
- 2.2 Winnipeg- Redeemer requests that this error be addressed and corrected to properly reflect the submission and the recommendation as adopted by synod regarding the SCBP Report – Form of Subscription paragraph (8.3.1 of the report).

3. Considerations

- 3.1 This was an obvious oversight for which a correction ought to be recorded in the Acts of Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010.
- 3.2 The SCBP made the churches aware of this error in the Acts of Synod Smithers 2007. Subsequently these forms were amended by the SCBP in accordance with the correct information, and distributed to all the churches.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to accept the recommendation of Winnipeg-Redeemer.

ADOPTED

Day 7 — Evening Session
Wednesday, May 19, 2010

Article 66 – Reopening, Speech by OPC Fraternal Delegate, and Meeting with URCNA Fraternal Delegates

Rev. Aasman called the meeting to order and noted that all the members of Synod were present. He invited br. J. Jonker to introduce the Rev. J. Sawyer, fraternal delegate from the OPC.

Rev. Sawyer then received the opportunity to address the assembly. He brought greetings from the OPC, expressing joy at the comradeship in the faith. He outlined some of the history of the OPC and gave details concerning her growth and mission work. Information was also given concerning their efforts to recruit men into the pastoral office as well as training for supplementing the seminary education of ministers. Rev. Sawyer referred to the <http://opc.org/> website and to the production of a new Psalter Hymnal which includes all 150 Psalms. He also mentioned the approval of a revised Directory for Public Worship as one of the highlights of the 76th General Assembly of the OPC held in 2009. In 2011, the OPC hopes to celebrate the 75th anniversary of its founding. Rev. Sawyer closed with the wish that the CanRC would join in rejoicing with them in the Lord's goodness to us all. The full text of his speech can be found in *Appendix 8* of the Acts. Rev. Feenstra responded, inviting all present to sing Psalm 126, after which he led in prayer.

Rev. Aasman then invited fraternal delegates from the URCNA to come forward to participate in a question and answer period. Rev. Aasman thanked the brothers for coming and expressed the hope that one day we will be one federation of churches.

Article 67 – Closing Devotions

Rev. Holtvlüwer gave a meditation on Numbers 11, focussing especially on verses 16-17. All present then sang Psalm 133:1 and 2, after which the meeting was adjourned.

Day 8 — Morning Session
Thursday, May 20, 2010

Article 68 – Opening and Roll Call

Rev. Aasman opened the meeting by requesting all present to sing Psalm 142:1-6, after which he read Jonah 4 and gave a meditation. Following

this, he announced that Dr. J. Smith accepted the appointment to become professor of Old Testament at the Theological College. Rev. Aasman then led in prayer. Roll call was held and all were present.

Following some general discussion the meeting was adjourned for committee work.

Day 8 — Evening Session
Thursday, May 20, 2010

Article 69 – Reopening

Rev. Aasman opened the meeting, requesting all to sing Psalm 110:1-3. All members of Synod were present.

Article 70 – Adoption of Articles 54-67 of the Acts of Synod

Articles 54-67 of the Acts were adopted.

Article 71 – Report of the Joint Committee about Theological Education

1. Material

- 1.1 Acts of General Synod Smithers 2007, Article 103.
- 1.2 Report of the Joint Committee of the Theological Education Committees of the URCNA and the CanRC (Reports to General Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010, vol. 3, pages 1-26).
- 1.3 Letters from the Churches at Guelph (8.3.E.1), Orangeville (8.3.E.2), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.E.3), Hamilton-Providence (8.3.E.4), Coaldale (8.3.E.5), Edmonton-Immanuel (8.3.E.6), Owen Sound (8.3.E.7), Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.E.8), Glanbrook (8.3.E.9), Ancaster (8.3.E.10), Yarrow (8.3.E.11), Abbotsford (8.3.E.12), and Neerlandia (8.3.E.13) regarding the report of the Joint Committee.

2. Observations

- 2.1 General Synod Smithers 2007 (Article 103, Recommendation 4) mandated the Theological Education Committee:
 - [4.4] To seek agreement with the URCNA committee about theological education for the new united federation:
 - [4.4.1] On the principle of 2 Timothy 2:2.
 - [4.4.2] Taking into consideration the “joint statement” made by the theological education committees (see Consideration 3).
 - [4.4.3] While expressing the strong preference of at least one federation seminary.

Note: The “joint statement” referred to consists of “six statements as reported to Synod Chatham 2004” (see Synod Smithers 2007, Article 103, Consideration 3.3).

- 2.2 Conclusion and Recommendations of the Joint Committee (pp. 8-9 of the Report):
- [1.] We are thankful for the harmony and brotherly manner in which we could work together, even in the circumstances where polarized and strongly cherished and held positions did not allow for easy or readily compromised solutions.
 - [2.] We are thankful for the providential care of the Lord over our deliberations in the many times we took to traveling to undertake the work.
 - [3.] As a fully independent model is not acceptable to the CanRC and a fully federational model is not acceptable to the URCNA, the only real viable choice of governance for theological education in a united federation would be a model where the united federation would operate with a model of two independent seminaries endorsed and approved by the general synod of a united church (i.e., Mid-America and Westminster California), with one federationally governed seminary (the Theological College in Hamilton) by way of a regional synod of Canada, or if deemed appropriate, by the general synods of the united federation meeting from time to time.
 - [4.] For this model to gain approval or acceptance from the URCNA the members of the URCNA will need to adopt in part the federational model by way of a regional synod overseeing a federational seminary (not to mention actually adopting a church order model which includes the concept of regional synods), together with financial assessments to the churches to support the federational model.
 - [5.] For this model to gain approval or acceptance from the CanRC, the members of the CanRC will need to adopt in part the independent model which calls for endorsement of independent seminaries, and voluntary financial support.
 - [6.] There is agreement on the core elements of the required curriculum, whatever the model.
 - [7.] Although we do not bring specific proposals, if the proposed hybrid model is adopted, we would envision a blended

system of voluntary contributions and assessments to support the federational seminary and the independent seminaries, and are confident that a counsel of experienced wise men could develop an equitable manner to do so.

- [8.] The synodical directions, the distinct historical experiences and the preferences for the two distinct models, do not allow the two committees to make a joint submission for consideration beyond that set out above.
- [9.] The two committees are of the view that they have wrestled with the distinctives thoroughly and sufficiently and that this report, inclusive of its appendices, is intended to serve the churches by laying out the clear alternatives and assist for fulsome and considered reflection and discussion in the churches regarding this matter.
- [10.] That the respective synods receive and approve of the work of the committees and declare that their mandates have been fulfilled and are at an end.
- [11.] That the respective synods receive, approve and adopt the recommended model as set out in Recommendation 3 above and direct and serve the churches in that regard.

2.3 The regional synod model and scriptural and historical considerations:

- 2.3.1. The church at Orangeville writes that “a federationally controlled seminary is still the best application of principle #6.” (See the six statements spelled out in Consideration 3.3 of Article 103 of the Acts of General Synod Smithers 2007 that are repeated on page 5 of the Joint Committee’s Report). Orangeville further states that it “sees it (theological education that is properly accountable to the churches) as the best out-working of 1 Tim. 3:15 and the best application of the instructions given in 2 Tim 2:2.”
- 2.3.2. Edmonton-Immanuel finds that the statement by the URCNA about a federational seminary not being biblically mandated has neither been substantiated nor challenged by the CanRC brothers. It points to Appendix 1 of the report that outlines in great scriptural and historical detail why the CanRC have one federational seminary and regrets the lack of drawing conclusions from Appendix 1. It points to answer 103 of the HC that reads, in part, “that the ministry of the gospel

and the schools be maintained” and that this historically has been understood to mean the maintenance of schools for the ministry. It repeats the statement of Appendix 1 that “training of pastors and teachers belongs to the tasks of the church as the pillar and foundation of the truth and it is not properly the responsibility of an organization independent of the church.”

- 2.3.3 Ancaster also disagrees with the recommended model and bases its view on the considerations of Appendix 1. It writes: “We are convinced that having a seminary run by and for the churches is a matter of principle not preference.” It notes the “glaring contrast” between the contents of Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. It notes that Appendix 2 “does not mention a single Biblical text” and “bases much of its reasoning on the observation that history has shown that denominational (i.e. synodical) supervision provides no guarantee that churches so controlled can remain firmly loyal to the Scriptures and to the Reformed confessions.” It points out that “the problem does not lie with the Biblical principle that the churches provide training for their ministers,” but occurs when “deviations from the Biblical principles are tolerated, approved and promoted.” Ancaster notes that it did not detect “a real effort on the part of the URC committee to seriously deal with the exegesis of the Biblical texts on which the very existence of the Theological College in Hamilton is founded.”

2.4 Regarding oversight and governance:

- 2.4.1 Abbotsford fully supports a “church run seminary” (the Theological College in Hamilton) and states that “a federation without at least one church run seminary is not acceptable.” It finds that the compromise reached is rather non-specific and even unclear and writes that “there needs to be clarity on the structure for governing the seminary prior to the CanRC and the URCNA being united into one federation.”
- 2.4.2 Neerlandia does not agree with the proposed model, has a strong preference for a Theological College supervised by a General Synod and is “disappointed that there is no willingness on the part of the Synod of the United Reformed

Churches to accept a compromise similar to the one made for the Union of 1892.”

- 2.4.3 Coaldale thanks the CanRC committee “for continuing to stand up for the mandate which they received from the synod, namely that governance of the seminary ought to be done by the churches.” It believes that “a seminary ought not to be independent but under the authority of the churches.” It asks “synod to continue to uphold this principle in its deliberations.” It notes that the CanRC shortly after they came into existence began working towards a federational seminary because of their conviction that “it is the best expression of how Scripture calls us to train future men for the office of the minister of the Word.” It notes that in the 40 year history of the Theological College in Hamilton the churches “have been very well served by this institution as it has been governed by the churches in common.” It states that “not only have many faithful men been trained for office, but the result has also been a genuine spirit of unity, peace and harmony among the churches in the federation.” It states that for these reasons “theological education of the churches should be under the supervision of the churches” and suggests “that another way be found for an acceptable model of supervision.”
- 2.4.4 Guelph writes that the “regional synod model” does not present a united approach in the training of our ministers and that it creates a “unity/disunity” situation that “might lead to particular preferences and division within the churches and the federation.” It notes that the viewpoint of the CanRC has been slowly compromised during these discussions from a “requirement” to a “strong preference” to an “acceptance of independent seminaries within a hybrid format.” Guelph writes that although the curriculum standard as outlined in Appendix 3 (see the Joint Committee’s Report to Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010) has been agreed upon by the committees, “it is broad enough to allow differences in approach” and Guelph questions “whether the curriculum standard would suffice in characterizing a seminary to be considered truly Christian and Reformed.”

- 2.4.5 Guelph further states that “the perception of a safeguard that the professors are called into the Lord’s service by one of our churches does not, in and of itself, ensure oversight over their teaching in an independent seminary that is not specifically controlled by the churches together.” Guelph finds that “if there is no federative oversight, then there is no opportunity to apply discipline for errant actions, teachings and doctrines.” It argues that “the teaching and training of our ministers must be protected by the churches for the churches,” that “it must remain based on the Word of God as confessed by the churches,” and that “therefore oversight of the theological college of the churches ought to continue to be exercised by the churches.” Guelph observes that the scriptural and historical burden of proof to not have a federative school has neither been brought forward nor defended in the report to justify the acceptance of the “regional synod model.” It states that if the Theological College is to be governed by the merged churches through the Regional Synod(s) of Canada (Appendix 4d), the General Synod of the merged churches will have the “final appeals in all matters of dispute” (Appendix 4g) and that this can only lead to dilution of the Regional Synod’s authority. Guelph notes that in a united federation, where both independent and federative seminaries are acceptable means for training for the ministry, the safeguards established by Synod Orangeville 1968 in “Qualifications of ministers trained in other seminaries” will *ipso facto* be removed.
- 2.4.6 Owen Sound regards a federational seminary with proper governance as the best method to train men for the ministry of the Word, but understands that the URCNA have used independent seminaries. It would be satisfied with the hybrid model provided that such a model could function in and be financed by the future united churches.
- 2.4.7 Fergus-Maranatha cannot support the adoption of the hybrid model since the agreements outlined in the Joint Statement of January 13, 2004, namely to i) to protect the confessional integrity of the training of ministers and ii) to ensure that the education is properly accountable to the churches, have not been met.

- 2.4.8 Glanbrook has a strong preference for the model of a federatively owned and controlled Theological School and/or Schools that have one board directed by the churches through Synod. It writes about the different manners of governance and the different substance and length of the degree programs at the Theological College in Hamilton and that of Mid-America and Westminster, and concludes that these differences may cause disunity among the among the churches.
- 2.4.9 Abbotsford states that there needs to be clarity on how the churches may influence the governing of seminaries not directly run by the churches. It notes that Recommendation 3 is not specific enough, that Recommendation 4 depends on decisions still to be taken by the URNCA regarding the federational model by oversight of a regional synod and the manner of funding, and that synodical directions do not allow the two committees to make a joint submission for consideration (see Recommendation 8). It further notes with Recommendation 9 that a “fullsome and considered reflection and discussion” needs to be carried out by the churches.
- 2.4.10 Yarrow states that the “existence of the Theological College as the Churches’ institution for theological training of future ministers needs to be non-negotiable in discussions with the United Reformed Churches of North America” and that the “Theological College must be governed by all the churches together through the General Synod rather than by some of the churches through a regional synod.”
- 2.5 Regarding assessments:
- 2.5.1 Glanbrook notes that there is no plan in place to fund the proposed Theological School(s). It states that a federative model ensures stable financial means to operate the School.
- 2.5.2 Guelph observes that Recommendation 7 of the report “removes the requirement for communicant member assessment to support the training of ministers,” and that also thereby the principle of a Theological College “by the churches and for the churches” will be removed.
- 2.6 Regarding legal issues:
- 2.6.1 Burlington-Ebenezer supports all the 11 conclusions and

recommendations of the Joint Committee's report but notes that implementation of the hybrid model (point 3 of the Conclusions and Recommendations) could prove to be logistically challenging and wonders if "The Canadian Reformed Theological College Act (1981)" might form an obstacle since it reads that "Synod" means an assembly convened by the churches as the Synod of the Can. Ref. Churches in Canada [Acts, 1. (1) (I)].

2.7 Regarding membership of the joint committee on theological education:

2.7.1 Providence-Hamilton is not enamoured with the idea of the "independent model" but is prepared to make that concession for the sake of unity. It proposes that if Synod 2010 reappoints a Theological Education committee, again to leave our seminary professors off this committee and also overture URCNA Synod London 2010 to reciprocate and leave their seminary professors off their committee. It offers as grounds the prevention of a perceived or real conflict of interest and the advancement of ecumenicity.

2.8 Regarding cooperation and support by the FRCA:

2.8.1 Edmonton reminds Synod 2010 of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia's specific request at Synod Legana 2009 that the CanRC maintain a federational seminary.

2.8.2 Glanbrook notes that the Australian Free Reformed Churches have expressed their thankfulness to the Theological College for the training provided and support it financially. It wonders if the proposed model would not negatively influence "our current relationship with the Australian Free Reformed Churches."

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Ten of the 13 churches that wrote to synod about the report of the Joint Committee stated one or more of the following:
A federationally governed seminary or a seminary that is run by and for the churches:
- 3.1.1 Is a requirement for the merged churches and not a strong preference.
- 3.1.2 Is the best out-working of 1 Tim 3:15 and the best application of the instructions given in 2 Tim 2:2, and

therefore is the best method to train men for the ministry of the Word.

- 3.1.3 Upholds the principle that governance of the seminary ought to be done by the churches.
- 3.1.4 Applies the principle that training of pastors and teachers belongs to the tasks of the church as the pillar and foundation of the truth and that it is not properly the responsibility of an organization independent of the churches.
- 3.2 Many faithful men have been trained for the office of minister of the Word at the Theological College in Hamilton during its existence of more than 40 years and it has resulted in a genuine spirit of unity, peace and harmony among the churches.
- 3.3 The regional synod model does not ensure that training for the ministry is properly accountable to all the churches.
- 3.4 A federative model with an assessment per communicant member ensures a stable funding for an institution for the training of men for the ministry of the Word.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To express thanks and gratitude to the Theological Education Committee for examining and discussing different models for the training for the ministry and the governance thereof.
- 4.2 Not to accept the regional synod model of theological education as proposed by the joint committee.
- 4.3 To reappoint a theological education committee to re-examine and discuss with our brothers in the URCNA the possibilities of operating at least one theological seminary by and for the churches, to ensure that such a seminary is accountable to and properly governed by the churches. Further, that the committee promotes adequate funding for such an institution(s) by means of an assessment per communicant member.
- 4.4 To instruct the Theological Education Committee to encourage the brothers of the URCNA to examine and interact with the biblical, historical and practical reasons for operating one institution for the training for the ministry as described in Appendix 1 of the report of the Joint Committee, summarized in Lord's Day 38 (Question and Answer 103) and regulated in Article 19 CO of the CanRC.

ADOPTED

A proposal to amend Consideration 3.1 to read “Ten of the 13 churches that wrote to synod about the report of the Joint Committee *correctly* stated one or more of the following:” was **defeated**.

Article 72 – Committee for Bible Translation

1. Material

- 1.1 Report from the Committee for Bible Translation (CBT) (8.2.k).
- 1.2 Letters from Hamilton-Providence (8.3.K.1), Burlington-Fellowship (8.3.K.2), Glanbrook (8.3.K.3) and Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.3.K.4).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod 2007 gave the CBT the following mandate (Acts, Article 134, Recommendation 4):
 - [4.4.1] To receive comments from the churches/members about passages in the NIV which are thought to need improvement.
 - [4.4.2] To evaluate these comments and pass on valid concerns to the NIV Translation Center.
 - [4.4.3] To monitor developments in case significant changes appear in the text of the NIV.
 - [4.4.4] To take up contact with the International Bible Society (IBS) to confirm that the IBS still stands behind its press release of May 27, 1997.
 - [4.4.5] To request the Liturgical Forms and Confessions Committee to initiate discussions with the URCNA in regard to promoting an agreed upon English translation for use in the liturgical forms and confessions of an eventual common songbook and to be available to assist the Liturgical Forms and Confessions Committee in this regard.
 - [4.4.6] To receive input from the churches regarding Bible translations which the churches through their own careful study have found to be worthy of recommendation for use among the churches.
 - [4.4.7] To serve the next general synod with a report to be sent to the churches at least six months prior to the next synod.
- 2.2 The CBT informed the churches of the relevant sections of its mandate [4.4.1 and 4.4.6].
- 2.3 The committee received very little feedback from the churches. One church reported that it was content with the NIV and saw no need for investigating alternatives. Another church reported that

it had adopted the NKJV in the year 2000 and appended a report concerning this decision.

- 2.4 As mandated, the committee sent a letter to IBS regarding the text of the NIV to confirm whether the IBS still stood behind its press release of May 27, 1997. At that time, IBS responded “the text will remain the same now and forever” (January 16, 2008).
- 2.5 The CBT requested the Liturgical Forms and Confessions Committee to initiate discussions with the URCNA regarding a common English translation for our liturgical forms and future common song book and expressed its willingness to assist. No request was made for such help.
- 2.6 The CBT reports that on September 1, 2009, *Biblica* (formerly IBS-STL Global) announced its plans for a new NIV, to be released in 2011 (see www.nivbible2011.com). The official press release cites continuing changes of the English language as the primary motivation, although it also mentions the contributions of biblical scholarship. It also appears that the 1984 text of the NIV currently used within the churches will no longer be published. The website states: “Beginning in 2011, no new products will be developed based on either the 1984 version of the NIV or the TNIV. All new NIV-related products will be based solely on the 2011 update of the NIV.” *Biblica* also expressed openness to receive input from both external scholars and regular Bible readers. These were to be received, however, before the end of the calendar year 2009. The CBT took the opportunity to remind the NIV publisher of past submissions regarding concerns with the NIV, including the matter of gender inclusiveness. Due to time constraints, the CBT advised churches and members to correspond directly with the NIV publisher.
- 2.7 The committee proposes to continue monitoring the NIV and to evaluate the updated NIV version when it is released in 2011.
- 2.8 The church at Hamilton (Providence) expresses concerns regarding upcoming changes to the NIV. Hamilton is also concerned that the work of Bible translation seems to be driven by economic factors and not by linguistic developments or new insights of scholarship. For this reason, Hamilton suggests that synod mandate the CBT to investigate the possibility of publishing an ecclesiastically-produced and owned translation with the cooperation of churches which are members of NAPARC and/or ICRC.
- 2.9 In view of the upcoming changes to the NIV, Burlington-Fellowship

suggests that the CBT should thoroughly review the ESV in order to determine whether or not this translation should become the recommended version for the churches.

- 2.10 Glanbrook suggests that the CBT should be mandated to investigate the possibility of obtaining the printing rights of the NIV 1984 edition.
- 2.11 Winnipeg-Redeemer asks whether the CBT has not merely reminded the NIV publishers of past submissions but has actually resubmitted them. If not, Winnipeg-Redeemer strongly urges doing so even though the deadline has passed.
- 2.12 Glanbrook and Winnipeg-Redeemer also both suggest that CBT should be mandated to evaluate the 2011 version of the NIV and to start looking for alternative translations.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 It would appear that the vast majority of the churches are content with the NIV as the translation recommended for use in the churches.
- 3.2 Current information about the upcoming new version of the NIV gives little indication of the nature of the changes being contemplated. The website of the NIV publisher states: “As time passes and English changes, the NIV we have at present is becoming increasingly dated. If we want a Bible that English speakers around the world can understand, we have to listen to, and respect, the vocabulary they are using today” (nivbibleupdate.com).
- 3.3 It seems unlikely that a translation which was completed in 1984 would already be linguistically dated.
- 3.4 The website for the upcoming edition of the NIV states that the publisher of the NIV does not have a seat on the Committee on Bible Translation (CBT). On the contrary, it asserts that the CBT is completely autonomous. The CBT only monitors developments in language and scholarship and makes independent decisions and recommendations about the need for translational changes. (It should be noted that in this Consideration, the acronym CBT refers not to the synodically-appointed Committee on Bible Translation but to the organization responsible for preparing the NIV translation of the Bible).
- 3.5 It would be a blessing for the churches to have a translation which would be available and could be used without significant changes for

a generation or more. Frequent changes in Bible translation diminish the ability of the people of God to hold the divine Word in their hearts and minds and should therefore be resisted.

- 3.6 The concept of an ecclesiastical translation is worthy of consideration. Dialogue with NAPARC and English-speaking ICRC churches would reveal whether there is interest and resources for such a project.
- 3.7 Synod Chatham 2004 gave the CBT the mandate to do a preliminary investigation of the English Standard Version (ESV) and to provide Synod 2007 with a report on the ESV translation, using also the input solicited from the churches.
- 3.8 Synod 2007 received a report from the CBT regarding the ESV. This Synod decided to “continue to recommend the NIV for use within the churches but to leave it in the freedom of the churches should they feel compelled to use other translations that have received favourable reviews in the reports of the CBT, namely, the NKJV, the NASB or the ESV” (*Acts*, Article 134, Recommendation 4.1).
- 3.9 Seeing that the CBT may come to the conclusion that the 2011 NIV is not suitable as the recommended translation for the churches and considering that the 1984 version of the NIV may rapidly become unavailable, it would be wise to begin looking for an alternative recommended translation. Among alternatives, the ESV, the NKJV and the NASB deserve priority due to the fact that they have previously received favourable reviews by the CBT and are currently used by some of the churches (see Acts of Synod 1995, Article 72, Appendix III; Acts of Synod 2007, Article 134).

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To thank the committee for its work.
- 4.2 To mandate the CBT as follows:
- 4.2.1 To thoroughly evaluate the updated NIV translation when it is released in 2011 and to produce and send a report to the churches within nine months of the release date.
- 4.2.2 To investigate the feasibility of obtaining access to the printing rights of the 1984 edition of the NIV.
- 4.2.3 To investigate further whether the ESV or the NKJV or the NASB could become the recommended translation for the churches.

- 4.2.4 Investigate the possibility and feasibility of publishing an ecclesiastically-produced and owned Bible translation with the cooperation of English-speaking churches which are members of NAPARC and/or ICRC.
- 4.2.5 To serve the next general synod with a report sent to the churches at least six months prior to the next synod.
- 4.3 To leave the matter of recommendations for committee appointments to the officers of Synod but to encourage increasing the manpower for the committee and the appointment of individuals who live in geographical proximity to each other so as to allow for face to face meetings.

ADOPTED

Article 73 – Committee for the Official Website

1. Material

Report from the Committee for the Official Website (8.2.i.i-ii).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Smithers 2007 (Article 74, Recommendation 4) gave the committee the following mandate:
 - [4.1.1] To maintain existing website and associated technical functions.
 - [4.1.2] To revise the content of the website whenever necessary, in particular ensuring that the text of the *Book of Praise* is the same as that most recently adopted and revised by general synod.
 - [4.1.3] To include on the website:
 - [4.1.3.1] Contact material about each local church, either via links or directly on the website, subject to concurrence of the local church.
 - [4.1.3.2] Contact information for committees and churches appointed by general synod for specific mandates.
 - [4.1.3.3] Publication of the official reports of the synodical committees in a standardized format (e.g., PDF) with security measures restricting access only to consistories. These restrictions should be lifted after synod has dealt with them.

- [4.1.4] To provide web and email services to the churches, and be available upon request to serve the churches with advice with regard to the possibilities of setting up their own websites.
- [4.1.5] To serve Synod 2010 with a report to be sent to the churches at least six months prior to the beginning of this synod, including a financial statement and a proposed budget, and any recommendations regarding new content to be added to the website.
- 2.2 The committee redesigned the website, updated information when appropriate, added links to other useful websites, posted press releases from broader assemblies, and posted the Acts of Synod Smithers 2007. The committee also posted the reports of the synodical committees of General Synod and restricted access to these reports as per the instructions from General Synod Smithers 2007.
- 2.3 The committee invited local churches to present themselves on the internet via the federational website.
- 2.4 The committee considered posting sermons but instead posted links to web pages of local churches in the federation where sermons can be found.
- 2.5 The committee is willing to serve churches with web and e-mail services, and encourages feedback.
- 2.6 Since the Theological College now has its own website, the librarian of the college no longer needs to be on this committee.
- 2.7 The committee recommends that General Synod 2010 decide:
 - 2.7.1 To strongly encourage ministers, synodical committees, and local churches to use a *@canrc.org* email address, and local congregations to use *congregation.canrc.org* as their primary domain name.
 - 2.7.2 To reduce the committee membership to four members (three technical and one administrative).
 - 2.7.3 To appoint two new members to the committee in the place of the three who have completed their terms.
 - 2.7.4 To approve the annual budget of \$750.00.
- 2.8 The committee recommends that its mandate be:
 - [1.] To maintain the existing website and associated technical functions.
 - [2.] To revise the content of the website whenever necessary, in particular ensuring that the text of the *Book of Praise* is the same as that most recently adopted and revised by General Synod.

- [3.] To provide web services and email services to the churches and serve the churches with advice with regard to the possibilities of setting up their own web sites.
- [4.] To serve Synod 2010 with a report to be sent to the churches at least six months prior to the beginning of Synod, including a financial statement and a proposed budget, and any recommendations regarding new content to be added to the website.

- 2.9 With respect to the Acts of General Synods, currently only Acts of General Synod Winnipeg 1989 and later are available on the web.
- 2.10 The website currently lists all the churches in the federation, but not the mission churches/preaching posts.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The committee has fulfilled its mandate.
- 3.2 Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 decided that reports from synod committees be made available on the web before synod also for all members of the churches (Article 65).
- 3.3 It would be beneficial to consider the feasibility of making the Acts of all general synods available on the website in searchable format.
- 3.4 The mission churches / preaching posts should also be listed on the website.
- 3.5 To leave it to the officers of synod to recommend two new members to the committee.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To thank the committee for its work.
- 4.2 To approve the annual budget of \$750.00.
- 4.3 To mandate the committee to:
 - 4.3.1 Maintain the existing website and associated technical functions.
 - 4.3.2 Revise the content of the website whenever necessary, in particular ensuring that the text of the *Book of Praise* is the same as that most recently adopted and revised by General Synod.
 - 4.3.3 Make synod reports available on the web before synod also for all members of the churches.
 - 4.3.4 Provide web services and email services to the churches

- and serve the churches with advice with regard to the possibilities of setting up their own web sites.
- 4.3.5 Work toward making all the Acts of all the general synods available on the website in searchable format.
- 4.3.6 List the mission churches / preaching posts on the website.
- 4.3.7 Serve Synod 2013 with a report to be sent to the churches at least six months prior to the beginning of Synod, including a financial statement and a proposed budget, and any recommendations regarding new content to be added to the website.

ADOPTED

Article 74 – Appeal from Attercliffe re: Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the ERQ

1. Material

Appeal from Attercliffe re: Article 75 of the Acts of Synod Smithers 2007 (8.5.1).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Attercliffe asks Synod to rescind the decision of Synod Smithers 2007 to establish a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship (EF) with the Reformed Churches of Quebec (ERQ).
- 2.2 As evidence for its belief that establishing EF with the ERQ was premature, Attercliffe highlights the Report of the CCCNA to Synod 2010 which speaks about the lack of a consensus in the ERQ concerning how supervision of the Lord's Table and the pulpit is to be done.
- 2.3 As further evidence that EF with the ERQ was established prematurely, Attercliffe points to the recommendation of the CCCNA to Synod 2010 that matters of confession and practice, especially regarding admission to the Lord's Table and supervision of the pulpit, should be discussed with the ERQ only when appropriate and that these matters should not be belaboured unnecessarily. According to Attercliffe, this recommendation from the CCCNA indicates that the first Rule of EF cannot be implemented.
- 2.4 Attercliffe believes that the lack of a consensus in the ERQ regarding admission to the Lord's Supper and supervision of the pulpit is evidence that obedience to Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity

“has not yet been understood or implemented in the practices of this federation.”

- 2.5 According to Attercliffe, key portions of the mandate of the CCCNA in regard to the ERQ were not fulfilled and the relationship of EF did not really function.
- 2.6 Attercliffe recommends that the CanRC end the relationship of EF with the ERQ and instead work with the ERQ in order to support their development and understanding of the implications of being faithful Churches in a secular society - as resources allow.
- 3. Considerations**
- 3.1 The main concerns of Attercliffe in regard to the ERQ revolve around supervision of the Lord’s Supper and the pulpit in the ERQ. In coming to the decision to establish EF with the ERQ, Synod Smithers was clearly aware of the matters listed by Attercliffe (see Acts of Synod Smithers 2007, Observations 2.3 - 2.4) but did not consider these an impediment to offering EF to the ERQ. Attercliffe does not demonstrate from Scripture or from the Three Forms of Unity that Synod Smithers erred in coming to this decision.
- 3.2 Synod Smithers 2007 also took note of the statement of the CCCA (the predecessor of the CCCNA) that “it has become clear from our discussions that although the practices in the ERQ and the Canadian Reformed Churches are not identical, their position mirrors what the Canadian Reformed Churches have agreed to in discussions with the OPC, and that in this respect there is an agreement on the same principles” (Acts, Article 75, Observation 2.7; Consideration 3.4). Attercliffe does not interact with this important consideration.
- 3.3 Synod Smithers 2007 indicated that differences between the ERQ and the CanRC can be discussed in the context of a relationship of EF. While stating that these differences should not be belaboured, the CCCNA Report to Synod 2010 is not suggesting that the differences should be simply forgotten. Working toward a more unified position on matters of mutual concern remains one of the goals of EF.
- 3.4 Contrary to the assertions of Attercliffe, the report of the CCCNA to Synod 2010 indicates that the relationship of EF is working well and is bearing positive results. There has been a good exchange of views and a willingness to hear each other.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to deny the appeal of Attercliffe.

ADOPTED

Article 75 – Appeal from Fergus-Maranatha re: Committee on Women’s Voting

1. Material

Appeal from Fergus-Maranatha re: Article 136 of Synod Smithers 2007 (8.5.i).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The church at Fergus-Maranatha recommends that, “Synod Burlington 2010 rescind the decision to appoint a committee to study the matter of ‘Women’s Voting’ on the basis that no new grounds were provided in accordance with Article 33 CO.”
- 2.2 Fergus-Maranatha observes a number of things, summarized as follows:
- 2.2.1 The basic history of how two committees were appointed by two successive synods to study the issue of women’s voting culminating in the decision of Synod 1983 not to appoint another committee.
- 2.2.2 Synod 1983 “thanked the committee for the work done, indicating that the committee fulfilled its mandate. Synod [2007] provides no evidence to the contrary.”
- 2.2.3 Synod 2007 took note that “despite requests from various churches and also by Regional Synod East, subsequent Synods (1986, 1995, and 2001) have decided not to appoint study committees on the basis that there were no ‘new grounds’ that would warrant revisiting the decision of 1983.”
- 2.2.4 Synod 2007 observed that “The Cornerstone Council is asking synod to appoint a committee with the mandate to examine biblical teaching on headship and to determine how this teaching impacts voting in the church.”
- 2.2.5 The topic of “headship” is extensively covered in the reports brought to synod by the committees formed by Synod 1980 (see pages 206 - 207, 211) and 1983 (see pages 114-117). Among other references to headship, the committee report to Synod 1980 begins the topic of “Women in the Old

Testament” by saying “the matter of the rulership of the male over the female in marriage is further developed in the Old Testament after the fall.” Among other references to “headship,” the conclusions of the committee report to Synod 1983 refer to Gen 3:16 when saying that “Man’s rule over the woman is not an ordinance of God, but part of the curse of sin.” It also refers to Eph 5:21-33 when stating that man is the head (Greek: ‘kephale’) of the woman.”

2.3 Fergus-Maranatha considers a number of things:

- [i.] ...Consideration 4.3 of the Acts of Synod 2007 erred by stating “the agenda set by a previous synod (1983) has not been completed.” Synod 1983 thanked the committee for their work, indicating that their mandate was fulfilled.
- [ii.] Synod may not continue agenda items from a synod 24 years earlier on the simple basis that a conclusive decision was not made. Article 30 CO, clearly states that new grounds must be presented and the synods 1986, 1995, 1998, and 2001 faithfully upheld this principle.
- [iii.] Re: Observation 3.7 of the Acts of Synod 2007: A new topic of study does not equate to new grounds. New grounds arise out of further study of scripture and need to be presented as such to be in compliance with Article 30 CO. The Cornerstone Church at Hamilton may have brought new questions to the matter and successfully argued that there was not a decisive conclusion regarding women’s voting, but this is not sufficient to support a motion to reopen a matter. To reopen a matter they must give an indication of new grounds (preferably biblical) as decided by synods 1986, 1995, 1998, and 2001.”
- [iv.] Re: Consideration 4.3 of the Acts of Synod 2007: The new elements brought forward by the Church at Hamilton are not clearly specified neither are they clearly referenced in the Observations or Considerations of Synod 2007.
- [v.] Assuming that the new “element” referenced in the Acts of 2007, Consideration 4.3, is the topic of “headship,” this topic has already been extensively studied and included in the reports brought to synod by the committees formed by Synod 1980 and 1983.

- [vi.] Since no legitimate grounds were presented, Synod 2007 has allowed the Cornerstone Church at Hamilton to re-package previously studied topics and to have another vote in another time where there may be different sociological perspectives on a matter where no new and relevant biblical grounds have been clearly identified. Article 33 CO is intended to prevent this disorderly persistence.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 It is true that Synod 1983 thanked the Committee on Women’s Voting Rights “for the work done,” but this does not prove that the Committee had “fulfilled its mandate.” This says nothing more than that Synod appreciated the efforts of the Committee in providing their report. It says nothing about whether the mandate was fulfilled or not.
- 3.2 Fergus-Maranatha acknowledges that a conclusive decision was not made in 1983. Fergus-Maranatha does not prove that subsequent synods denied either to admit the matter or to appoint a new committee on the basis that a conclusive decision was never made on this issue. The Acts of Synods 1986, 1995, 1998 and 2001 indicate that other reasons were brought forward as rationale to re-open this issue but were all found not to be “new grounds.” However, when Hamilton approached Synod 2007, this rationale served as a legitimate new ground to reconsider the matter, having not been presented as a ground to a general synod in the time since 1983.
- 3.3 It is a matter of public record that the churches have struggled with the issue of women’s voting since Synod 1974 and yet no conclusive decision was ever reached on the matter despite two extensive committee reports. Thus Synod 2007 was correct in stating that “The agenda set by a previous synod (1980) has not been completed.”

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to deny the appeal of Fergus-Maranatha.

ADOPTED

One member of Synod abstained from voting.

Article 76 – Appeal from Fergus North re: Committee on Women’s Voting

1. Material

- 1.1 Appeal from Fergus North re: Article 136 of Synod Smithers 2007 to appoint a committee on women’s voting (8.5.v).
- 1.2 The decision of Synod 2010 (Acts, Article 62) on the Appeal from Kerwood re: Article 136 of Synod Smithers 2007.

2. Observations

- 2.1 On the basis of Article 30 CO, Fergus North appeals the decision of Synod Smithers 2007, Article 136, to appoint a committee to study the matter of “Women’s Voting.”
- 2.2 Fergus North observes a number of things:
 - 2.2.1 The history of how a committee to study this matter was first appointed by Synod 1977.
 - 2.2.2 How Synod 1980 reappointed this committee to “re-examine the matter” “in light of the criticism voiced in letters to Synod and in the report of the advisory committee.”
 - 2.2.3 How Synod 1983 decided “not to accede to its [the appointed committee’s] recommendation (to implement Women’s Voting for Office Bearers),” and “not to appoint a new committee on this matter.”
 - 2.2.4 This decision of Synod 1983 was never successfully appealed.
 - 2.2.5 The history of how this matter was handled at subsequent synods. Fergus North notes in particular how Synods 1995 and 1998 both declared letters inadmissible on grounds which included Article 30 CO.
- 2.3 The decision of Synod 2010 regarding the appeal of the church at Kerwood (Article 62) supplies much detailed background on how various general synods have dealt with the matter of admissibility as per Article 30 CO.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Past Synods have been inconsistent on admitting materials as per Article 30 CO. Some Synods have accepted submissions directly from churches on matters of the churches in common (e.g., Synods 1974, Article 84; 1977, Article 27; 1992, Article 36; and 2007, Article 136) using Article 30, and other Synods have rejected similar

- submissions pointing to the very same Article 30 (e.g., Synods 1995, Article 51; 1998, Article 110; 2001, Article 101). No Synod has proven that the other (opposite) interpretation of Article 30 is faulty; each Synod has gone by its own opinion. This inconsistency should be addressed. However, it is not in itself a valid ground to appeal under Article 31 CO.
- 3.2 The response of Synod 2010 to the appeal of Kerwood (see Acts, Article 62) provides more detail about this inconsistency and recommends a way forward for the churches.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to deny the appeal of Fergus North.

ADOPTED

Article 77 – Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA)

1. Material

- 1.1 Report 6 from the CCCNA re: the RPCNA (8.2.f).
- 1.2 Letters from the following churches: Hamilton-Providence (8.3.F.1), Toronto (8.3.F.2), Smithers (8.3.F.3), Guelph (8.3.F.4), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.F.5), Grand Valley (8.3.F.6), Coaldale (8.3.F.7), Orangeville (8.3.F.8), Edmonton-Immanuel (8.3.F.9), Owen Sound (8.3.F.10), Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.F.11), Flamborough (8.3.F.12), Neerlandia (8.3.F.13), Willoughby Heights (8.3.F.14), Attercliffe (8.3.F.15), Surrey (8.3.F.17), London (8.3.F.19), Glanbrook (8.3.F.20), Ancaster (8.3.F.23), Lincoln (8.3.F.24), Cloverdale (8.3.F.25) Dunnville (8.3.F.26), and Barrhead (8.3.F.27).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Smithers 2007 (Article 163, Recommendation 4) gave the CCCNA the following mandate:
 - [4.2.1] To confirm whether the marks of the church of the Lord Jesus are evident in the RPCNA.
 - [4.2.2] To explore further whether the matters mentioned in Considerations 3.3 and 3.4 are a hindrance to the establishment of ecclesiastical fellowship (EF).
 - Consideration 3.3 reads: “...The CCCNA should be instructed to study the status and content of the Testimony in the RPCNA including what it says about the Covenant...”

- Consideration 3.4 reads: “The CCCNA’s concern about exclusive psalmody ought to be investigated further, as ought their views on ordaining women as deacons.”

[4.2.3] To submit its report to the next General Synod.

- 2.2 The CCCNA interacted with the Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC) at NAPARC in November 2007 and again in November 2008. Members of the CCCNA attended an RPCNA Synod in 2008 and had another meeting with the IRC.
- 2.3 The CCCNA comes to the conclusion that the RPCNA exhibits the marks of the church.
- 2.4 The CCCNA studied the *Testimony*, including what it says about the covenant, and concludes that neither its status nor its contents present an obstacle to the establishment of EF.
- 2.5 The CCCNA investigated the concerns about exclusive psalmody and concludes that this matter does not present an obstacle to the establishment of EF.
- 2.6 The CCCNA notes that the RPCNA have congregations in Ottawa, Denver and in the Kitchener-Waterloo area; for the CanRC congregations in these areas, EF would potentially provide many practical benefits.
- 2.7 The CCCNA consulted with other churches with whom we have EF about establishing a relationship with the RPCNA.
- 2.8 The CCCNA recommends that Synod 2010 decide:
- [1.] To express gratitude to the Lord for the positive developments within our contact with the RPCNA.
 - [2.] That the Committee has confirmed that the marks of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ are evident in the RPCNA.
 - [3.] That the status and the content of the Testimony have been sufficiently studied, including what it says about the covenant, and that it does not present an obstacle to the establishment of EF.
 - [4.] That the concern about exclusive psalmody has been investigated further and that it does not present an obstacle to the establishment of EF.
 - [5.] That the views of the RPCNA with respect to ordaining women as deacons have been investigated and that they do not present an obstacle to the establishment of EF.
 - [6.] That EF with the RPCNA has the potential to be meaningful and practical at the local level.

[7.] To offer a relationship of EF to the RPCNA under the adopted rules.

- 2.9 A total of 21 churches raise concerns about the recommendations of the CCCNA report. The concerns can be summarized as follows:

In regard to the ordination of female deacons in the RPCNA:

- 2.9.1 While the RPCNA claims that deacons in their churches are not part of the government of the church and therefore do not exercise authority, Appendix 4, 4.c of the Report of the CCCNA seems to indicate that the office of deacon in the RPCNA involves not only assistance and administration but also leading, training, overseeing and teaching. Thus the practice of ordaining women as deacons would potentially involve women exercising authority over men, contrary to the injunctions of the apostle in 1 Tim. 2:12 and 1 Cor. 14:34.
- 2.9.2 The ordination of women as deacons is a point contested by some ministers within the RPCNA to the extent that they declare an exception on this point.
- 2.9.3 Apart from the functioning of women as deacons within the RPCNA, the very fact of ordination implies authority.
- 2.9.4 In view of our concern about the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands which seem to be moving in the direction of female office bearers, it would not be wise to compromise our witness by establishing EF with the RPCNA.
- 2.9.5 Scripture speaks of deacons as men who must be the “husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well” (1 Tim. 3:8-12) which passage plainly prohibits the ordination of women to this office.
- 2.9.6 Scripture indicates that the first deacons were men (Acts 6).
- 2.9.7 Even though it occurred many years ago, the decision of the RPCNA to allow for the ordination of women as deacons may well show the influence of unscriptural feminism.
- 2.9.8 Synod Smithers cautioned the Reformed Churches of New Zealand to be careful in their relationship with the CRC of Australia due to the ordination of women as deacons in these churches.
- 2.9.9 Ordaining women as deacons is a major issue which must be resolved prior to the establishment of any relationship of EF.
- 2.9.10 Article 30 of the Belgic Confession indicates that deacons are part of the governing body of the church and can only be men.

In regard to Exclusive Psalmody:

- 2.9.11 Does the RPCNA view the singing of Hymns as sin? If so, how can it have EF with churches which have this practice?
- 2.9.12 Exclusive Psalmody is an extra-scriptural binding which the church is not allowed to make.
- 2.9.13 If the RPCNA would not bind a church in EF to exclusive Psalmody, how can it bind its own members to this practice?

In regard to the Testimony:

- 2.9.14 Churches should not be bound by extra-confessional documents.
- 2.9.15 The distinction in the Testimony between external and internal covenant does not fit with the accepted understanding of the covenant among the CanRC.
- 2.9.16 The Testimony is an obstacle to EF because it is the “interpretive lens” through which the confessional standards are read.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 While the CCCNA report provides extensive information about the nature and functioning of female deacons in the RPCNA, many serious questions about this practice remain.
- 3.2 The churches are legitimately concerned that the ordination of women as deacons contradicts the teaching of Scripture that deacons ought to be men (1 Tim. 3:8-12).
- 3.3 The official RPCNA position is that women deacons do not govern or exercise authority over men; in practice, however, it would seem that they do (see Appendix 4, 4c). If this is the case, this would conflict with Scripture (see 1 Tim. 2:12 and 1 Cor. 14:34 and cf. Article 30, Belgic Confession).
- 3.4 It would be inconsistent and confusing for the CanRC to enter into EF with a federation of churches which ordain women as deacons while Synod 2007 cautioned the Reformed Churches of New Zealand about their relationship with the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia due to their practice of ordaining women as deacons.
- 3.5 Exclusive psalmody has never been seen as an obstacle to EF as is clear from the existing relationship between the CanRC and the FCS. Even if the RPCNA views the singing of hymns as sinful, they do not press the matter in terms of their ecumenical relationships.
- 3.6 It would seem that some of the churches are mistaken in speaking of

the *Testimony* as an “extra-confessional” document. In reality, this document has the status of a confession on par with the Westminster Confession and Catechisms. More study would be necessary to determine whether this document is a faithful Reformed confession.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To not enter into EF with the RPCNA at this time.
- 4.2 To mandate the CCCNA:
- 4.2.1 To monitor developments in the RPCNA regarding the ordination of women as deacons.
- 4.2.2 To continue informal contact with the RPCNA via NAPARC.
- 4.2.3 To report to the next General Synod.

ADOPTED**Article 78 – Speeches by Fraternal Delegates from the ERQ and FRCSA**

Rev. J. VanWoudenberg introduced Rev. Ben Westerveld, fraternal delegate from the ERQ. Rev. Westerveld then addressed the assembly. He described some of the struggles and joys of the ERQ, outlined developments in their inter-church relations, and highlighted the benefits of interaction with the CanRC through the CCCNA as well as through other personal contacts. The full text of his address can be found in *Appendix 9* of the Acts.

Rev. J. Moesker then introduced Rev. Dirk M. Boersma of the FRCSA. Rev. Boersma then spoke, describing the history of the FRCSA as well as “the religious tapestry of South Africa.” Despite the small size of the FRCSA, these churches are quite active in mission work. He expressed gratitude for financial support received from the Dutch and Australian churches, and stressed the need for structural instead of incidental giving, also by some of the CanRC. That would help relieve pressure on the mission budget. He also thanked the CanRC for help given through the Theological College in regard to training for the ministry in the FRCSA. His complete address is in *Appendix 10* of the Acts.

Article 79 – Closing Devotions

Rev. Louwse gave a meditation on Psalm 19, after which all sang Psalm 19:1 and 3. He led in prayer and then the chairman adjourned the meeting.

Day 9 — Morning Session
Friday, May 21, 2010

Article 80 – Opening and Roll Call

Rev. Aasman opened the meeting by requesting all present to sing Psalm 40:1. He then read from Micah 2. Roll call was held and all were present.

Article 81 – Free Church of Scotland (FCS) and Free Church of Scotland Continuing (FCC)

1. Material

- 1.1 Report from the CRCA.
- 1.2 Letters from the churches of Toronto (8.3.M.1), Grand Valley (8.3.M.4), Coaldale (8.3.M.8), Fergus-Maranatha, (8.3.M.15) Attercliffe (8.3.M.26), Taber (8.3.M.27), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.M.29), Glanbrook (8.3.M.33), Abbotsford (8.3.M.35), Lincoln (8.3.M.36), and Cloverdale (8.3.M.38).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The CRCA recommends that Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 decide:
 - 2.1.1 To continue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship (EF) with the FCS under the adopted rules.
 - 2.1.2 To rescind the decision of Synod Smithers 2007 with respect to FCC and to reinstate the relationship of EF with that church.
 - 2.1.3 To use its good offices to exhort the FCS and the FCC to work earnestly at reconciliation and reunion.
 - 2.1.4 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.
- 2.2 Synod Smithers 2007 decided, among other things, to acknowledge that Synod Chatham 2004 erred by “continuing” a relationship of EF with the FCC which, in fact, did not exist. Since then the CRCA received several letters from the FCC expressing sadness that Synod Smithers decided to discontinue a relationship of EF with the FCC. The FCC suggests this decision was based on inaccurate information. According to the FCC the division between them and the FCS was more than a matter of polity but “comes down to a question of practical acceptance of the doctrine that Christ is the Head of the

Church.” Furthermore, “the Free Church Continuing would strongly challenge any suggestion that they have ‘seceded.’” They “did not want a division and do not want division and from the beginning have worked toward reconciliation.” In a letter to the CRCA the FCC expresses the following wish: “We most sincerely pray that your Committee will be able to correct at as early a date as possible the errors of fact which seem to underlie the findings of Synod Smithers.”

- 2.3 After hearing the comments of the FCC, the CRCA concludes that Synod Smithers erred in some of its assumptions and conclusions. Most of the churches who responded to the report encourage synod to accept all four recommendations of the committee and as such reinstate the relationships with the FCC under the adopted rules. The suggestion is made by one of the churches that the CRCA should as yet pursue a study of the history of this separation in order to come to a well-founded decision regarding this legitimacy. One church cautions Synod to make the decision to rescind the decision of Smithers 2007 on the basis of errors made and not simply as a means to re-establish communication.
- 2.4 Two churches recommend Synod “uphold the decision of Synod Smithers 2007 with respect to the FCC and to encourage the FCS and FCC to work earnestly at reconciliation and reunion” since, as one church wrote “Synod Smithers decision is consistent with past decisions which rejected the idea of the pluriformity of the church.”
- 2.5 Several of the churches who wrote to synod expressed concern about the fact that the Free Church of Scotland entered into a formal relationship with the Church of Scotland (a denomination that is a member of the World Council of Churches).
- 2.6 The CRCA reports on a meeting with two ministers of the FCS in which the status of the Joint Statement was discussed. These ministers explained that the Joint Statement was meant to form a basis for discussion and did not purport to be either a covenant or agreement. In the meantime the discussions with the Church of Scotland have run stuck over matters of how to view and interpret Scripture, as well as over the matter of the ordaining of homosexuals to the ministry in the Church of Scotland. The CRCA sees no need to delve further into this matter.
- 2.7 One of the churches laments the fact that the report makes no mention that the committee took any action to exhort the FCS and FCC to continue their efforts towards reconciliation.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The CRCA correctly recommends that the decision of Synod Smithers 2007 be rescinded. It is clear from the CRCA report that the decision was made on the basis of incorrect information. To reinstate a relationship of EF allows the CRCA to deal with both churches in a fair and just manner.
- 3.2 It would be redundant to mandate CRCA as yet to study the history of the separation of these churches. The Acts of Synod 2001 and 2004 testify that such an investigation has already taken place. The CRCA should keep in mind, however, the mandate given by Synod 2004 which instructed the CRCA “to continue monitoring the situation in the hope of gaining clarity.”
- 3.3 The Joint Statement between the Free Church of Scotland and the Church of Scotland is a cause of concern not only to some of our own churches but to the FCC as well. The CRCA report indicates recent developments would suggest the Joint Statement no longer functions and that, therefore, the matter needs no further attention. However, the CRCA should receive confirmation from the FCS that their evaluation and conclusions are correct.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To continue the relationship of EF with the FCS under the adopted rules.
- 4.2 To rescind the decision of Synod Smithers 2007 with respect to the FCC and to reinstate the relationship of EF with the FCC.
- 4.3 To provide the CRCA with the following mandate:
- 4.3.1 To give due diligence to the Rules for EF and in the context of these rules to monitor the relationship the FCS has with the Church of Scotland.
- 4.3.2 To encourage the FCS and the FCC to work earnestly at reconciliation and reunion.
- 4.3.2 To send two committee members to the FCS and FCC with a view to encouraging them, also when it comes to the topic of the unity of the church.

ADOPTED

Article 82 – Free Reformed Church of South Africa (FRCSA)**1. Material**

Report from the CRCA (Agenda 8.2.m).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Smithers 2007 decided (Article 124, Recommendation 4):
- [4.1] To continue ecclesiastical fellowship (EF) with the FRCSA under the adopted rules.
- [4.2] To recommend the FRCSA to the churches as worthy of continued and increased prayerful and financial assistance, to help them with their extensive mission work as well as the compassionate pursuits among the disadvantaged.
- [4.3] To mandate the Board of Governors of our Theological College to encourage and aid the FRCSA in the quest to redesign their Theological Training by serving them with advice, and by extending academic backing through guest lectures, as well as assisting students who may enrol here with the necessary language and social support.
- 2.2 The following are some of the CRCA’s communications regarding the FRCSA:
- 2.2.1 A letter dated June 26, 2007 was sent informing the FRCSA of the observations, considerations and recommendations of Synod Smithers 2007.
- 2.2.2 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 CanRC.
- 2.2.3 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.
- 2.2.4 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.
- 2.2.5 An Afrikaans short report of the FRCSA Synod Cape Town May 12-15 2008 was received in January 2009 as well as an English copy of the full Acts in March 2009.
- 2.2.6 On June 29, 2009, the CRCA sent a letter to the church at Coaldale asking its Council to take on the project of

being the coordinating church for aid to needy churches of the FRSCA. On November 4, 2009, the CRCA learned that Coaldale had agreed to take on this project and had established a Committee of Council for that purpose.

2.3 Concerning the CanRC, Synod Capetown decided:

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

As grounds for this decision, Synod stated:

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

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

2.4 With respect to the ICRC, Synod Capetown decided:

- [1.] To continue membership of the ICRC.
- [2.] To accept the proposed amendment to the ICRC constitution.
- [3.] To authorize the deputies to send one delegate to the next conference.

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

2.6 As far as theological training is concerned, Synod decided that the deputy curators should appoint a National Coordinator to implement the required steps for a “Ministerial Training Structure.”

2.7 The CRCA comes with the following evaluation concerning the FRCSA:

“As demonstrated in our contacts and in the Acts of Synod Cape Town 2008, the Free Reformed Churches of South Africa continue to give evidence of faithfulness to the Word of God, to maintaining the adopted confessions and to upholding their Church Order. The Lord’s great blessings over the extensive mission and mission aid work continue to be noted with gratitude. In their own situation the FRCSA continue to work at developing their own Ministerial Training Structure. There remain considerable opportunities for mission and mission aid in South Africa.”

2.8 The CRCA comes with the following recommendations to Synod Burlington-Ebenezer:

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

3. Considerations

- 3.1 It is clear from the observations that the CRCA has been active in dialogue with the FRCSA and in assisting them when possible. The CanRC have been informed of the financial needs of our sister churches in South Africa, and a mechanism has been put into place to collect monies in Canada for this cause.
- 3.2 It is regrettable that the CRCA was not able to send a fraternal delegate to General Synod of the FRCSA in Cape Town May 2008.
- 3.3 It is much appreciated that the FRCSA have authorized sending one delegate to attend the next Synod of the CanRC.
- 3.4 It is proper according to the Rules of EF that the Deputies for Contact with Churches in South Africa have informed the CanRC of their talks with the Reformed Churches in South Africa (GKSA). It is good to see that such contacts are explored while carefully monitoring how the GKSA deals with matters such as women in office and confessional faithfulness in its contacts with other churches in South Africa.
- 3.5 It is clear from the Report of the Board of Governors of the

Theological College of the CanRC that there has been significant dialogue between representatives of the FRCSA and the Senate of the College. The Board considers that it has fulfilled the directives of Article 124 of the Acts of Synod 2007. This has proven to be fruitful contact.

- 3.6 The CRCA delivers a very positive report about the FRCSA. This is encouraging for EF between the FRCSA and the CanRC.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To continue EF with the FRCSA under the adopted rules.
 4.2 To recommend the FRCSA to the churches as worthy of continued financial assistance, to help them support the needy churches in the federation, and to assist them with their extensive mission work and relief efforts among the disadvantaged and sick in South Africa.
 4.3 To mandate the Board of Governors of our Theological College to encourage and assist when possible the FRCSA in their efforts to set up their Ministerial Training Structure.

ADOPTED

Article 83 – Appeal from Grassie re: Article 103 of Synod Smithers 2007

1. Material

- 1.1 Appeal from the church at Grassie (8.5.a).
 1.2 Acts of Synod Smithers 2007.

2. Observations

- 2.1 The church at Grassie states that the decision of Synod Smithers 2007 “which mandates the Theological Education Committee to “express the strong preference for at least one federational seminary (Article 103 4.4.1.3)” is “contrary to Scripture because 2 Timothy 2:2 ‘indicates that those ordained by the church should work to supply the church with future preachers’ (Report of the Theological Education Committee, Acts 2004, p.227).”
 2.2 Grassie also states that “It is part of the responsibility of the office-bearers of the churches to ensure that there will be ministers who are able to preach and teach God’s people in the future. This responsibility should not be carried out by an institution or institutions which have no integral connection with the churches.”

- 2.3 Grassie argues further that the decision of Synod Smithers is contrary to Article 19 of the Church Order which states, “The churches shall maintain an institution for the training for the ministry.” Grassie states: “We fail to understand how this institution in Article 19 ‘is not the same as a federational seminary,’ as stated in 3.4 of Article 103 of Synod Smithers. An institution which the churches maintain is a federational seminary by definition.”

- 2.4 Synod Smithers stated in Article 103, Consideration 3.4, that “The principle of 2 Timothy 2.2, which points in the direction of the churches being responsible for the training for the ministry, does not necessitate the conclusion of a ‘federational’ seminary. Article 19 of the Church Order of the CanRC also does not necessitate a federational seminary as ‘an institution for the training for the ministry’ is not the same as federational seminary. Already it is possible under Article 19 for the churches to maintain an institution apart from that institution having to belong to the federation. Therefore, it would be best, for clarity’s sake, to realize that ‘federational’ seminary is terminology that has arisen (in the Statements of Agreement and in the mandate of Synod Chatham) out of current practice and is not itself the Reformed theological education principle. The principle remains: the churches are responsible for the training for the ministry.”

- 2.5 Synod Smithers also stated in Article 103, Consideration 3.6, that: “A seminary at which the board and faculty are appointed by the synods of the churches is one of the fullest ways to express the principle that the churches take responsibility for the training for the ministry. Therefore a federational seminary cannot and must not be quickly removed from the discussion of the theological education committees... Synod expresses the desire that the next URCNA synod would mandate the URCNA theological education committee to engage the CanRC committee on all options, including the possibility of at least one federational seminary.”

3. Considerations

- 3.1 In evaluating the decision of Synod Smithers, the context of that decision must be kept in mind. The report concerning theological education received by Synod Smithers indicated that an “impasse” had been reached in discussions with their URCNA counterparts (Article 103, 2.3.4). It was with the desire to break through that

- impasse and continue fruitful discussion that Synod Smithers laid out a careful distinction between biblical principle and ecclesiastical practice and also between current realities and future possibilities. The intention of Smithers was not to remove the CanRC commitment to a federational seminary or remove any one legitimate possibility from the discussion. Instead Smithers wanted to “leave sufficient room for a broad range of possibilities to be considered and explored based on scriptural principle and in accordance with the agreements the committees have already made” (Article 103, 3.5).
- 3.2 Grassie’s statement in Observation 2.2 has merit. However, Grassie does not prove that a “federational” seminary is the only possible expression of the principle contained in 2 Timothy 2:2. In a discussion about future possibilities it cannot be denied that there is more than one legitimate way for those “ordained by the church” to “work to supply the church with future preachers.”
- 3.3 The decision of Smithers pertains to ongoing dialogue with the URCNA concerning a potential and *future* federation of merged churches. That future federation would operate under a *new* Church Order which at the time of Smithers was still in development. In particular, no article on theological education for the new Church Order had yet been proposed. As such, Grassie’s appeal to the *present* Church Order of the Canadian Reformed Churches is out of place when considering the matter of how to put into practice the biblical principle in this proposed, *future* union. How that new federation will agree together by common consent (i.e. in the new Church Order) to implement the principle of 2 Timothy 2:2 has not yet been determined. At the same time it is good to make clear that Article 19 of the present CanRC Church Order gives expression to a certain *practice* which is *based on* the principle laid out in 2 Timothy 2:2. Other possible practices based on that same principle could not (in 2007) be removed from the dialogue between committees. Synod Chatham 2004 already made this clear when it stated that, “the new federation should retain at least one federational theological school at which the board of governors, the professors and teaching staff are appointed by synod” (Acts Chatham 2004, Article 75, 5.2.3.1). That statement implies that theological training in a different format cannot be excluded from discussions.
- 3.4 It is clear from the statements of Synod Smithers that it has not in any way dismissed the notion of working toward at least one

federational seminary. It merely has distinguished between the biblical principle proper and the *application* of that principle. The biblical principle is this: the churches are responsible for the training for the ministry. One of the fullest ways to *apply* that principle is this: a seminary owned and operated by the federation of churches (i.e. a federational seminary).

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to deny the appeal.

ADOPTED

After some further plenary discussion in regard to committee proposals, synod was adjourned for committee work.

Day 9 — Evening Session

Friday, May 21, 2010

Article 84 – Reopening

Rev. Aasman welcomed all who came for the evening and noted that all the members of Synod were present.

Article 85 – Adoption of Articles 68-79 of the Acts of Synod

Articles 68 to 79 of the Acts were adopted.

Article 86 – Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN)

1. Material

- 1.1 Report from the CRCA (Agenda 8.2.m).
- 1.2 Letters from Toronto (8.3.M.1), Guelph (8.3.M.2), Hamilton-Providence (8.3.M.3), Grand Valley (8.3.M.5), Carman-East (8.3.M.9), Edmonton-Immanuel (8.3.M.12), Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.M.19), Neerlandia (8.3.M.24), Attercliffe (8.3.M.26), Taber (8.3.M.27), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.M.29), Glanbrook (8.3.M.33), Abbotsford (8.3.M.35), Lincoln (8.3.M.36), Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.3.M.37), Yarrow (8.3.M.40), and Kerwood (8.5.x).

2. Observations

- 2.1 With regard to the RCN, the mandate of the CRCA included the following (Acts of General Synod Smithers 2007, Article 133, 5.1-9): [5.3.1] To pay attention to the content of the hymns.

- [5.5] That the CRCA has fulfilled its mandate with respect to studying the results of the deputyship “Fourth Commandment and Sunday” and reporting to the churches, but should continue to monitor developments to see how the decisions about the fourth commandment work out in practice.
- [5.6] To mandate the CRCA to discuss with the Deputies BBK the new approach to divorce in order to get answers to the hermeneutical concerns highlighted by the committee with respect to “the-style-of-the-kingdom” approach to divorce and remarriage. Attention should also be paid to the suggested revision of the Church Order about discipline in cases of divorce and remarriage.
- [5.7] To encourage the committee to monitor the situation in the RCN, keeping in mind the concerns expressed by the churches about the situation in the RCN.
- [5.8] To instruct the CRCA to hold joint meetings at least every two years with Deputies of the BBK to discuss pro-actively matters of mutual concern and interact with requests for advice or feedback about issues coming before synods as much as possible in keeping with Rule 1 of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF).
- 2.2 The CRCA reports the following about the way it has worked with its mandate
- 2.2.1 *Hymns*. The CRCA has not given this much attention. Once the new songbook is complete it will be in a better position to evaluate this matter.
- 2.2.2 *Fourth Commandment and Sunday*. Smithers 2007 mandated the CRCA to “see how the decisions about the fourth commandment work out in practice.” The CRCA feels this is an impossible mandate to meet.
- 2.2.3 *Hermeneutical concerns*. The CRCA suggests that organizing a conference involving the professors of Hamilton and Kampen would be a way of addressing these concerns.
- 2.2.4 *Monitoring the relationship*. The CRCA reports on a matter that has arisen since Smithers 2007 which involves men connected to the Theological University. The CRCA expressed disappointment that Synod Zwolle 2008 did not

- call Dr. G. Harinck to retract his controversial remarks. The CRCA is also disappointed that the Theological University appointed Dr. S. Paas. Dr. Paas has written and defended a dissertation that makes many concessions to liberal scholarship.
- 2.2.5 *Joint meetings*. The CRCA met with the deputies of the RCN at the time of Synod Zwolle 2008 and at the time of the ICRC meeting in New Zealand in 2009.
- 2.3 Regarding General Synod Zwolle 2008 the CRCA reports:
- 2.3.1 Two reports that served at Synod Zwolle had been translated into English. They are: “Men and Women in the Church,” dealing especially with the role of women in the church, and “Church Unity,” dealing with the matter of confessional subscription between the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and the Netherlands Reformed Churches (NRC).³
- 2.3.2 The Canadian deputies took part in the so-called “Foreigners Week.” They received opportunity to address only two matters, the role of women in the church and confessional subscription. The CRCA expresses disappointment that it was limited to addressing these two matters only.
- 2.3.3 During this week a closed session was held in which the foreign delegates were urged to be frank and open about their evaluation of the two reports mentioned in 2.3.1. The CRCA reports that it would not be proper to reveal what precisely went on in this closed session except to say that a number of brothers used the opportunity to speak in a very forthright manner.
- 2.3.4 Synod Zwolle adopted most of the recommendations of the report on the role of men and women in the church. With regard to confessional subscription, Synod charged the committee dealing with this matter to have further discussions with the NRC.
- 2.4 The CRCA recommends that Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 decide:
- [1.] To continue the relationship of EF with the RCN.
- [2.] To monitor developments regarding the quality or contents of new hymns.

³ The “Netherlands Reformed Churches” is a group of churches that separated from the RCN in the late 1960’s. The Dutch name is “Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken,” indicated as NGK in various documents. In the Acts of Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010, the acronym NRC will be used instead.

- [3.] To give priority to the matter of biblical hermeneutics, discussing this with deputies of the RCN and through them with the appropriate committees of synod.
- [4.] To seek ways to organize a conference on hermeneutics which would involve professors currently teaching at Hamilton, Kampen and perhaps elsewhere.
- [5.] To pay special attention to the upcoming report on the role of women in the church and the discussions currently taking place between the RCN and the NRC.
- [6.] To express disappointment that:
- [a.] Synod Zwolle of the RCN did not demand that one of the professors reaching at the Theological University in Kampen retract his controversial remarks.
- [b.] The Theological University did not exercise greater care in the case of a more recent appointment to its faculty.
- 2.5 The CRCA reports that Synod Legana of the FRCA expressed concerns about the developments in the RCN including the following: the approach of these churches to hermeneutics, their position on the Lord's Day, the public comments of Dr. Harinck, and the administration of the sacraments for military personnel. The Australian deputies were instructed to examine and discuss the concerns about hermeneutics as expressed in the report of the late Rev. M. Nap, the report concerning the role of men and women in the church, the decision of the RCN on divorce and remarriage, the proliferation and content of new hymns, the position of the RCN regarding developments in the NRC in connection with female office bearers, the need for the RCN to uphold the plain meaning of Gen 1 – 11 and signs of independentism in the RCN. Synod Legana expressed the hope that these matters can be discussed with the Dutch deputies and those of other sister churches. The Australian Synod observed that the current direction of the RCN is placing tension on their relationship with the RCN.
- 2.6 Most of the churches that submitted letters express concern about the direction of the RCN. In the words of one of the churches "the time has come to 'speak the truth in love' and exhort our sister churches in the Netherlands for walking a path that is deviating from the Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline and

- liturgy. A mandate should be given to the Committee that allows them to express our prayerful concern for our brothers and sisters in the Lord." Several churches suggest that Synod decide that our relationship with the RCN is "under strain."
- 2.7 The churches express concern about the lack of meaningful communication between the CRCA and the RCN. The following examples are given:
- 2.7.1 The CRCA delegates were only allowed to address two matters at Synod Zwolle 2008.
- 2.7.2 The RCN had a meeting with the foreign delegates in a meeting behind closed doors. The CRCA does not report on these meetings. "Is it appropriate to discuss public matters concerning the churches in common and of interest to foreign churches in a closed session?"
- One church feels that the CRCA failed to do justice to responsibly exercising the communion of saints in relation to the Dutch brothers and sisters.
- The churches who mention the lack of meaningful communication give the following suggestions:
- 2.7.3 Mandate the CRCA to send a letter of admonishment to the RCN concerning the lack of interaction.
- 2.7.4 Assess whether the RCN is still motivated to mutually uphold Rule 1 of EF and communicate with each other accordingly.
- 2.7.5 Re-evaluate the status of EF with the RCN because of the inability to uphold meaningful communication with the RCN.
- 2.8 Three churches express concern about the way the CRCA worked with its mandate. They suggest that more should have been done in light of the concerns expressed by Synod 2007. One church notes that several items included in the mandate of the CRCA by Synod 2007 do not seem to have been concluded. These points are: how the decisions about the fourth commandment work out in practice; the new approach to divorce; monitoring the situation in the RCN; and joint meetings at least every two years (Acts 2007, Article 133, 5.5-5.8).
- 2.9 Three churches, though agreeing with the CRCA that the matter of biblical hermeneutics is an important concern with regard to the RCN, do not agree with the CRCA's recommendation to organize a conference. The hermeneutical concerns are not topics for a scholarly

- debate, but were concerns which the deputies had to convey to the RCN.
- 2.10 The churches suggest various topics that should (continue) to be addressed. One church suggests that the CRCA has to continue to speak with the RCN regarding the fourth commandment, because this matter continues to be divisive. It also feels that the CRCA has to speak with the RCN about divorce and remarriage because the principles and practices regarding these matters appear to be in flux. Another church suggests to mandate the CRCA to discuss with the RCN the following matters in addition to the ones already mentioned: variations in liturgy, admission standards for Lord's Supper attendance by non-members, practice of the "unity congregations," severe restrictions on the appeal process, unity discussions with the NRC. This church doesn't give reasons why they should be discussed.
- 2.11 Several churches interact with Recommendation 6 of the CRCA, which deals with the controversial remarks of Dr. Harinck and the appointment of Dr. Paas. Six churches feel that the CRCA's recommendation to express "disappointment" is insufficient. There is a need to express our deep concern. One church suggests to suspend the full application of the Rules 4 and 5 of EF with the RCN. It gives as reason "When a General Synod does not properly and without ambiguity deal with the errant views of one or more of the professors at the Theological University, this becomes evidence of deviation at the level of the federation." Another church feels that there is insufficient information to warrant Recommendation 6.
- 2.12 One church addresses the report about confessional subscription and the contact with the NRC. It suggests that the CRCA be mandated to request the RCN to provide an authorized translation into English of the decisions taken by Synod Zwolle-Zuid 2008 as recorded in "Hoofdstuk 10 - Binnenlandse betrekkingen"
- 3. Considerations**
- 3.1 Several churches have expressed concern about the way the CRCA fulfilled its mandate in regard to the RCN. They feel the CRCA should have done more. It must be kept in mind that the CRCA has a broader mandate than just the RCN and is limited in its possibilities. It is unrealistic to expect the CRCA to be able to deal extensively with each part of its mandate regarding the RCN. At the same time,

- however, the decisions of Smithers 2007 indicate that the relationship with the RCN is a matter of great concern to the churches and needs more attention. Smithers 2007 urged the CRCA to keep in mind the concerns expressed by the churches and to be "pro-active." In light of the concerns expressed by Smithers 2007, the contact with the RCN should have received greater priority in the way the CRCA allocated its resources.
- 3.2 With regard to the communication with the Dutch churches, it is disappointing that there was not much opportunity to speak together. It is also regrettable that the deputies could only address two items on the agenda of Synod Zwolle. In regard to the meeting behind closed doors, the report of the CRCA delegates indicates that this meant that the members of the press were not present. In this way the foreign delegates could have a frank and open discussion with the RCN and speak in a forthright manner.
- 3.3 Typically the contact with churches in EF takes place at times of general synods or other assemblies. As in past years, the CRCA met with the Dutch deputies at the time of the Synod Zwolle as well as at the time of the ICRC 2009. This way of keeping contact is important and sufficient when the relationship is going well. It is not an adequate way to express serious concerns or to have a discussion on matters that place tension on the relationship. At the time of a general synod all the other foreign churches are present, thus limiting the possibilities for one to one meetings. The concerns of our churches need to be conveyed in a different setting. At this point in our relationship and in light of the limited possibilities of the CRCA, it would be beneficial that Synod would appoint a temporary sub-committee of the CRCA with a specific mandate to address the RCN on the matters of concern. This sub-committee could meet with the RCN at a time separate from General Synod.
- 3.4 One church suggests to re-evaluate the commitment of the RCN to EF. Because there is still room from our side to intensify the contact, it would be too early to do this.
- 3.5 With regard to the hermeneutical concerns it is important to consider that Synod Smithers referred to them in the context of dealing with the approach of the RCN to divorce and remarriage. To organize a conference can have its merits within e.g. the ICRC setting, but it is not sufficient to address serious concerns.
- 3.6 The CRCA delegates have properly expressed disappointment about

the matters involving Dr. Harinck and Dr. Paas. Since the CanRC are in a relationship of EF with the RCN it is appropriate to express grave concern. However, it would not be correct to suspend Rules 4 and 5 of EF, as one church suggests. To suspend one or more of the rules would in effect mean the termination of the relationship.

- 3.7 Several churches list matters that they feel the CRCA should discuss with the RCN. Churches who request this should also indicate why these items need to be discussed. There are several items which Smithers 2007 included in the mandate of the CRCA. The report of the CRCA does not show that the discussion on these items has been completed. They are the hymns, revision of Church Order, women in the church, divorce and remarriage. These items need to be addressed within the context of Rule 1 of EF.
- 3.8 The CRCA requests Synod to pay special attention to the upcoming report on the role of women in the church. Both the FRCA and the OPC have been evaluating this matter as well. The CRCA would do well to take note of this work.
- 3.9 The CRCA requests that it be mandated to pay special attention to the discussion taking place between the RCN and the NRC. In this connection it would be helpful to request the RCN to provide an authorized translation into English of the decisions taken by Synod Zwolle-Zuid 2008 as recorded in “Hoofdstuk 10 - Binnenlandse betrekkingen.”
- 3.10 The fraternal delegates of the FRCA and the OPC at Synod Burlington-Ebenezer requested that our deputies work together with theirs in reaching out to the RCN. It would be important to do this, given our common concerns.
- 3.11 The CRCA is of the opinion that the mandate of Smithers 2007 to “see how the decisions about the fourth commandment work out in practice” is impossible to meet. Synod Smithers did not suggest to conduct “surveys and interviews to discover just what is being done with the fourth commandment.” Synod Smithers concluded that specific questions about the fourth commandment were put to rest, but we should keep this matter in mind in the application of the Rules of EF.
- 3.12 Our relationship with the RCN is at a critical stage. Rule 1 of EF requires us to be “watchful for deviation.” It is time to “speak the truth in love” and exhort our sister churches in the Netherlands. A mandate should be given to the Committee that allows them to

express our prayerful concern for our brothers and sisters in the Lord. It is our prayer that the Lord may give the RCN grace to work through the weighty issues facing them in a manner that is in full obedience to and accord with Scripture.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To continue the relationship of EF with the RCN under the adopted rules.
- 4.2 To express our prayerful concern for our brothers and sisters in the Lord that they be committed to the Reformed faith.
- 4.3 To appoint a temporary subcommittee to the CRCA for contact with the RCN.
- 4.4 To mandate the subcommittee:
- 4.4.1 To express our grave concerns that:
- 4.4.1.1 Synod Zwolle of the RCN did not demand that Dr. Harinck, a professor associated with the Theological University in Kampen, retract his controversial remarks;
- 4.4.1.2 The Theological University did not exercise greater care in the case of the appointment of Dr. Paas as lecturer;
- and to urge the RCN to deal with these matters as yet.
- 4.4.2 To express and discuss our grave concerns about a change in how biblical hermeneutics are functioning in the RCN.
- 4.4.3 To pay special attention to the upcoming report on the role of women in the church.
- 4.4.4 To pay special attention to the discussions currently taking place between the RCN and the NRC and to request the RCN to provide an authorized translation into English of the decisions taken by Synod Zwolle-Zuid 2008 as recorded in “Hoofdstuk 10 - Binnenlandse betrekkingen.”
- 4.4.5 To work in consultation with the deputies of the FRCA and the OPC.
- 4.4.6 To monitor developments regarding the quality or contents of new hymns.
- 4.4.7 To report to the churches six month prior to General Synod 2013.

An amendment was proposed, but the chairman ruled that it was not germane to the proposal. The ruling was challenged from the floor and a vote took place according to the Guidelines for Synod, II.A.6. The ruling was sustained.

Following this, the entire proposal was put to a vote and **ADOPTED**.

Article 87 – Common Songbook

1. Material

- 1.1 Report from the Committee for a Common Songbook (8.2.C).
- 1.2 Letters from Hamilton-Providence (8.3.C.1), Burlington-Fellowship (8.3.C.2), Edmonton-Immanuel (8.3.C.3), Flamborough (8.3.C.4), Neerlandia (8.3.C.5), Carman West (8.3.C.6), Ancaster (8.3.C.7), and Lincoln(8.3.C.8).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The Committee for a Common Songbook received a mandate from General Synod Smithers which includes the following (Acts of Synod Smithers, Article 104, Recommendation 4):
 - [4.5] To reappoint the Committee for a Common Songbook with the mandate to prepare the Psalms and Hymns section for the common songbook, in accordance with:
 - [4.5.1] The agreements of the Joint Committee.
 - [4.5.2] The mandate received from Synod Chatham, taking into account
 - [4.5.2.1] synod’s strong preference for a complete Anglo-Genevan Psalter with the common songbook, while acknowledging that this may not be a defining obstacle to federative unity.
 - [4.5.2.2] To work as much as possible towards a completed common songbook before federative unity is achieved.
 - [4.6] To make a clear commitment for an eventually common songbook before federative unity is achieved and requests the committee to obtain the same commitment from URCNA.

- [4.7] To make the commitment that the common songbook shall be the exclusively used songbook in the worship services of the united federation, recognizing the possibility of exceptions as noted in Consideration 3.6.
- 2.2 In regard to the common songbook, the committee notes the following:
 - 2.2.1 Its disappointment in the post-Schererville developments, and the subsequent lack of progress in attaining the mandate set by General Synod Smithers.
 - 2.2.2 Its request to General Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 to provide a clear sense of direction when it determines a mandate for the Committee for a Common Songbook.
- 2.3 During the past three years, the activities of the Committee for a Common Songbook were deeply affected by a change in direction and mandate given by the URCNA General Synod Schererville (July 2007). This Synod’s decision to affirm “that in addition to reaffirming our original abiding purpose to publish a new URCNA Psalter Hymnal (Synod 1999) we remain committed to the supplemental decision of Synod 2001 to continue to dialogue with the Canadian Reformed Churches as parallel track.” In effect this decision changed the direction away from working together towards a common songbook. By direct implication, this decision rendered the mandate given to the Committee by General Synod Smithers impossible to attain.
- 2.4 There was one meeting of the joint Committees for a Common Songbook in Wyoming, ON. The Committees expressed disappointment at the diverse decisions reached by the General Synods. They noted the change of the mandate for the URCNA Committee but also Synod Schererville’s expression of continued commitment to the “supplemental decision of Synod 2001 to continue to dialogue with the Canadian Reformed churches as a parallel track.” Yet, the reality is that this work has now been put on a backburner.
- 2.5 The Committee decided to continue to work independently for the time being, devoting their energies to *Book of Praise* related matters. In the meantime, requests for feedback and input were shared between the two Committees for a Common Songbook. Our Committee requested clarification on the function of these *Principles and Guidelines* in the current work done by their committee. The

question was asked if they are aware they are bound exclusively by these *Principles and Guidelines* as they develop a new URCNA songbook. In the Committee's view, "close adherence to these guidelines remains foundational for our work together."

- 2.6 The following Churches share the disappointment and frustration at the lack of progress: Hamilton-Providence, Edmonton-Immanuel, Lincoln, Ancaster, and Carman West. Flamborough supports the committee's request of Synod that they provide a clear sense of direction before continuing.
- 2.7 Both Burlington-Fellowship and Ancaster note Synod Schererville's decision to publish a new Psalter Hymnal. Burlington-Fellowship concludes that without meaningful dialogue and input from the URCNA Committee, our Committee can no longer function. They urge suspension of the work of the CanRC Committee. Ancaster suggests that Synod Burlington-Ebenezer address Synod London, seeking clarification and requesting either priority be given to the compilation of a common song book or at least an equivalent amount of time and attention be devoted to this important work by the URCNA's committee for a Common Song Book. Neerlandia recommends that further work towards a common songbook cease until it is clear that there is desire on the part of the URCNA for further unity. Lincoln recommends that General Synod London be encouraged to revisit this decision.
- 2.8 Carman West notes that both Committees have gone ahead with revisions of their respective song books. The result could be that the CanRC would have their own revised *Book of Praise* and the URCNA their own revised Psalter Hymnal. They regret the decision to work independently for the time being, since it potentially means the loss of a suitable opportunity to work on a product that is satisfactory to both parties. Carman West suggests that if Synod Burlington-Ebenezer decides to work towards a common songbook in the near future, this would call into question the wisdom of asking the churches to invest in a new edition of the *Book of Praise* at this time. Such an edition would be dated the moment a common songbook would be adopted. If Synod Burlington-Ebenezer decides to adopt a revised *Book of Praise*, Carman West is of the opinion that at this stage the mandate of CanRC Committee for a Common Songbook should not go beyond keeping each other informed by presenting the final products to each other. Perhaps a few decades

from now, if the desire for unity is stronger than it is now, it may be worth the effort to revisit the discussion and work more seriously towards a common songbook. They recommend that if Synod gives a further mandate, there should be clarity as to what the objective is and how the time and effort required to produce a common songbook would still be of significant benefit to the churches.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The decision by the URCNA Synod with regard to the songbook resulted in a changed mandate which has made progress impossible to date. Nevertheless, it would be beneficial to continue this Committee to work on further improvements as needed to the *Book of Praise*, positioning it in whole or in part for possible future integration into a common songbook.
- 3.2 It would be advantageous to find ways to remain in contact with the URCNA Committee as well as to explore possible avenues of cooperation.
- 3.3 Seeing the decision to develop a common songbook has not been revised or rescinded, this should remain a stated objective within the context of a new federation. At the same time it needs to be realized that such an endeavour requires a considerable amount of time, manpower, and resources and thus will not be quickly completed either before or after merger is realized.
- 3.4 Seeing that previous Synods appointed the members of the SCBP as the Committee for a Common Songbook, Synod Burlington-Ebenezer should make a similar decision.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To state that the Canadian Reformed Churches remain committed to having a common songbook in a united federation.
- 4.2 To thank the Committee for a Common Songbook for the work done to date, and to reappoint it at this time, with the mandate to work out Considerations 3.1. and 3.2.

ADOPTED

Article 88 – Liturgical Forms and Confessions**1. Material**

- 1.1 Report from the Liturgical Forms and Confessions Subcommittee of the Committee for Church Unity (8.2.d).
- 1.2 Letters from Hamilton-Providence (8.3.D.1), Edmonton-Immanuel (8.3.D.2), Owen Sound (8.3.D.3), Flamborough (8.3.D.4), Neerlandia (8.3.D.5), Carman West (8.3.D.6), and Lincoln (8.3.D.7).

2. Observations

- 2.1 According to the Acts of Synod Smithers, Article 104, the recommendation was made “to appoint a Liturgical Forms and Confessions Committee with the mandate to meet with their counterparts in the URCNA to come with a unified text for creeds, confessions, and liturgical forms and prayers, for the proposed prose section for the Common Songbook.”
- 2.2 The Committee never met with URCNA Committee. They did communicate by means of letters. In their October 27, 2008 letter of response, the URCNA Committee noted that they were mandated to prepare liturgical forms and confessions for a URCNA songbook. They went on to state, “Therefore we do not see our mandate as entailing the production of a ‘unified text’ for all future liturgical forms as does yours.” In the reply they also appended a copy of all their completed work to date on their revised liturgical forms and prayers. The URCNA brothers requested our Committee’s thoughts on these forms and prayers. The Committee responded with some suggestions of improvements, but they have not received any official response.
- 2.3 The Committee notes that if it is to function there needs to be clarity from the URCNA as to the mandate of their Committee regarding our Committee. The Committees cannot function together if the mandate of the URCNA Committee does not include direction to work with the CanRC Committee towards unified texts for a joint songbook. The Committee questions whether the URCNA is sincerely interested in unity with the CanRC.
- 2.4 In the course of their discussions the Committee noted that several issues arose with regards to our existing creeds, confessions, liturgical forms and prayers. They are listed in section 4.2 of their report.
- [a.] In the future, the committee will need to discuss the Three

- Forms of Unity. Must we insist on our editions of the Three Forms? Are the URCNA editions acceptable to us? What are we to say if the URCNA wishes to adopt editions from another church federation? Is it within the mandate of the committee to produce new editions of the Three Forms of Unity in collaboration with our URCNA counterparts?
- [b.] Is our committee to entertain the production of new liturgical forms, such as a Form for the Reception of New Families? Are we also to consider multiple forms such as found in the URCNA (Blue) Psalter Hymnal?
- [c.] With regards to the prayers, the present mandate does not address whether the committee has the freedom to or is expected to propose additions to or emendations of the prayers. Other related questions arise such as: What is the purpose of the prayers? Are they teaching models or intended to be used on a regular basis? Do we envision a common songbook with a small number of prayers or are we open to the possibility of multiple prayers (i.e. having the URCNA prayers and traditional CanRC prayers both included)?
- [d.] Do we want Seasonal Collects in our joint song book?
- 2.5 The Committee recommends in section 5.0 of their report that:
- [1] Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 forthrightly address URCNA Synod London on the concerns raised in 4.1.
- [2] Synod 2010 clarify the mandate of the CanRC Liturgical Forms and Confessions Sub-Committee by providing guidance as to the questions posed above in 4.2.
- [3] Synod 2010 appoint Rev. J. Van Vliet to the Committee and use its own discretion as to where the Committee should be based and who should serve.
- 2.6 The Committee also submits four appendices.
- Appendix 1: Comparative Study of Forms for Public Profession of Faith. This study provides background notes, a comparison table, and general impressions and evaluation.
- Appendix 2: Comparative Study of Forms for Readmission. This study provides background notes, a comparison table, and general impressions and evaluation.
- Appendix 3: Seasonal Collects.
- Appendix 4: Form for the Reception of New Families.

- 2.7 Hamilton-Providence expresses regret that our Committee was only able to make limited progress in fulfilling its mandate because of an apparent lack of interest on the part of the URCNA.
- 2.8 Hamilton-Providence and Edmonton-Immanuel agree with the Committee that Synod Burlington-Ebenezer address Synod London on whether or not the URCNA is serious about pursuing full federative unity with the CanRC. They also support the other recommendations of the Committee. Flamborough agrees with the Committee's request that Synod 2010 find out the intention of the URCNA.
- 2.9 Neerlandia proposes that no further work be carried out by the Liturgical Forms and Confessions Subcommittee until we as churches know what the desire of the URCNA is with respect to further unity, and then a mandate can be given to the Committee.
- 2.10 Edmonton-Immanuel expresses disappointment that the mandate of the Committee could not be properly carried out due to a conflicting mandate from the URCNA for their Committee. They desire that this concern of conflicting committee mandates be passed on to Synod London. Owen Sound also expressed disappointment that the URCNA did not give their Committee a clear mandate and as a result the two Committees could not work together.
- 2.11 Edmonton-Immanuel affirms the issues raised in 4.2. Carman West, Owen Sound and Edmonton-Immanuel gives the following suggestions to the Committee as it seeks clarification.
- 2.11.1 Carman West suggests that the mandate is sufficiently clear. It is not necessary to define in advance everything the committee should be doing, but simply to encourage it where possible to enter into discussions to come up with a "unified text for creeds, confessions, and liturgical forms and prayers." Obviously the intent in regard to the Three Forms of Unity is to come up with an edition that faithfully reflects the wording of the definitive documents in their original languages, that is understandable, and mutually acceptable to both federations. Whether this will ultimately be our edition, their edition, the edition of another church federation or one that seeks to build on the strengths of various versions is secondary to the objective "to come with a unified text." With the questions given, it seems that the Committee is asking for clarification on areas that have been discussed

- already. Owen Sound believes that a common edition of the Three Forms of Unity should be the aim of the two Committees.
- 2.11.2 Rather than broaden the existing mandate in such a way, Carman West indicates that it would be preferable to remain within the limits of working with forms already in use. It would be beneficial for the Committee to include further background information in regard to such forms. The Committee should include a discussion as to whether multiple forms are necessary. As council they would prefer to have single forms. Owen Sound believes that it would be best for the churches to have common liturgical forms. Even multiple forms as found in the Psalter Hymnal would be good, as long as they are acceptable to both. The Form for Reception of New Families would appear to them to be a useful form to include in respect to families with children joining the congregation. Edmonton-Immanuel considers that our forms for Baptism and Public Profession of Faith are certainly sufficient; they would question the necessity of such a redundant form.
- 2.11.3 Carman West would prefer that the Committee mandate not be extended to include adding to existing prayers, but to refine what is in use. They would like to encourage the committee to discuss the proposed questions in order to come up with a final product that is workable and acceptable as a "unified text." Owen Sound believes that the prayers in the *Book of Praise* and Hymnal are basically teaching models that can be used in the worship service. They envision a collection of prayers similar to that presently contained in the *Book of Praise*.
- 2.11.4 Carman West suggests that season collects could be included. They like to note that some changes to the words of the Christmas prayer are necessary in order to reflect the present. We live in a time period after the ascension of the Lord. Owen Sound feels that it would be beneficial to include the seasonal collects in the collection of prayers as examples that could be used in special worship services.
- 2.12 Lincoln feels that this Committee was not able to complete its task. They also note that in requesting for continuance, the Committee

recommends in section 5.0, point 3, that they might "... use their own discretion..." as it relates to future decisions. Lincoln asks if that term refers to the Committee's or Synod's discretion? They recommend some clarification. Lincoln, also points out that some statements within the proposed URCNA liturgical forms require some clarity, specifically as that relates to the doctrine of covenant and of the impact of publicly professing one's faith.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 It is regrettable that no progress could be made by this Committee.
- 3.2 With the regard to the matter of a unified text, it would be beneficial for the Committee to work on this matter. A careful review of our existing editions of the creeds and confessions would prove beneficial for our federation and for a future united federation
- 3.3 A careful review of our existing Forms as well as the production of a Form on the Reception of New Families also has merit.
- 3.4 With respect to the prayers, the Committee asks a number of questions but gives no recommendations. Seeing that the prayers function both as teaching models and for liturgical use, it would be good to review them carefully as well and to suggest emendations as needed. The addition of more prayers and collects did not receive much support from the churches and thus requires no further work.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To retain the objective of working towards a unified text.
- 4.2 To thank the Committee for Liturgical Forms and Confessions for the work done to date, and to reappoint it at this time.
- 4.3 To give the committee the following mandate:
 - 4.3.1 To review and compare the Creeds, Confessions, Forms, and Prayers of the CanRC and URCNA with a view to merger, and to make itself available to the URCNA as needed.
 - 4.3.2 To report to the churches 6 months before the next General Synod.

ADOPTED

Article 89 – Closing Devotions

Rev. Aasman noted that the fraternal delegates from the OPC, the Revs. E.

Henes and J. Sawyer would be leaving and wished them safe travels and the Lord's blessings. Rev. Pol read Psalm 72 and gave a meditation on Psalm 72:19, after which he led in prayer. The assembly then sang Psalm 72:10. The meeting was then adjourned.

Acts of Synod Burlington-Ebenezer Day 10 — Morning Session Monday, May 24, 2010

Article 90 – Opening and Roll Call

Rev. Aasman opened the meeting by asking the members of Synod to sing Hymn 57:3,4. He read from Micah 4, gave a meditation, and led in prayer. Roll call was held and all were present.

Article 91 – Overture of Regional Synod East re: Needy Students Fund

1. Material

Overture from Regional Synod East 2009 dealing with the funding of needy theological students (8.4.b).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Regional Synod East 2009, having adopted with amendments an overture from Classis Ontario West, overtures Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 to: "To establish a Synod-appointed church for funding of theological students, ad CO Article 20."

Ground: Current funds/committees have several inherent deficiencies:

- [1.] Students have been getting a new home church by moving to a University close to the Theological College in preparation for entry into Theological College. The classis of the new home church now becomes responsible for funding.
- [2.] More students are married and have families than in the past making it more costly for the supporting Classis.
- [3.] Regions blessed with many needy students pay the full cost (Press Release Classis MB, Sept. 12/08). Regions with no needy students have equal access to calling these students to become their Minister of the Word once they become available for call, even though they have not contributed financially.
- [4.] Students are treated differently financially depending on which Classis they come from as some Classes are more

generous than others. Occasionally deacons have had to step in to cover the difference.

[5.] Some Classes administer their fund better than others. Those that are administered poorly take a long time to send their students the necessary funds. Deacons have had to step in to help out in the interim.

[6.] Depending on where students are from, they often arrive in Hamilton without a real sense of the cost of living there. Because they are hesitant to ask for money, they under-estimate how much they need to live in Hamilton. As a result, they often spend their first year living in some financial difficulty.

To deal with these deficiencies, Classis Ontario West proposes to establish a Synod-appointed church under the following rubric:

[1.] For the sake of transparency, theological students in need shall submit a budget to the council which submitted the attestation to the Theological College. Responsibility for the short-fall rests first of all with that local church. Further needs shall be directed to the Synod-appointed church via that local church.

[2.] Synod would appoint a church in the vicinity of the Theological College as Deputy Church for Students for the Ministry. The Deputy Church will adjust financial support if necessary.

[3.] The Deputy Church would report to each church of the federation once per year and assess each church as per number of communicant members in the current Yearbook.

[4.] The Deputy Church will report to each General Synod on its activities with regards to theological students.

2.2 In describing the history of how needy students have been assisted in our federation, the overture points out that in the early years (1950s) there was only one fund among all the churches. Later, as the federation grew, for various practical reasons the one fund was “divided in a Western Canada and Eastern Canada Regional Fund each with their own treasurer and Deputy Church.”

2.3 The overture also states that “Besides the student or student’s family no one should know better than the church they attend as to the student’s financial needs. The student can present his financial

income and needs to his Council and Council can approve/ recommend an income supplement from the Needy Student Fund.”

2.4 Regional Synod East adopted the overture of Classis Ontario West, “in principle, subject to the following amendment and recommendations:
a. Amendment

The overture of Regional Synod East is “To request Synod to appoint a church or committee for the funding of theological students, ad CO Article 20.”

b. Recommendations:

[1.] Synod give full and equal consideration to the appointment of either a church or committee, and in case of the appointment of a church, to consider whether such a church needs to be in the vicinity of the Theological College.

[2.] Recognizing the importance of the ongoing place and role of the local church, that is, the church which issued the attestation to the Theological College, that Synod establish a mandate for a synodically appointed church or committee by which local churches would interact with and communicate with such church or committee, as the case may be; and

[3.] Synod allow for the appointed church or committee, as the case may be, to assess the churches in the federation as reasonably required.”

2.5 Synod Smithers appointed a committee (Acts, Article 78, Recommendation 4.11.1) with a mandate to look after the funding of the Pastoral Training Program (PTP). This committee was actually the church at Guelph (Acts, Article 159) which in turn appointed a committee to do this work under the supervision of the consistory (*Report from the Pastoral Training Program Funding Committee* to Synod Burlington, p. 273).

3. Considerations

3.1 Article 20 of the Church Order states, “The churches shall endeavour that there be students of theology, extending financial aid to those who are in need of it.” It would be beneficial for each local church to nurture and generally support suitable students of theology in their midst. Presently, the financial aspect of that support is handled collectively by the churches in each classis. However, the Church Order does not specify any particular method of financial support and therefore different options are possible.

- 3.2 It is a fact that certain classes deal regularly with requests for needy students and other classes only rarely. While it is an honour to support those who aspire to be labourers in the Lord's harvest, it is financially inequitable when some churches pay significantly more for a benefit which accrues to all the churches in common. Appointing a committee to set up a fund administered on behalf of and supported by all the churches in the federation would eliminate this inequity.
- 3.3 With so many different classes existing across the federation of churches it is inevitable that the various classical funds for assisting needy students of theology will be administered in different ways. Such a situation is quite vulnerable to give rise to the inequitable treatment of students. Appointing one committee to deal with all such students throughout the federation would help avoid this.
- 3.4 When students of theology encounter a financial need, it is highly desirable to address that need in an efficient and timely manner. Having a student interact with a committee that is in close proximity to the Theological College would allow for this to occur more easily.
- 3.5 A committee in close proximity to the College would better be able to identify the living expenses for students of theology who are enrolled there and consequently live in that area, than a committee based further away.
- 3.6 A fund established by and supported by all the churches to assist needy students of theology would be the manner in which each local congregation addresses such needs. Therefore it is inconsistent to, as Classis Ontario West proposes, insist that the "responsibility for short-fall rests first of all with that local church." Each local church would be contributing to one central fund. Therefore all requests for help on the part of eligible students should, from the start, be directed to a synod-appointed committee. The Committee would be free to contact the home church of the student should it desire verification or further information. The historical origins of the Canadian Reformed Churches demonstrates that there is precedent for establishing one general fund among all the churches. After a time when this task was divided among the churches according to classical districts, it appears to be wise to return to the original model for all the reasons listed above.
- 3.7 On the model of the PTP, which appears to be working well, it would be best to appoint a local church in the area of Theological College

to serve as this Committee for Needy Students of Theology. This church would then be free, at its discretion, to appoint a committee (which would be under the supervision of the consistory with the deacons) to administer this fund.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to appoint a church in proximity to the Theological College as Committee for Needy Students of Theology to look after extending financial aid to those students of theology who are in need of it. To mandate this church:

- 4.1 To advise each classis in the federation of its existence and synodical mandate and to seek their cooperation in setting up and maintaining one general fund.
- 4.2 To request each classis to share with the Committee the mandate they as classis currently have for their fund for needy students of theology.
- 4.3 To solicit additional input from each classis toward the particulars of their Committee's own internal guidelines and then to develop such guidelines for the support of theological students in need.
- 4.4 To request each classis to consider sending their existing funds (currently set aside for needy students) to the Committee to be pooled together into one general fund.
- 4.5 To assess the churches annually as per number of communicant members in the current Yearbook based on the anticipated funding required for the year ahead.
- 4.6 To report annually to each church of the federation on its activities and to report triennially to each general synod on the same.

A motion to delete the line "Such a situation is quite vulnerable to give rise to the inequitable treatment of students" in section 3.3 was **defeated**.

The proposal as a whole was then **ADOPTED**.

Article 92 – Appeal from Surrey re: Article 103 of Synod Smithers 2007

1. Material

- 1.1 Appeal from the church at Surrey (8.5.s).
- 1.2 Acts of Synod Smithers 2007.

2. Observations

- 2.1 The church at Surrey states that “the Synod [2007] erred in mandating the (Theological Education) Committee to seek agreement with the URCNA Committee about theological education with as a working premise that the strong preference (Article 103, rec. 4.4.1.3, Acts) was for at least one federation seminary.”
- 2.2 Surrey states further, “The training for the ministry is the task of the churches who confess in Lord’s Day 38 that, by the command concerning the day of rest, the LORD commands us in the first place - that is, before the day of rest, during the week - to see to it that “the ministry of the Gospel and the schools (for training for the ministry) are maintained.
- 2.3 Surrey argues that dropping the requirement for the federation to maintain the training for the ministry (at least one institution) goes against the principle that even our own Committee on Theological Education maintained. Surrey quotes from the Committee’s report to Synod 2007, where it states: “In our discussions we *defended* (emphasis added) the principle of having at least one federational school and that theological education should be of the churches, by the churches and for the churches.”
- 2.4 Synod Smithers stated that “the principle of 2 Timothy 2:2 which points in the direction of the churches being responsible for the training for the ministry does not necessitate the conclusion of a ‘federational’ seminary.’ Article 19 of the Church Order of the CanRC also does not necessitate a federational seminary, as ‘an institution for the training for the ministry’ is not the same as a federational seminary. Already it is possible under Article 19 for the churches to maintain an institution apart from that institution having to belong to the federation. Therefore, it would be best, for clarity’s sake, to realize that ‘federational’ seminary is terminology that has arisen (in the Statements of Agreement and in the mandate of Synod Chatham) out of current practice and is not itself the Reformed theological principle. The principle remains: the churches are responsible for the training for the ministry” (Article 103, Consideration 3.4).
- 2.5 Synod Smithers also stated that, “A seminary at which the board and faculty are appointed by the synods of the churches is one

of the fullest ways to express the principle that the churches take responsibility for the training for the ministry. Therefore a federational seminary cannot and must not be quickly removed from the discussion of the theological education committees... Synod expresses the desire that the next URCNA synod would mandate the URCNA theological education committee to engage the CanRC committee on all options, including the possibility of at least one federational seminary.”

3. Considerations

- 3.1 In evaluating the decision of Synod Smithers, the context of that decision must be kept in mind. The report concerning theological education received by Synod Smithers indicated that an “impasse” had been reached in discussions with their URCNA counterparts (Article 103, 2.3.4). It was with the desire to break through that impasse and continue fruitful discussion that Synod Smithers laid out a careful distinction between biblical principle and ecclesiastical practice and also between current realities and future possibilities. The intention of Smithers was not to remove the CanRC commitment to a federational seminary or remove any one legitimate possibility from the discussion. Instead Smithers wanted to “leave sufficient room for a broad range of possibilities to be considered and explored based on scriptural principle and in accordance with the agreements the committees have already made” (Article 103, 3.5).
- 3.2 Surrey’s statement in Observation 2.2 is correct. However, Surrey does not demonstrate that Synod Smithers is not in harmony with it. Surrey does not prove either how Synod Smithers erred in mandating the committee to proceed with, as working premise, the strong preference for at least one federational seminary. Smithers was speaking in favour of one of the best practices (yet leaving room in the discussion for other legitimate practices) which is based on the principle contained in 2 Timothy 2:2: “The churches are responsible for the training for the ministry” (Article 103, 3.4).
- 3.3 Surrey cites Lord’s Day 38 but does not prove how it necessitates the conclusion of a federational seminary. A school owned and operated by the churches to train men for the ministry is certainly one of the best ways to “maintain the ministry of the gospel and

the schools” in light of the fourth commandment, but it cannot be said to be the only way. During the period of discussion with the URCNA in 2007, Synod Smithers was correct to keep all legitimate options on the table.

- 3.4 It is clear from the statements of Synod Smithers that it has not in any way dismissed the notion of working toward at least one federational seminary. It merely has distinguished between the biblical principle proper and the application of that principle. The biblical principle is this: the churches are responsible for the training for the ministry. One of the fullest ways to apply that principle is this: a seminary owned and operated by the federation of churches (i.e. a federational seminary).

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to deny the appeal.

ADOPTED

Article 93 – Appeal from Owen Sound re: A Decision of Regional Synod East 2007

1. Material

Appeal from Owen Sound against the decision of Regional Synod East Nov. 14, 2007 (8.5.e).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The church at Owen Sound appeals a decision of Regional Synod November 14, 2007, by stating that the Regional Synod East has “overstepped the boundaries of its jurisdiction by judging the actions of the consistory of the church at Owen Sound.”
- 2.2 The documentation supplied indicates that a number of appeals were addressed to Classis Northern Ontario of Dec 17, 2004, and Jan 21, 2005. Classis denied these appeals. The appellants then addressed themselves to Regional Synod East, Nov 9, 2005, and it sided with the appellants against the Classis Northern Ontario (and thereby the church at Owen Sound). When this matter was appealed by the church at Owen Sound to General Synod 2007, it sustained the appeal and based its decision on the fact that Regional Synod East had not proven that the decision of the church at Owen Sound (as sustained by Classis Northern Ontario) was in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order.

- 2.3 One of the appellants thereafter resubmitted an appeal to Regional Synod East, Nov. 14, 2007. This Regional Synod declared the appeal admissible and judged again that Classis Northern Ontario of Dec 17, 2004, and Jan 21, 2005, erred in upholding the decision of the church at Owen Sound.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 From the sequence of events noted in the observations it appears that the appellants decided to resubmit their appeal to Regional Synod East and that Regional Synod East 2007 upheld their appeal, added considerations that had been lacking in the decision of Regional Synod East 2005 and then restated the decision of Regional Synod East 2005 to the effect that Classis Northern Ontario erred. This is a most questionable procedure.
- 3.2 Here we have a case of an appellant addressing a minor assembly in view of the fact that a major assembly has decided against him. Seeing that the major assembly decided in favour of the church of Owen Sound and thus against the appellant, the appellant should have addressed his appeal to the next major assembly, in this case General Synod 2010.
- 3.3 Furthermore Regional Synod East 2007 considers that withdrawal can happen by word, or by letter, or by the actions of the appellant. Then Regional Synod cites a number of Scripture passages, Lord’s Days, and articles from the Church Order, but fails to prove that the decision of the church at Owen Sound namely “that by their actions they have withdrawn” was in conflict with Scriptures, Confessions, and Church Order.
- 3.4 Regional Synod East 2007 accepts the word of the appellants that they do not want to withdraw but fails to weigh their actions (e.g. staying away from many worship services, refraining from fellowship with other members of the congregation at the Lord’s Supper, refusing to indicate a desire to work towards reconciliation in a church orderly fashion.) This refusal comes out in their unwillingness to discuss with the consistory anything else than the issues brought forward by the appellant.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 That Regional Synod 2007, by declaring this matter admissible, acted contrary to Article 31 of the CO.

- 4.2 That Regional Synod fails to prove that the actions of the church of Owen Sound were in conflict with Scriptures, Confessions, and Church Order.
- 4.3 That the appeal of the church of Owen Sound is sustained.

ADOPTED

Four brothers abstained according to Article 32 CO.

Article 94 – Appeal from the Rev. R.F. Boersema re: A Decision of Regional Synod West 2009

1. Material

Letter from Rev. R.F. Boersema appealing a decision of Regional Synod West (8.5.h).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Rev. Boersema asks General Synod Burlington-Ebenezer to make the following judgments:
- 2.1.1 Since the command to proclaim God’s word to all creatures is a divine command, restricting this proclamation must be based on God’s word.
- 2.1.2 Since the churches in common have not expressed themselves on this, it cannot be assumed that consistories have jurisdiction over the proclamation of God’s word by their members or ministers in churches not under their oversight when no statement is being made with regard to relationships with the inviting church. A consistory that wishes to make a ruling about this must first demonstrate scripturally that the matter comes under its jurisdiction.
- 2.1.3 Potential unjustified reactions of others cannot be used as reasons to restrict the proclamation of the word of the Lord.
- 2.2 Rev. Boersema states that Regional Synod West November 3, 2009 did not deal with these points when dealing with his appeal of the decision of Classis Pacific West (October 6, 2009).
- 2.3 Regional Synod West decided that Classis Pacific West (October 6, 2009) did not judge Rev. Boersema’s appeal correctly, and provided several considerations explaining their decision.
- 3. Considerations**
- 3.1 Regional Synod in its Consideration 2 did deal with the first and second matters in which Rev. Boersema asks for General Synod

- 2010’s judgment, when it stated, in response to Rev. Boersema’s concerns with respect to founding decisions on the Bible (see Observations 2.1.1 and 2.1.2), “Regional Synod points out that not all decisions taken in matters of polity need to be directly based on the Bible; they must keep to Scriptural principles as confessed in BC Articles 30-32 and commonly agreed upon practice as outlined in the Church Order (cf. CO Article 31).”
- 3.2 In its Consideration 4, Regional Synod stated that Regional Synod must judge the work of classis and not directly the work of the Surrey consistory. Judgement of the consistory’s reasons “to restrict the proclamation of the word of the Lord” are indeed not in the jurisdiction of the Regional Synod.
- 3.3 Regional Synod West has addressed these concerns, and Rev. Boersema should be able to work with them in his further interaction with the consistory in these matters. He gives no evidence that he has interacted with his consistory in light of the decisions of Regional Synod West.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to deny this appeal.

ADOPTED

Article 95 – Proposal from Langley re: A Fifth Professor at the Theological College

1. Material

- 1.1 Proposal from the church at Langley re: a fifth professor (8.1.h).
- 1.2 Letters of interaction from the churches at Burlington-Ebenezer (8.1.i), Flamborough (8.1.q), Guelph-Emmanuel (8.1.l), Hamilton-Providence (8.1.n), Hamilton-Providence (8.1.o), Cloverdale (8.1.u), Willoughby-Heights (8.3.L.7), Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.1.t), and Abbotsford (8.3.L.10).
- 1.3 Letter from the Board of Governors (8.1.m).
- 1.4 Report from the Board of Governors (8.2.l).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The church at Langley has made a direct proposal to Synod 2010 regarding the curriculum of our Theological College as well as to increase the number of professors

- 2.2 Burlington-Ebenezer and Flamborough agree in principle with Langley's proposal but feel that Synod is the wrong address for this proposal.
- 2.3 Guelph-Emmanuel sees merit in the Langley proposal but notes that this new material has not gone through the minor assemblies.
- 2.4 Hamilton-Providence and Cloverdale endorse Langley's proposal.
- 2.5 Winnipeg-Redeemer feels that the Langley proposal has merit, but needs to go through the minor assemblies. Should the proposal be admitted, then Winnipeg-Redeemer has more suggestions.
- 2.6 Willoughby Heights expresses reservations about adding a fifth professor.
- 2.7 Abbotsford supports the proposal to add a fifth professor and also that the Missiology department be strengthened.
- 2.8 In its letter to Synod, the Board of Governors endorses the letter of Dec. 24, 2009, from the Senate of the College. The Senate suggests "that the Board of Governors communicate to Synod 2010 our appreciation for Langley's desire to improve things at the College, but at the same time, request that Synod 2010 would leave it in the discretion of the Board of Governors, along with the Senate, to determine the specifics of how things should be improved, and in particular, how the teaching load would be divided in the event that a fifth professor is appointed at our College."
- 2.9 In its report to Synod, the Board of Governors indicates that it plans to come to Synod 2013 (D.V.) with a proposal to "seek approval for the appointment of a fifth faculty member."
- 3. Considerations**
- 3.1 There has been confusion and inconsistency in the past as to whether a church can directly address general synod on a matter of the churches in common (Article 30 CO), such as the Theological College (Article 19 CO), or whether such proposals must first be examined and supported by the minor assemblies. Inconsistency, however, is not a valid reason to refuse admission of Langley's proposal. Langley also wisely sent a copy to all the churches and also to the Board of Governors, allowing for their interaction at this general synod.
- 3.2 The Theological College is governed by a synod-appointed Board of Governors. It would be prudent if churches would first interact directly with the Board of Governors on proposals under their

- governance. Letters can always be sent to general synod later, interacting with the report that is submitted by the Board to every succeeding general synod.
- 3.3 According to the report from the Board of Governors, the Board is in the process of undertaking a thorough review of a number of matters, including the number of professors. The Board plans to come to Synod 2013 with a proposal for a fifth professor. It would be good for the Board to consider not only Langley's proposal, but also input from the other churches.
- 4. Recommendation**
- That Synod decide:
- 4.1 To instruct the Board of Governors, as it prepares its proposal regarding a fifth professor to Synod 2013, to continue to take into consideration the proposal of Langley, and also to take into consideration the suggestions and ideas of the other churches who wrote to Synod.
- 4.2 To instruct the second clerk of Synod to forward the correspondence interacting with Langley's proposal received by Synod to the Board of Governors for their consideration.

ADOPTED

Article 96 – Address Church

1. Material

Report from Burlington-Ebenezer (8.2.n.i).

2. Observation

Burlington-Ebenezer reports that the only mail it has received as the Address Church were annual requests from the Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches for statistical information. Three letters were sent providing the requested statistical information for the 2008, 2009 and 2010 Yearbooks.

3. Consideration

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

4 Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To thank Burlington-Ebenezer for work done.

- 4.2 To re-appoint Burlington-Ebenezer as Address Church for the Canadian Reformed Churches.

ADOPTED

Article 97 – Financial Report of the General Fund

1. Material

Financial report of the General Fund from February 6, 2007 to January 15, 2010, (8.2.q).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The church at Carman East was appointed by Synod Smithers 2007 to administer the general fund and to collect funds as required from the churches.
- 2.2 Carman East reports in their letter of February 26, 2010, that two of their office bearers audited these books and they were found to be in good order.
- 2.3 The churches were assessed \$2 per communicant member for 2007, \$4 for 2008, and \$5 for 2009.
- 2.4 Special expenditures: \$5,187.55 to build a fire proof room for the archives in the Burlington-Ebenezer church building (as authorized by Synod Smithers 2007, Article 75).

3. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 3.1 To receive with thankfulness the report from the church at Carman East.
- 3.2 To express gratitude to the office-bearers who audited the books and to Br. G. Vandersluis for functioning as treasurer.
- 3.3 To authorize Carman East to collect funds from the churches as required.
- 3.4 To discharge Carman East for the duties completed during the period of February 6, 2007, to January 15, 2010.
- 3.5 To reappoint Carman East for the General Fund.

ADOPTED

Article 98 – Days of Prayer, Article 54 CO

1. Material

Report from Edmonton-Providence and Burlington-Waterdown (8.2.p).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod 2007 appointed the Churches at Edmonton-Providence and Burlington-Waterdown as the churches to implement the provisions of Article 54 CO.
- 2.2 On September 2008, the church at Cloverdale requested the church at Edmonton-Providence to declare a day of prayer. Edmonton-Providence forwarded the request of Cloverdale to the church at Burlington-Waterdown.
- 2.4 The church at Cloverdale requested the day of prayer because of its concerns about the abuses of Canada's Human Rights Commissions particularly against Christians who have spoken out about matters such as homosexuality.
- 2.5 The churches at Burlington-Waterdown and Edmonton-Providence informed Cloverdale that "we strongly believe that the consistent moral decline of our nation should constantly be brought forward to our God and Father in both regular congregational and individual prayer."
- 2.6 Cloverdale's request was denied because it "does not fit the current requirements for a national day of prayer" as outlined in Article 54 CO, which states that a day of prayer should be considered "in time of war, general calamities and other great afflictions the presence of which is felt throughout the churches." As stated by Synod Chatham 2004, "these afflictions must be of an acute nature, of extreme severity and posing an immediate crisis for the life of the church and the nation" (Acts of Synod Chatham 2004, Article 40, 4.4).

3. Considerations

- 3.1 It is understandable that the church at Cloverdale is concerned about the abuses of Canada's Human Rights Commissions.
- 3.2 This request does not pose an immediate crisis for the life of the church and the nation.
- 3.3 The churches at Burlington-Waterdown and Edmonton-Providence were therefore correct in denying this request.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to thank Edmonton-Providence and Burlington-Waterdown for their report.

ADOPTED

Two members of Synod abstained according to Article 32 CO.

Article 99 – Appeal from Hamilton-Cornerstone re: Article 110 of Synod Smithers 2007

1. Material

Appeal from Hamilton-Cornerstone against Article 110 of Synod Smithers (8.5.b).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Hamilton appeals the decision of Synod Smithers 2007 to repeal the decision of Synod Chatham to mandate the SCBP to restore the Apostles' Creed to the Forms for Baptism (Infant and Adult).
- 2.2 Hamilton states that Synod Smithers overturned a settled and binding decision of the previous Synod on grounds lacking substance and without providing proof that Synod Chatham had erred according to Scripture or the Church Order. Synod Smithers went against Article 31 of the Church Order.
- 2.3 Hamilton indicates that the proposal to insert the Apostles' Creed into the baptismal Forms came from the Cornerstone Council and was endorsed by both Classis Ontario West (Sept. 10, 2003) and Regional Synod East (Nov. 12, 2003).
- 2.4 The grounds provided by Hamilton, Classis Ontario West and Regional Synod East for inserting the Apostles' Creed into the baptismal forms were taken over by Synod Chatham 2004 (Acts, Article 115, par. 4.1.1.3). The grounds were as follows:
 - 2.4.1 A renewal of the catholic connection of baptism and the Apostles' Creed.
 - 2.4.2 A return to the original Form of Baptism as found in the Church Order of Heidelberg 1563.
 - 2.4.3 A restoration of parallelism with the Form for the Lord's Supper.
 - 2.4.4 The use of the Apostles' Creed at baptism in the early Christian Church and in the Middle Ages is well known and generally documented.

- 2.5 Synod Chatham 2004 instructed the SCBP to present a proposal with the inclusion of the Apostles' Creed in the baptismal forms to the next General Synod, keeping in mind Consideration 4.1.2.2, which states: "Synod agrees that the SCBP ought to consider the most suitable place in the forms for this insertion, keeping in mind that the structure of the Form for the Baptism of Adults is different from the Form for the Baptism of Infants."
- 2.6 The SCBP presented to Synod 2007 a proposal for the inclusion of the Apostles' Creed into the baptism Forms. The proposal was as follows:

In regard to the *Form for the Baptism of infants*, the SCBP proposed:

 - 2.6.1 That the congregation profess its faith between the first prayer and the address to the parents, and that the profession of faith be introduced with the words, "Let us now together profess our faith in God in whose Name this child will be baptized." (The Apostles' Creed may be recited by the minister, said in unison, or sung by the congregation.)
 - 2.6.2 In addition, the SCBP proposed that the rubric in the margin beside the Apostles' Creed should read "Profession of Faith."

In regard to the *Form for the Baptism of Adults*, the SCBP proposed that:

 - 2.6.3 The congregation profess the faith after the administration of the baptism and before the prayer of thanksgiving, and that the profession of faith be introduced with, "Let us now together profess our faith in God in whose Name this brother (sister) was baptized." (The Apostles' Creed may be recited by the minister, said in unison, or sung by the congregation.)
 - 2.6.4 The rubric in the margin beside the baptizant's public profession of faith should stay as "Public Profession of Faith."
 - 2.6.5 The rubric beside the Apostles' Creed should read "Profession of Faith." Rationale: The person baptized first professes his/her faith. Note that the first question speaks about the Triune God and the baptizant's faith in Him. Once the baptizant professes his/her faith and is baptized, it is natural and fitting for him/her to join in with the whole congregation professing the Christian faith. Likely the Apostles' Creed would be sung.
- 2.7 Hamilton notes that the decision of Synod Chatham (Article 115)

- was overturned by Synod Smithers not on the basis of an appeal(s) but on the basis of letters from several churches interacting with the proposal of the SCBP to Synod 2007.
- 2.8 Hamilton argues that it was illegitimate for Synod Smithers to use letters reacting to a proposal of the SCBP to undo a lawful decision of the previous Synod.
- 2.9 Hamilton notes that even if the letters from the churches to Synod Smithers were appeals (which they were not), they ought not to have been used as a basis to undo the decision of Synod Chatham to insert the Apostles' Creed into the baptismal forms, since none of the letters prove or even attempt to prove that the stated grounds for the decision of Synod Chatham were in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order. Hamilton therefore considers that the decision of Smithers is in violation of Article 31 of the Church Order.
- 2.10 Even though Hamilton considers the procedure used by Synod Smithers 2007 unlawful, it provides interaction with the reasons given by this assembly to undo the decision of Synod Chatham 2004.
- 2.10.1 In Consideration 3.2.1, Synod 2007 stated that "the orders of worship are not mandatory but suggested: therefore it should be left in the discretion of the churches where to place the profession of faith."
In response, Hamilton writes: There is no compulsion in having two professions of faith in one service. Synod Smithers itself stated this in 3.2.1 "The orders of worship are not mandatory but suggested: therefore it should be left in the discretion of the churches where to place the profession of faith." Consequently our original overture to incorporate the profession of faith into the form for baptism need not generate any redundancy. The form for baptism, especially if conducted in the pm service provides a natural context for this vital component of our liturgy. This wonderful link between Profession of Faith and baptism was endorsed by Synod Chatham.
- 2.10.2 In Consideration 3.2.2, Synod 2007 stated that "the profession of faith is already part of our liturgy, and as such there already is adequate 'connection' between baptism and the congregational profession of faith in the Triune God."
In response, Hamilton writes: This "connection" will be even more effective when this profession of faith occurs in the

- immediate context of the sacrament of baptism, see proposal A above.
- 2.10.3 In Consideration 3.2.3, Synod 2007 stated: "Synod Chatham did not prove that the 1563 form is more scriptural than our present form. Therefore to depart from our current forms would be unwise."
Hamilton responds by writing: This is an impossible demand, since there are no grounds that can be gathered from Scripture either in favour or opposed to this proposal. However historical analysis can demonstrate that the early church did link the Apostles' Creed to the sacrament of Baptism.
- 2.10.4 In Consideration 3.2.4, Synod 2007 stated: "The fact that the Apostles' Creed is part of the Form for the Lord's Supper does not that mean that it should be included in the baptismal forms."
Hamilton responds with: Nor does it make it inadvisable, and in light of the arguments made earlier that support the restoration of the parallelism with the Form for the Lord's Supper, the proposal to include it rather than not include it naturally follows.
- 2.10.5 In Consideration 3.2.5, Synod 2007 stated: To incorporate the Apostles' Creed in the baptismal forms would lead to undue repetition."
Hamilton responds with:
Proposal A: There is no compulsion in having two professions of faith in one service. Synod Smithers itself stated this in 3.2.1 "The orders of worship are not mandatory but suggested: therefore it should be left in the discretion of the churches where to place the profession of faith." Consequently our original overture to incorporate the profession of faith into the form for baptism need not generate any redundancy. The form for baptism, especially if conducted in the pm service provides a natural context for this vital component of our liturgy. This wonderful link between Profession of Faith and baptism was endorsed by Synod Chatham.
Proposal B: This concern for redundancy in the worship service is mitigated by proposal A, especially given that

in our experience most baptisms are performed in the PM service.

2.10.6 In Consideration 3.3, Synod 2007 stated: “The Apostles’ Creed is not found in the baptismal forms of our sister churches. This element of catholicity should be kept in mind.”

Hamilton responds with: The concept of catholicity is not only bound to the contemporary church, but also the church of all ages. This larger consideration for catholicity was part of the proposal contemplated and recommended by Synod Chatham.

2.11 Hamilton recommends that Synod 2010 decide that “since the grounds for the decision of Synod Chatham to mandate the SCBP to restore the Apostles’ Creed to the Forms for Baptism remain valid, the original proposal of the SCBP to Synod Smithers ought to be considered.”

3. Considerations

3.1 Hamilton’s argument against Article 110 of Synod Smithers 2007 has two components. One refers to a perceived procedural injustice while the second concerns content. In regard to procedure, Hamilton argues that Synod Smithers failed to uphold Article 31 of the Church Order. In regard to content, Hamilton provides responses to the Considerations which led Synod Smithers to its decision to rescind Article 115 of Synod Chatham.

3.2 Concerns about procedural injustice:

3.2.1 Hamilton’s concern about procedural injustice arise from its interpretation of Article 31 of the Church Order. According to Hamilton, a synod may only revise or overturn a decision of a previous synod if it is proved that the original decision went against Scripture or the Church Order. Churches of the federation are bound by the decisions of the major assemblies unless they are proven to be against the Word of God or the adopted Church Order. Article 31 does not prevent churches from approaching the major assemblies with a request to revise or revoke a decision of a synod on grounds other than the Word of God or the adopted Church Order.

3.2.2 Article 33 of the Church Order makes provision for the

churches to approach subsequent assemblies with a request to revisit decisions on the basis of new grounds. It is not necessary that these new grounds prove the original decision to be in conflict with the Word of God or the adopted Church Order. It might be enough to show that the original decision was unwise or unhelpful or was made without due consideration of all the implications.

3.3. Concerns about content:

3.3.1 Hamilton has provided meaningful responses to the grounds used by Smithers 2007 to rescind Article 115 of the Acts of Synod Chatham 2004. It is clear that the practical concerns raised by several churches in regard to inserting the Apostles’ Creed into the baptismal forms are not insurmountable. However, Hamilton has not given convincing reasons as to why the place of public profession of faith in the worship service should not be left to the discretion of the churches. Given that several churches expressed strong discomfort to Synod 2007 with regard to linking profession of faith with baptism, it would not be wise to make this change mandatory by including it in the baptismal forms. Local churches are free to make this change at their own discretion.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to deny the appeal of the church at Hamilton-Cornerstone.

ADOPTED

**Day 10 — Evening Session
Monday, May 24, 2010**

Article 100 – Closing Devotions

Rev. Aasman opened the meeting, noting all were present. Rev. Schouten then read John 14:12-14. He then led in prayer and asked all present to sing Psalm 68:12. The meeting was then adjourned.

Day 11 — Morning Session
Tuesday, May 25, 2010

Article 101 – Opening and Roll Call

Rev. Aasman opened the meeting and welcomed all the guests, also noting the arrival of students from John Calvin School in Burlington. He read from Habakkuk 3. All sang Hymn 10:8,9,10, after which he led in prayer. Roll call was then held and all were present.

Article 102 – Adoption of Articles 80-89 of the Acts of Synod

Articles 80-89 of the Acts were adopted after some minor changes.

Article 103 – Report of the Board of Governors of the Theological College

1. Material

- 1.1 Report of the Board of Governors of the Theological College (8.2.1).
- 1.2 Letters from Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.1.t) Burlington-Ebenezer (8.1.f), Elora (8.3.L.1), Coaldale (8.3.L.2), Winnipeg-Grace (8.3.L.3), Chilliwack (8.3.L.4), Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.L.5), Neerlandia (8.3.L.6), Willoughby Heights (8.3.L.7), Attercliffe (8.3.L.8), Fergus North (8.3.L.9), Abbotsford (8.3.L.10), and Lincoln (8.3.L.11).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The report of the Board of Governors gives an overview of its many activities to ensure the ongoing operation of the Theological College.
- 2.2 Dr. G.H. Visscher, professor of New Testament since June 2001, and Dr. A.J. de Visser, professor of Diaconiology and Ecclesiology since June 2004, meet the requirements for tenure as set forth by Synod Abbotsford 1995.
- 2.3 The Board reports on the difficulties it encountered in finding a temporary instructor in Dogmatology for Semester I of the 2008-2009 academic year, which led to the appointment of Dr. J Maris of Apeldoorn, The Netherlands, who is not a member of a Canadian Reformed Church or a sister church. Several churches criticised this appointment as in conflict with the College Act and the By-laws. The Board admits that these churches were correct in pointing this out, but states that it had no other choice.
- 2.4 In accordance with the mandate in Article 124 of Synod Smithers the Board has facilitated significant dialogue between representatives of

the FRCSA and the Senate of the College.

- 2.5 In accordance with the instructions 5.3 – 5.5 of the mandate in Article 130 of Synod Smithers the Board has established a Review and Accreditation Committee for accreditation with the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). An external committee of three experts from the Association of Reformed Theological Seminaries (ARTS) was also appointed to conduct a review as mandated by Synod 2007. The findings of this committee were presented to the Board with a number of considerations and recommendations. Even though this process has not led yet to a clear direction and a concrete proposal, the Board remains convinced that a fifth professor would be very beneficial for the future of the College. The Board expects to come to Synod 2013 to seek approval for a fifth faculty member, and provides reasons for this as follows:
 - 2.5.1 Workload help is needed in delivering the current curriculum. The greatest need for workload relief is in the area of Diaconiology. The present church historian is far too overworked to maintain his current pace.
 - 2.5.2 There is a need for a fifth full-time professor for the academic year 2010-2011. Barring substantial growth, the school should be well situated with five professors for many years to come.
 - 2.5.3 Generally, the course offerings of the College are appropriate and sufficient but there are some areas of weakness which need to be addressed. The areas which need to be developed are pastoral theology, missions, apologetics, philosophy and spirituality.
 - 2.5.4 There is need for more help in the area of administration. The external committee recommends the appointment of a full-time person to this position as soon as possible.
 - 2.5.5 The principalship should be a permanent rather than rotating position and the present principal should be appointed to that position. Rationale: Not everyone is equally qualified for this position and too many changes from year to year in leadership leave a school in a rather tenuous position.
 - 2.5.6 The Deanship should be a permanent position for similar reasons for continuity's sake. When deans rotate this can be difficult on the student body.
 - 2.5.7 The College should join the Association of Reformed

- Theological Schools (ARTS). Being part of this body would assist the College in keeping abreast of contemporary developments without in any way jeopardizing its Reformed identity
- 2.5.8 For smoothness of operation and continuity with other seminaries, the College should consider the possibility of moving to a regular two-semester-per-year system, with as many annual or every other year course offerings as is feasible with a small faculty.
- 2.5.9 The College should update the College Handbook and, in the process, discuss levels of expectation for continued education, study, workloads (taking into account teaching loads, new preps, and administrative hours), and writing/publication of faculty members.
- 2.5.10 Having five professors would allow the College to have a bit more flexibility with sabbaticals, and enable the faculty to get a bit more involved in lecturing, writing, and publishing.
- 2.5.11 Though the faculty does a good job of keeping its doors open to students, more work should be done by the faculty in mentoring students.”
- 2.6 In accordance with instruction 5.6 of the mandate in Article 130 of Synod Smithers, the Board has improved the transparency of the appointment procedure for faculty members.
- 2.7 The Board approved four required amendments to By-law Number 12.
- 2.8 The Board adopted a proposal to implement a Bachelor of Theology program.
- 2.9 The Board of Governors recommends:
- 2.9.1 To receive this report and all its appendices.
- 2.9.2 To acknowledge the expiration of the term of office of Dr. G. Nederveen, Mr. G.J. Nordeman and Rev. R.A. Schouten and to express gratitude for their work. Further, to express gratitude for the contributions of Rev. G. Ph. van Popta who resigned from the Board in 2007.
- 2.9.3 Pursuant to Section 5(2) of the Act and Section 3.04 of By-Law 3:
- 2.9.3.1 To appoint, elect or re-appoint six active ministers to hold office until the next General Synod and to appoint at least three

- substitutes from each Regional Synod area, keeping in mind that the By-laws prohibit anyone serving more than three consecutive terms and also keeping in mind the recommendations of the Board in regard to reappointments.
- 2.9.3.2 To reappoint brs. A. Bax and H. Kampen as Governors for a term lasting until the second subsequent General Synod.
- 2.9.3.3 To reappoint brs. L. Jagt and K. Veldkamp as Governors for a term lasting from the date of re-appointment until the next subsequent General Synod.
- 2.9.3.4 To appoint one new non-ministerial Governor for a term lasting from the date of appointment until the third subsequent General Synod, with a standby replacement candidate as well. The Board recommendation for this appointment can be found in a separate letter which also contains a *curriculum vitae*.
- 2.9.4 To express gratitude for the help of Rev. P. Feenstra, Rev. E. Kampen, Prof. J. Geertsema, Dr. J. Maris, and Rev. J. Van Vliet during the illness of Dr. N.H. Gootjes.
- 2.9.5 To request the churches to continue to remember in their prayers the needs of Mrs. K. Deddens, Dr. and Mrs. J. DeJong, Mrs. W. Faber, Dr. and Mrs. N.H. Gootjes, and Prof. and Mrs. J. Geertsema.
- 2.9.6 To judge that under the circumstances surrounding the department of Dogmatology and in view of the lengthy past practice of inviting guest speakers and guest lecturers who are not members of the Canadian Reformed Churches or their sister churches, the appointment of Dr. J. Maris as temporary instructor in Dogmatology was understandable and defensible.
- 2.9.7 To approve the granting of tenure to Dr. A.J. de Visser and to Dr. G.H. Visscher.
- 2.9.8 To approve the appointment of Dr. J. VanVliet as professor of Dogmatology.

- 2.9.9 To approve the retirement of Dr. C. VanDam and to express deep gratitude for thirty years of faithful and diligent service to the College and the Churches as professor of Old Testament.
- 2.9.10 To approve the appointment of a new professor of Old Testament in accordance with the recommendation of the Board contained in a submission separate from this Report.
- 2.9.11 To appoint Prof. G.H. Visscher as Principal for the years 2011-2014.
- 2.9.12 To approve the changes to By-law 12 described in this report.
- 2.9.13 To renew the mandate given to Board in sections 5.3 – 5.5 of Article 130 of the Acts of Synod 2007.
- 2.9.14 To agree that the Board has completed the mandate given in section 5.6 of Article 130 of the Acts of Synod 2007.
- 2.9.15 To agree that the Board has completed the directives of Article 124 of Acts of Synod 2007.
- 2.9.16 To recommend for the consideration of the churches the reasons given in this report for the eventual appointment of a fifth professor and to seek the direction of the churches in that regard.
- 2.9.17 To approve all other decisions and actions of the Board and of its committees for the years 2007, 2008 and 2009 until the date of this Report.
- 2.9.18 To express gratitude for the support from the Free Reformed Churches in Australia.
- 2.9.19 To consider the audited financial statements and the report of the Auditors for the previous fiscal periods; to relieve the Treasurer of the Board of all responsibilities for these fiscal periods; to reappoint br. H. Salomons as Auditor until the next General Synod.
- 2.9.20 To acknowledge with gratitude the enormous contributions of the Women's Savings Action to the well-being of the College.
- 2.10 Burlington-Ebenezer, Fergus-Maranatha, Fergus North and Lincoln ask Synod to judge that the Board of Governors erred when it appointed a temporary instructor in Dogmatics, who was not a member of a Canadian Reformed Church or a sister church, since it was a violation of the adopted College Act and By-laws.

- 2.11 Elora, Coaldale, Chilliwack, Neerlandia, and Abbotsford support the recommendation to begin the process, with input of the churches, of seeking a suitable candidate to serve as a fifth professor at the Theological College. Chilliwack suggests that the Board should appoint a temporary professor in whatever department is necessary with a view to approaching Synod 2013 with a request for a permanent appointment of that professor.
- 2.12 Fergus-Maranatha, Willoughby Heights, Attercliffe, and Lincoln question the need to appoint a fifth professor without well-defined requirements for this position. Attercliffe urges Synod to instruct the Board to rearrange the workload among the four professors. Lincoln feels that the Review and Accreditation Committee should complete its report before any decision re: a fifth professor be considered.
- 2.13 Chilliwack asks that Synod mandate the Board of Governors to investigate the potential for making Missiology one of the core subjects at the Theological College.
- 2.14 Fergus-Maranatha and Lincoln are puzzled by the Board's proposal with regards to By-law 12.
- 2.15 Fergus-Maranatha cannot support the recommendation regarding the approval of all previous decisions of the Board, since it is not clear what all these decisions are.
- 2.16 Fergus-Maranatha and Willoughby Heights recommend not to add a Bachelor of Theology or other programs that go beyond the mandate of Article 19 CO.
- 2.17 Fergus-Maranatha is of the opinion that the report of the Board of Governors does not reflect the transparency that they feel the College should have in light of the fact that it is to serve the churches.
- 2.18 Willoughby Heights strongly urges Synod to instruct the Theological College to explore avenues of possible cooperation with Mid-America Reformed Seminary.
- 2.19 Abbotsford questions the wisdom of having the practical training taking place during the summer.
- 3. Considerations**
- 3.1 Synod notes with thankfulness that the work at the Theological College could continue without interruption between Synod Smithers 2007 and Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010.
- 3.2 Synod does not question Dr. J. Maris' qualifications to teach Reformed Dogmatics, nor his faithfulness to the Scriptures and the

- Reformed Confessions. Synod also appreciates that it was difficult for the Board to find a suitable temporary instructor (or temporary instructors) within the Canadian Reformed Churches or sister churches to teach Reformed Dogmatics. However, the Board of Governors is at all times required to operate within the bounds of the College Act and the By-law.
- 3.3 Synod notes with gratitude that the now mandatory Pastoral Training Program continues to be very beneficial for the students and for the churches, and that the appointment of a committee to look after the funding of this program has worked well.
- 3.4 Although the Review and Accreditation process, as mandated by Synod Smithers, is a lengthy one, it should be completed. It will be a valuable exercise that will benefit the well-being of the churches in the future. The process has already provided convincing arguments to work towards the appointment of a fifth professor, rather than rearranging the workload among the four current professors.
- 3.5 The process implemented after a vacancy was declared in the department of Old Testament shows that the Board has significantly improved the transparency of the appointment procedure for faculty members. Still, the Board only provides a general outline of the process to Synod, and not the particular policy adopted. Since the concern of Smithers was transparency in the process, it would be good for the Board to inform the churches of the adopted policy, ask for their input and submit this to the next General Synod for their review.
- 3.6 As the Review and Accreditation process continues and the Board is going to evaluate the implications of this review, it has merit to give special attention to the subject of Missiology.
- 3.7 The changes in By-law 12, section 13.10 are of a technical and legal nature and the churches that have questions about this should ask the Finance and Property Committee of the Board of Governors for clarification.
- 3.8 The Board's request to approve all other decisions and actions of the Board and its committees is a legal requirement in accordance with the College Act.
- 3.9 The mandate of Article 19 CO is not restricted to the current M.Div. program. On the contrary, the Board should be encouraged to explore the options of offering more courses and perhaps more degrees so as to better serve the purpose of Article 19, "that the churches may be

provided with ministers of the Word who are able to fulfil the duties of their office." This could include possible cooperation with Mid-America Reformed Seminary.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To receive the report of the Board of Governors and its appendices (three annual reports of the Finance and Property Committee), and to thank the Board for its work .
- 4.2 To acknowledge the expiration of the term of office of Dr. G. Nederveen, br. G.J. Nordeman and Rev. R.A. Schouten, and to express gratitude for their work as governors. Further, to express gratitude for the contributions of Rev. G. Ph. van Popta who resigned from the Board in 2007.
- 4.3 Pursuant to Section 5(2) of the Act and Section 3.04 of By-Law 3: To appoint, elect or re-appoint six active ministers to hold office until the next General Synod and to appoint at least three substitutes from each Regional Synod area, keeping in mind that the By-laws prohibit anyone serving more than three consecutive terms, with the actual appointments to be made under point 9 of the agenda, to be prepared by the officers of Synod.
- 4.4 To express gratitude for the help of Rev. P. Feenstra, Rev. E. Kampen, Prof. J. Geertsema, Dr. J. Maris and Rev. J. VanVliet during the illness of Dr. N.H. Gootjes.
- 4.5 To request the churches to continue to remember in their prayers the needs of Mrs. K. Deddens, Dr. and Mrs. J. DeJong, Mrs. W. Faber, Dr. and Mrs. N.H. Gootjes and Prof. and Mrs. J. Geertsema.
- 4.6 To judge that the Board of Governors erred when it appointed Dr. J. Maris as temporary instructor in Dogmatology.
- 4.7 To approve the granting of tenure to Dr. A.J. de Visser and to Dr. G.H. Visscher.
- 4.8 To appoint Prof. Dr. G.H. Visscher as Principal for the years 2011-2014.
- 4.9 To approve the changes to By-law 12 described in the report of the Board.
- 4.10 To renew the mandate given to Board in sections 5.3 – 5.5 of Article 130 of the Acts of Synod Smithers 2007.
- 4.11 To instruct the Board to inform the churches of the adopted appointment process and to involve the churches in seeking their

- input in completing the mandate given in section 5.6 of Article 130 of the Acts of Synod 2007, and to submit the final appointment policy to be reviewed by General Synod 2013.
- 4.12 To agree that the Board has completed the directives of Article 124 of Acts of Synod 2007.
- 4.13 To recommend for the consideration of the churches the reasons given in the report of the Board to Synod Burlington-Ebenezer for the eventual appointment of a fifth professor and to seek the direction of the churches in that regard.
- 4.14 To approve all other decisions and actions of the Board and of its committees for the years 2007, 2008, and 2009, until the date of the report of the Board to General Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010.
- 4.15 To express deep gratitude for the generous support from the Free Reformed Churches in Australia.
- 4.16 To consider the audited financial statements and the report of the Auditors for the previous fiscal periods, to relieve the Treasurer of the Board of all responsibilities for these fiscal periods, and to reappoint br. H. Salomons as Auditor until the next General Synod.
- 4.17 To acknowledge with gratitude the contributions of the Women's Savings Action for the well-being of the College.

ADOPTED

Article 104 – Archives of General Synod

1. Material

- 1.1 Report from Burlington-Ebenezer as Archive Church for general synods (8.2.0.i).
- 1.2 Letter from Burlington-Waterdown concerning inspection of the archives (8.2.0.ii).
- 1.3 Letter from Burlington-Ebenezer re: request from SCBP (8.2.0.iii).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Burlington-Ebenezer reports as follows:
- 2.1.1 There have been no activity or inquiries about the archives since Synod 2007.
- 2.1.2 The General Synod Smithers 2007 documents have been added to the archives.
- 2.1.3 Burlington-Waterdown inspected the archives of General Synod 2007.

- 2.1.4 Br. K. Spithoff has been appointed as archivist, replacing br. J.H. Harsevoort.
- 2.1.5 A fireproof room has been built to house the archives as per synod instruction at a cost of \$5187.55.
- 2.2 Burlington-Waterdown reports that the archives of General Synod 2007 kept by the Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church of Burlington and maintained by the archivist br. J.H. Harsevoort were found to be complete and in good order.
- 2.3 Burlington-Ebenezer received a request from the SCBP that the SCBP archives which had been stored with the synodical archives be released to them. Burlington-Ebenezer agreed to this request on the basis of Article 165 of Synod Smithers 2007, which records that Synod noted with thankfulness the setting up of SCBP archives by the SCBP.
- 2.4 Burlington-Ebenezer also requests Synod 2010 to clarify whether it is the Archive Church for general synods only, or also for synodical committees.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Seeing that the SCBP has established its own archival system, it was appropriate for Burlington to release SCBP materials to the SCBP.
- 3.2 Most synodical committees (e.g., CCCNA, CRCA, CBT) currently maintain their own archives. Ready access to archival material of the recent past can be important for the ongoing work of these committees.
- 3.3 Storing archival material from the more distant past could be challenging for synodical committees to do on their own due to regular changes in committee membership and because of space requirements.
- 3.4 Not all committee material is worth archiving. The substance and conclusions of committee work over the years are contained in the accumulated reports to Synod which are already part of the archives of General Synod. It would be wise to let individual committees determine what material warrants preservation in the archives of General Synod.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To thank Burlington-Ebenezer for its work as archive church, including work done to build a fireproof room.

- 4.2 To thank Burlington-Waterdown for examining the archives and reporting to synod.
- 4.3 To reappoint Burlington-Ebenezer as archive church and to reappoint Burlington-Waterdown to inspect the archives.
- 4.4 To mandate Burlington-Ebenezer to gather and manage the long-term archives (older than ten years) of all synodical committees with the exception of the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise*, but to leave the content of archival material to the judgment of each committee.
- 4.5 To mandate Burlington-Ebenezer to send a requisition notice for archive material to all synodical committees within three months following each General Synod.

ADOPTED

Article 105 – Presbyterian Church of Korea – Kosin (PCK)

1. Material

- 1.1 Report D from the CRCA re: The Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK) (8.2.m.i).
- 1.2 CRCA Supplementary Report dated February 15, 2010 (8.2.m.ii).
- 1.3 Letters from Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.M.16), Attercliffe (8.3.M.26), Yarrow (8.3.M.34), and Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.3.M.37).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Smithers 2007 (Article 86, Recommendation 4) charged the CRCA as follows:
- [4.3.1] To work diligently on improving our relations with the PCK by mail/email by meeting with their delegates at the ICRC, and by sending a member of the CRCA to Korea on a more regular basis.
- [4.3.2] To contact those sister churches who have relations with the PCK with the request that we alternate with them in visiting the General Assembly of the PCK.
- [4.3.3] To send a copy of our agreement with the OPC to the PCK and ask for their reaction and possible agreement.
- [4.3.4] To report on the state of communications to the next synod (Synod 2007, Article 86).
- 2.2 Synod 2007 also instructed the CRCA to send delegates to the General Assembly of the PCK (in consultation and rotation with sister churches).

- 2.3 The CRCA maintained ecclesiastical fellowship with the PCK by extensive communication, by visiting the General Assembly, and by discussions with the Fraternal Relations Committee of the PCK.
- 2.4 Since the Acts of Synod sent to the General Assembly are not always passed on to the Fraternal Relations Committee, the CRCA will send them directly to the Fraternal Relations Committee and include a summary of the points which are important to our relationship with the PCK.
- 2.5 After consultation with the RCN and the FRCA, the CRCA sent two delegates to the 58th General Assembly of the PCK. The FRCA sent a delegate in 2007 and the RCN sent one in 2009. The FRCA shared its report with the CRCA and the RCN report is forthcoming.
- 2.6 As mandated by Synod Smithers, the CRCA sent a copy of the Statements of Agreement between the CanRC and the OPC regarding admittance to the celebration of the Lord's Supper and confessional membership to the Fraternal Relations Committee of the PCK, asking for their reaction and possible agreement. In its letter to Synod 2010, the church at Winnipeg-Redeemer also addressed these matters.
- 2.7 Subsequent to filing its Report to General Synod, the CRCA received a letter from the Fraternal Relations Committee of the PCK on these matters and forwarded its contents to General Synod. In this letter, the PCK indicated that it agrees with the agreement between the CanRC and the OPC. The CRCA therefore considers that the committee's mandate concerning confessional membership and admittance to the Lord's Supper in the PCK has been completed.
- 2.8 The CRCA encouraged the Fraternal Relations Committee to provide the CRCA with information regarding church relations within Korea.
- 2.9 Professor Yoo (member) of the Fraternal Relations Committee of the PCK has provided the CRCA with highlights of the 57th and 58th General Assembly.
- 2.10 The church of Yarrow makes Synod aware of a document called Report of the Christian Council of Korea to the 58th General Assembly, including an attachment called Basic Principles for Uniting Korean Churches, and proposes that the CRCA be mandated to study that document.
- 2.11 The church of Fergus-Maranatha submits the following:
- [1.] Observations
- [a.] The report on the RCK indicates "it is not clear to

the CRCA why the RCK churches do not work with the IRCK.”

- [b.] The Report on the RCK indicates “the RCK feels there is some creeping deformation in the PCK.”

[2.] Considerations

- [a.] It is uncertain what relationship the PCK has with the RCK and the ICRK.

- [b.] It does not seem appropriate to establish unity with three Korean churches that do not share ecclesiastical unity with each other.

[3.] Recommendations

- [a.] Synod accede (to) the recommendations of the CRCA.

- [b.] The CRCA be thanked for the reporting of their communications with the PCK.

- [c.] Synod mandate the CRCA to understand and encourage the relationships between the PCK, IRCK, and the RCK.

- 2.12 In view of differences of language and culture, Attercliffe wonders whether it would be better to limit our contact with the PCK and to request the FRCA to act on our behalf “as they appear to have a better insight and understanding of Asian culture.” Attercliffe asks Synod to mandate the CRCA to “further investigate the Korean situation, to consider the practicality of our contacts in Korea and then to come with concrete recommendations on how to proceed.”

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The CRCA has fulfilled its mandate.

- 3.2 It would seem appropriate to continue discussions with the PCK concerning their relationships (or lack thereof) with the IRCK and the RCK. This would be in line with the submission from Fergus-Maranatha.

- 3.3 In light of the submission from Yarrow, the CRCA should study the Report of the Christian Council of Korea.

- 3.4 In the last years, there has been greater cooperation between the CanRC, the RCN, and the FRCA in maintaining contacts with the PCK (see Observation 2.5). Each federation now visits the PCK General Assembly once per three years and shares reports with the other federations. This addresses the suggestions of Attercliffe.

- 3.5 The letter received by the CRCA from the Fraternal Relations Committee confirms that the PCK agrees with the terms of the agreement we have with the OPC re: admittance to the Lord’s Supper and confessional membership.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to mandate the CRCA:

- 4.1. To continue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the PCK under the adopted rules.
- 4.2 To continue to discuss with the PCK its relationship with the IRCK and the RCK with the goal of seeking further insight into these two federations.
- 4.3 To continue to work cooperatively with the RCN and the FRCA in exercising our relationship with PCK in meaningful ways, such as by regular communication, by visiting the General Assembly of the PCK, and by meeting and interacting with their delegates at the ICRC.

ADOPTED

Article 106 – Appeal from Grand Valley re: Article 143 of Synod Smithers 2007

1. Material

Appeal from the Church of Grand Valley re: Article 143 of Synod Smithers (8.5.g).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The CRCA in its report to Synod Smithers 2007 (Acts, Article 143, paragraph 3.2) recommended that Synod 2007:
- [5.6.7.1] Express sadness over the schism in the RCN which began in 2003.
- [5.6.7.2] Urge the federation to pray for the restoration of unity between the Reformed Churches – Restored (RCR)⁴ and the RCN.
- [5.6.7.3] Not accept the RCR request to acknowledge these churches as sister churches.

⁴ The Reformed Churches – Restored (RCR), known in Dutch as the Gereformeerde Kerken [hersteld]. This group of churches was formed in 2003 and 2004. In quotes from various documents, the Dutch name is abbreviated by the initials of the English equivalent: RCR.

- [5.6.7.4] Mandate the CRCA to communicate Mandate the CRCA to communicate 5.6.7.1, 5.6.7.2, and 5.6.7.3 to the Deputies BBK of the RCR and maintain contact with them.
- 2.2 Synod Smithers 2007 adopted the following Considerations (Article 143 of the Acts):
- [4.1] It is true that the CRCA does not give details in their report leading to their conclusions. However, all the issues raised by the RCR, as listed at 3.5, have had the attention of the CRCA over the years. The CRCA has been aware of the critiques of the decisions and studied them (see Acts of previous synods and the most recent CRCA Report). They have been able to conclude that the RCN has remained faithful. The documents provided by the RCR did not lead the CRCA to change their assessment as presented in their Report (see Addendum). In this respect, it is good to refer to the comment of the CRCA in which they express concern that “the RCR is in danger of not carefully examining what has actually been decided by RCN Synod” (p. 66).
- [4.2] The RCR clearly indicates that they consider the RCN a false church. This shows in the way that they consider themselves the “lawful continuation of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands” (Report 5.6.4). Further, they are unwilling to consider reconciliation unless the RCN would see “the need to return to the Scriptures, Confession and Church Order” (Report 5.6.5). For this reason, synod agrees with the CRCA when it speaks of the separation that occurred as “schism.” The CRCA should be instructed to admonish the RCR in a brotherly manner on this matter as this action is not scripturally valid according to Belgic Confession Article 28 where we confess that “all therefore who draw away from the church or fail to join it act contrary to the ordinance of God.” At the same time, the CRCA should continue to look for ways to facilitate reconciliation.
- 2.3 Synod Smithers 2007 adopted the following Recommendations (Article 143 of the Acts):
- [5.1] To express sadness over the separation in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (RCN) that began in 2003.
- [5.2] Not to accept the RCR’s request to acknowledge these churches as sister churches.

- [5.3] To urge the churches to pray for the restoration of unity between the RCR and RCN.
- [5.4] To mandate the CRCA:
- [5.4.1] To admonish the RCR in a brotherly manner for its unlawful separation as outlined in Consideration 4.2 (see in Observation 2.2 above).
- [5.4.2] To communicate 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 to the Deputies BBK of the RCR and to continue to seek ways to facilitate reconciliation between the RCR and RCN.
- 2.4 After Synod Smithers 2007 adopted Article 143, br. Nordeman, one of the members of synod moved that the decision about the RCR be revisited, citing the following six reasons (Synod Smithers, Article 146):
- [1.] Synod is using excessively strong language with words such as “schism” and “admonish.”
- [2.] Synod is not consistent in its approach as compared to the situation with the FCS and FCC, where the FCC also considers itself the lawful continuation of the FCS.
- [3.] Synod is premature in its position taken as no correspondence was received from any of the churches requesting synod to make such pronouncements.
- [4.] Synod is passing a public judgment on the RCR with words and terminology that have not first been used in communications with the RCR.
- [5.] In view of the strong opinions expressed by many churches in regards to the situation in the RCN, Synod Smithers risks creating further unrest in the CanRC.
- [6.] By adopting the above mentioned consideration and recommendation Synod Smithers further underlines the concerns expressed by our sister church in Australia: that developments in the CanRC “do not parallel those in theirs” (Report CRCA section 2.3, pp. 23-24).”
- This motion was carried and br. Nordeman was instructed to bring a new proposal to the meeting.
- 2.5 Synod Smithers then considered the following proposal (Synod Smithers, Article 167):
- To maintain the advisory committee’s proposal as adopted in Article 143...but delete Considerations 4.2 and Recommendation 5.4.1, and to change Recommendation

5.4.2 to read: “to facilitate reconciliation between the RCR and the RCN.”

This proposal was defeated (Synod Smithers, Article 167).

2.6 Following this, Synod Smithers considered another proposal:

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

And to change Recommendation 5.4.1 to read:

5.4.1 “To advise the RCR that its separation from the RCN is unlawful.”

This proposal was also defeated, and thus it was noted that the original decision as found in Article 143 stands (Synod Smithers, Article 167).

2.7 Grand Valley requests Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 to judge that Synod Smithers 2007 erred when it decided to mandate the CRCA “to admonish the RCR in a brotherly manner for its unlawful separation as outlined in Consideration 4.2” (Synod Smithers, Article 143, 5.4.1), and contends that Synod Smithers should have refrained from making the conclusion it made regarding the RCR in Consideration 4.2 (i.e. “...For this reason...to facilitate reconciliation”).

2.8 In support of its request and contention, Grand Valley expresses agreement with the six points brought forward by br. Nordeman at Synod Smithers (Article 146). Grand Valley finds it regrettable that the Acts of Synod Smithers 2007 do not record Synod’s interaction with or refutation of these six points. Grand Valley finds these six points to be valid and thus requests Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 to judge that Synod Smithers 2007 erred when it mandated the CRCA to admonish the RCR in a brotherly manner for its unlawful separation.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 From the fact that synod first came to a decision regarding the RCR, then voted to reconsider this decision, and yet to eventually hold to the original decision, it is clear that Synod Smithers had difficulty deciding exactly how to respond to the schism in the Netherlands and the request of the RCR to acknowledge the RCR as a sister church.
- 3.2 Grand Valley finds it regrettable that Synod Smithers did not record Synod’s interaction with or refutation of the six points brought forward by br. Nordeman (Article 146). These six points, however, have to be considered in connection with the original considerations (Article 143, Considerations 4.1 and 4.2). It is unfortunate that Grand Valley did not interact directly with these original considerations.
- 3.2.1 Re: point 1: Synod Smithers 2007 gave good reason for the usage of strong language like “schism” and “admonish” in Consideration 4.2.
- 3.2.2 Re: point 2: The schism in Scotland and in the Netherlands was different: in the Netherlands the RCR considered the RCN to be a false church.
- 3.2.3 Re: point 3: It is true, particularly given the rise of concerning developments in the RCN, that one could question whether Synod Smithers was perhaps too hasty in deciding not only to deny the request of the RCR for ecclesiastical fellowship (EF) as per the original recommendation of the CRCA, but even to proceed with admonishing the RCR. It is also true that other churches with which we maintain EF did not proceed this way. Synod Smithers, however, felt that such a judgment call was warranted given how it had concluded that the RCN at that time, in spite of concerning developments that needed addressing, had remained faithful. Meanwhile the RCR had indicated that it deemed the RCN to be false. Grand Valley does not prove this judgment call of Synod Smithers to be wrong.
- 3.2.4 Re: point 4: This point does not reckon with the contents of Consideration 4.1 of Article 143 of Synod Smithers.
- 3.2.5 Re: points 5 and 6: In seeking to address serious issues such as schism among foreign churches in EF, Synod must ensure that it makes judgments according to the facts of the situation and according to Scripture and the Confessions.

It must not make its judgments out of fear regarding unrest among its own congregations, or out of fear about how other federations will perceive this.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to deny the appeal of Grand Valley.

ADOPTED

One member of Synod abstained from voting.

Article 107 – Appeal from Kerwood re: Article 143 of Synod Smithers 2007

1. Material

Appeal from the Church of Kerwood (8.5.x).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The CRCA in its report to Synod Smithers 2007 (Acts, Article 143, paragraph 3.2) recommended that Synod 2007:
- [5.6.7.1] Express sadness over the schism in the RCN which began in 2003.
 - [5.6.7.2] Urge the federation to pray for the restoration of unity between the Reformed Churches – Restored (RCR)⁵ and the RCN.
 - [5.6.7.3] Not accept the RCR request to acknowledge these churches as sister churches.
 - [5.6.7.4] Mandate the CRCA to communicate 5.6.7.1, 5.6.7.2, and 5.6.7.3 to the Deputies BBK of the RCR and maintain contact with them.
- 2.2 Synod Smithers 2007 adopted the following Considerations (Article 143 of the Acts):
- [4.1] It is true that the CRCA does not give details in their report leading to their conclusions. However, all the issues raised by the RCR, as listed at 3.5, have had the attention of the CRCA over the years. The CRCA has been aware of the critiques of the decisions and studied them (see Acts of previous synods and the most recent CRCA Report). They

⁵ The Reformed Churches – Restored (RCR), known in Dutch as the Gereformeerde Kerken [hersteld]. This group of churches was formed in 2003 and 2004. In quotes from various documents, the Dutch name is abbreviated by the initials of the English equivalent: RCR.

have been able to conclude that the RCN has remained faithful. The documents provided by the RCR did not lead the CRCA to change their assessment as presented in their Report (see Addendum). In this respect, it is good to refer to the comment of the CRCA in which they express concern that “the RCR is in danger of not carefully examining what has actually been decided by RCN Synod” (p. 66).

- [4.2] The RCR clearly indicates that they consider the RCN a false church. This shows in the way that they consider themselves the “lawful continuation of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands” (Report 5.6.4). Further, they are unwilling to consider reconciliation unless the RCN would see “the need to return to the Scriptures, Confession and Church Order” (Report 5.6.5). For this reason, synod agrees with the CRCA when it speaks of the separation that occurred as “schism.” The CRCA should be instructed to admonish the RCR in a brotherly manner on this matter as this action is not scripturally valid according to Belgic Confession Article 28 where we confess that “all therefore who draw away from the church or fail to join it act contrary to the ordinance of God.” At the same time, the CRCA should continue to look for ways to facilitate reconciliation.
- 2.3 Synod Smithers 2007 adopted the following Recommendations (Article 143 of the Acts):
 - [5.1] To express sadness over the separation in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (RCN) that began in 2003.
 - [5.2] Not to accept the RCR’s request to acknowledge these churches as sister churches.
 - [5.3] To urge the churches to pray for the restoration of unity between the RCR and RCN.
 - [5.4] To mandate the CRCA:
 - [5.4.1] To admonish the RCR in a brotherly manner for its unlawful separation as outlined in Consideration 4.2 (see in Observation 2.2 above).
 - [5.4.2] To communicate 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 to the Deputies BBK of the RCR and to continue to seek ways to facilitate reconciliation between the RCR and RCN.
- 2.4 Kerwood appeals the decision to Synod Smithers to admonish the RCR (Article 143, 5.4.1), and recommends that Synod Burlington-

Ebenezer 2010 “apologize to the RCR for our hasty judgment and invite them to our synods from this point forward to continue our discussion with them, in order to gain greater understanding and make honest judgments.”

2.5 In support of this appeal Kerwood gives the following considerations:

- [1.] Many of the concerns that have been raised here in Canada concerning the RCN have also been raised by the RCR and yet at synod level we judge the RCR divisive without due consideration of local circumstances.
- [2.] How can we make strong judgments on the RCR, calling them schismatic, while making no judgments about the RCN and its path of decline?
- [3.] In the process of the separation of local RCR churches there may have been sin involved, but can the sin of those that left be greater than those in the RCN that are not reprimanded? Can we call those to repentance who have locally used all means possible for a period of 5-10 years to appeal and change the direction of the churches?
- [4.] It is always a difficult question what is too early to step out and some freedom must be given here. The RCR shows a clear desire to uphold the Truth of the Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity and felt they needed to ‘come out from her and be separate.’
- [5.] If in the future it becomes even more clear to us that the RCN has fully deviated from Scripture and the Confessions, we may be seeking a relationship with the RCR over time, while at this moment we criticize them of being too hasty and too extreme.
- [6.] We can learn from the Free Reformed Churches in Australia who took a much more balanced approach to their relationship with the RCN and RCR, because they did not want to be hasty in laying judgment.

3. Considerations

3.1 It is true that the RCR has raised similar concerns as the CanRC regarding the RCN. In and of itself, however, this does not justify the RCR’s judgment of the RCN as a false church (cf. Synod Smithers, Article 143, Consideration 4.2). Kerwood itself agrees that on the part of the RCR there may have been sin involved.

- 3.2 Contrary to Kerwood, Synod Smithers had made judgments regarding the RCN, concluding that in spite of concerning developments it had remained faithful (Synod Smithers, Article 143, Consideration 4.1).
- 3.2 It is true, particularly given the rise of concerning developments in the RCN, that one could question whether Synod Smithers was perhaps too hasty in deciding not only to deny the request of the RCR for EF (as per the original recommendation of the CRCA), but even to proceed with admonishing the RCR. It is also true that other churches with which we maintain EF did not proceed in this way. Synod Smithers, however, felt that such a judgment call was warranted given how it had concluded that the RCN at that time, in spite of concerning developments that needed addressing, had remained faithful. Meanwhile the RCR had indicated that it deemed the RCN to be false. Kerwood does not prove this judgment call of Synod Smithers to be wrong.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to deny the appeal of Kerwood.

ADOPTED

Article 108 – Churches in Indonesia

1. Material

- 1.1 Two reports from the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) concerning the Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia (CRCI), and the Reformed Churches in Indonesia – NTT (RCI-NTT) (8.2.m.i and ii).
- 1.2 Letters from Hamilton-Providence (8.3.M.3), Grand Valley (8.3.M.4), Coaldale (8.3.M.8), Attercliffe (8.3.M.26), Taber (8.3.M.27), Abbotsford (8.3.M.35), and Lincoln (8.3.M.36).

Acronyms

Various documents are inconsistent in the acronyms used to refer to the churches in Indonesia. Please note that for the sake of readability, also when quoting from such documents, the following acronyms will be used.

CRCI	Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia. The Indonesian name is: Gereja-Gereja Reformasi
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Calvinis di Indonesia NTT. The letters NTT refer to the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur (East Nusa Tenggara), where these churches are located. In some documents this federation is sometimes referred to as GGRC - NTT.

GGRM The Pilgrim Reformed Churches in East Nusa Tenggara, originally one federation together with the CRCI.

RCI Reformed Churches in Indonesia (unless otherwise indicated, only those in the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur). The Indonesian name is: Gereja-Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia NTT. In some documents this federation is therefore sometimes referred to as the GGRI-NTT.

2. Observations

- 2.1 The CRCA notes that where the church of Smithville is working through the mission efforts of Rev. Ed. Dethan in Indonesia, there are already two faithful federations: the CRCI and the RCI. It also indicates that:
- 2.1.1 The RCN has recognized both as sister churches.
- 2.1.2 The FRCA has extended ecclesiastical fellowship to the RCI and has declared the CRCI to be a faithful church of Jesus Christ.
- 2.1.3 It would not be desirable that through the mission of work of Smithville a third federation of churches would be established next to the CRCI and the RCI.
- 2.2 In regard to the *CRCI*, Synod Smithers 2007 (Article 150, Recommendation 5.2) decided to delay entering into a sister church relationship until:
- [5.2.1] Proper consultation with other churches in ecclesiastical fellowship has taken place according to Rule 3.
- [5.2.2] The reasons why the FRCA have not as yet entered into ecclesiastical fellowship are understood and evaluated.
- [5.2.3] It is clear that there are no obstacles to entering into ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRCI.
- 2.3 Synod 2007 also decided to mandate the CRCA to maintain close contact with this federation and:
- [5.3.1] To consult with all sister churches as per Rule 3 bearing in mind Considerations 4.2-4.4 and Recommendation 5.2.
- [5.3.2] To seek clarity into the situation of the CRCI using also

information solicited from the churches at Smithville and Edmonton-Immanuel.

- [5.3.3] To promote efforts towards federative unity with the RCI.
- [5.3.4] To encourage the CRCI to cooperate with the FRCA, RCN and RCI in the establishment of joint theological training.
- 2.4 In regard to the *RCI*, Synod Smithers 2007 (Article 151, Recommendation 5) decided:
- [5.2] To delay accepting the invitation from the RCI to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship until all the necessary information is available to make a decision concerning ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRCI.
- [5.3] To mandate the CRCA to encourage the RCI to:
- [5.3.1] Promote efforts toward federative unity with the CRCI.
- [5.3.2] Cooperate with the CRCI in joint theological training.
- 2.5 The CRCA reports that there are problems between the CRCI and the *GGRM* (the Pilgrim Reformed Churches in East Nusa Tenggara, originally one federation together with the CRCI) that have not been resolved despite efforts on the part of the RCI to mediate. The differences are not doctrinal but personal between Rev. Yonson Dethan of the CRCI and Rev. Eli Fangidae of the *GGRM*. However, the church at Lincoln recommends in regard to the CRCI and *RCI*: “to mandate the committee to assess the causes of the separation between these two apparently faithful federations, and offer all possible assistance in reconciling them.”
- 2.6 The CRCA notes that “the RCI is convinced that it has done all it could to promote unity between itself and the CRCI.” It is also open to cooperation between the two federations in regard to theological education. Ministers of the CRCI have even been members of the Board of Governors of the Theological College of the RCI in Sumba.
- 2.7 The CRCA expresses some frustration in its supplementary report that in its own communication with the CRCI it did not receive official responses but “personal answers from Rev. Yonson Dethan,” making it difficult “to gain any sense of the character and direction of the CRCI.” The church at Taber, however, notes that Rev. Dethan is the chair of the CRCA of the CRCI and “is quite distressed that he did not make it clear that he spoke officially. Communication received by him was sometimes informal and personal, not always with official designation, and he merely responded in kind.”

- 2.8 The CRCA notes in its first report that the RCI has invited the CRCI to participate in a merger. In its supplementary report the CRCA lists objections that Rev. Yonson Dethan has raised on the basis of differences of culture, language, and church history. It notes further: “In regard to unification possibilities between the CRCI and the RCI, the CRCA feels that the CRCI lacks enthusiasm for this endeavour.”
- 2.9 The CRCA observes in regard to the CRCI “that while the Free Reformed Churches of Australia have more knowledge of the situation in Indonesia, they have not yet established ecclesiastical fellowship with these churches but are still monitoring the situation.” The church at Taber notes that while the CRCA has had repeated contacts with deputies of the FRCA, it “does not report on the reasons for the hesitation of the FRCA nor give us an evaluation of them.” It therefore questions whether there are valid reasons for continuing to withhold ecclesiastical relations with the CRCI.
- 2.10 The FRCA delegates attending Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 explained why the FRCA has not established sister church relations with the CRCI. The FRCA has had sister church relations with the RCI for many years. It is only in the recent history that contact began with the CRCI. Synod Legana 2009 appointed deputies for contact with the CRCI and mandated them to continue contact and “to encourage the CRCI to work towards federal unity with the RCI, especially in view of the anticipated unification of the three federations of the RCI” (Acts Legana 2009, Article 57). The Australians are referring to the three groups of Reformed churches in Indonesia that have been established through the mission work of the RCN and the CanRC: RCI-KalBar in Kalimantan Barat, RCI-NTT in the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur, and RCI-Papua in Papua (formerly Irian Jaya).
- 2.11 The fraternal delegates of the FRCA also indicate that since the beginning of the Australian contact with these churches in Indonesia, the Australian churches have always insisted that there should not be two federations of churches in the same province. The CRCI are very similar to the RCI in governance, history, background and even culture. They both have ministers who have been trained at the theological seminary of the RCI on the island of Sumba. Moreover there are also churches of the CRCI and RCI in Kupang. The Australian churches therefore believe that it is best for unity that the CRCI is encouraged to work towards unity with the GGRI. The

- brothers from the FRCA are of the opinion that it is not warranted to delay establishing ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCI-NTT.
- 2.12 In regard to the *CRCI*, the CRCA recommends that Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 decide:
- [1.] To not at this time offer a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship to the CRCI.
 - [2.] To mandate the CRCA to continue contact with the CRCI with a view to improving official communications.
 - [3.] To acknowledge that unity between the CRCI and the RCI should not be a prerequisite for ecclesiastical fellowship with either of these church federations.
 - [4.] To mandate the CRCA to continue to promote unity efforts between the CRCI and the RCI.
 - [5.] To authorize the CRCA to appoint Dr. A.J. Pol and Rev. A. Souman to visit a General Synod of the CRCI and to generally assess the ecclesiastical situation of these churches.
- 2.13 In regard to the *RCI*, the CRCA notes that Synod 2007 already “considered that the CRCA ‘provides the proof that the RCI are a federation of faithful churches of our Lord Jesus Christ’ and further that ‘the Committee gives evidence that it followed Rule 3 for Ecclesiastical Fellowship when it consulted with the GKN and the FRCA’ (*Acts of Synod 2007*, Article 151, section 4.1).”
- 2.14 The CRCA recommends that Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 decide:
- [1.] To accept the invitation of the RCI to enter into a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship.
 - [2.] To maintain the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship under the adopted rules.
 - [3.] To monitor the progress of dialogue between the RCI and the CRCI.
- 2.15 Two churches noted not yet having seen the Supplementary Report and could not interact with it, although one did not wish to state this as an objection to Synod discussing it.
- 2.16 Grand Valley cautions against making “any conclusions that could have a negative bearing on the churches in NTT.”
- 2.17 Two churches recommend that Synod refrain from making any decisions regarding ecclesiastical fellowship with either the CRCI or the RCI until these churches have sorted out their own issues. Coaldale suggests further that it would be best to consult closely with the FRCA in this matter.

2.18 Attercliffe wonders “whether it would not be practical to limit our contacts and to request the FRCA to act on our behalf seeing both their insights and proximity to Asian culture,” while Abbotsford questions the necessity and value of entering into ecclesiastical fellowship since “there are already ties with the FRCA” and “more Reformed church federations in Indonesia it could seek ties with.”

3. Considerations

3.1 The CRCA has stressed the importance of ecclesiastical relations with faithful federations in Indonesia, given the current involvement of the church of Smithville in mission work on the island of Timor. The churches being established through this mission work need to align themselves with an existing, faithful Reformed church federation. Indirect interaction with such federations in the same area through the FRCA would not be beneficial for the progress of the mission work undertaken through Smithville.

3.2 Since Synod Smithers 2007, churches with which we have ecclesiastical fellowship are now sufficiently aware of our developing contacts with the churches in Indonesia.

3.3 The FRCA, which already has had a relationship with the RCI for years, has not yet established ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRCI because their contacts with this federation are more recent. Moreover, they would prefer to see the CRCI merge with the RCI.

3.4 The CRCA is not yet ready to recommend ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRCI. It desires first to get a clearer sense of “the character and direction of the CRCI.” So far the CRCA has apparently only been able to communicate with the CRCI through Rev. Yonson Dethan (Observation 2.7). The interaction between the CRCA and the CRCI would be enhanced if the CRCI would approach the CRCA in an official way as a federation of churches and not only through one particular individual. A visit to Indonesia to interact with more church leaders than only Rev. Yonson Dethan could provide clarity in regard to this and related matters.

3.5 The CRCI and the RCI have already had ecclesiastical relations with each other for years. The RCI has made efforts to seek unity with the CRCI. However, it does not look like these efforts will be successful in the immediate future. It would therefore also not be realistic to postpone establishing ecclesiastical fellowship until there is a positive outcome.

3.6 Given the fact that the RCI has made it possible for members of the CRCI to be trained at their Theological College and even to be members of the Board of Governors of that institution (Observation 2.6), it seems that the RCI has already shown its goodwill in regard to cooperation with the CRCI in joint theological training.

3.7 It is not necessary for Synod to mandate the CRCA to assess the causes of a supposed separation between the CRCI and RCI as recommended by the church at Lincoln (Observation 2.5), since the separation was actually between the CRCI and the GGRM (originally one federation). The CRCA noted that the RCI has attempted to mediate between the CRCI and the GGRM (see Observation 2.5).

3.8 The RCI has shown repeatedly willingness to promote unity between itself and the CRCI. That this has not been fruitful yet should not become a reason to withhold ecclesiastical fellowship from them. They already have a long established relationship with the RCN and the FRCA. The fraternal delegates from the FRCA have made it very clear that they see no reason for the CanRC to delay establishing ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCI. Synod Smithers 2007 has also already considered that the CRCA “provides the proof (Report, 7.3) that the RCI are a federation of faithful churches of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts, Article 151, paragraph 4.2).

3.9 The Free Reformed Churches of Australia live in closer proximity to the Indonesian churches and are more familiar with the complexities and the developments that have taken place within these churches. Therefore, it would be prudent to leave any face-to-face discussions with Indonesian churches to the FRCA. The CRCA would be well-advised to work in consultation with the FRCA.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

4.1 To not at this time offer a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship to the CRCI.

4.2 To mandate the CRCA to continue contact with the CRCI with a view to improving official communications and to gain more insight in the character and direction of the CRCI.

4.3 To acknowledge that unity between the CRCI and the RCI should not be a prerequisite for ecclesiastical fellowship with either of these church federations.

4.4 To accept the invitation of the RCI to enter into a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship.

- 4.5 To maintain the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship under the adopted rules.
- 4.6 To mandate the CRCA:
- 4.6.1 To monitor the progress of dialogue between the RCI and the CRCI and where possible to continue to promote unity efforts between the CRCI and the RCI.
- 4.6.2 To work in consultation with the FRCA, receiving their reports and any other information that would be helpful in assessing the ecclesiastical situation of these churches.
- 4.6.3 If necessary, to send Dr. Pol and Rev. Souman to visit the CRCI and to combine this with a visit to a General Synod of the RCI.

ADOPTED

In accordance with Article 32 CO, one member of Synod abstained from voting.

Article 109 – Appeal from Surrey re: Article 166 of the Acts of Synod Smithers 2007

1. Material

Appeal from the church at Surrey re: Article 166 of the Acts of Synod Smithers 2007 (8.5.r).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The church of Surrey-Maranatha appeals the decision of Synod Smithers 2007 “to retain the capitalization of the personal pronouns referring to God (Article 166, 4.1).”
- 2.2 Surrey provides two main grounds for its appeal:
- [1.] Synod Smithers did not provide adequate grounds for its decision.
- [2.] Synod Smithers did not take into account some further points which we raise.
- 2.3 Surrey requests Synod to judge:
- [1.] Synod erred in its judgement.
- [2.] The practice of the NIV and the ESV be followed with the result that uppercase initial letters not be used in the *Book of Praise* for second and third person pronouns referring to God.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Synod Smithers bases its recommendation on four considerations. Closer scrutiny reveals that this recommendation really hinges on one recommendation namely 3.4 “While the points of Observation 2.4. have merit, to capitalize is consistent with how the pronouns have been capitalized in our forms in the past.” To base capitalization on what is done in the Forms in the *Book of Praise* instead of sound principles of biblical interpretation constitutes a very weak ground or consideration.
- 3.2 It needs to be noted that the former recommended translation in our federation, the RSV, and the current recommended translation in our federation, the NIV, do not capitalize pronouns for God. It should also be noted that the oldest, dominant English version, the King James Version, does not capitalize pronouns for God either. (Surrey is mistaken in its reference to the RSV.)
- 3.3 Surrey is correct when its states that “the Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic text of the Bible have no such practice, current rules of English usage avoid this, the NIV does not use this, and there are no known biblical grounds for this convention.”
- 3.4 Surrey also rightly comments “using an uppercase initial letter may obscure the immediate Old Testament referent.” As well, it mentions “in some texts of the Old Testament it is not clear who is in view when pronouns or metaphors are used that have God as their referent.” This shows that capitalization is not just a matter of translation but can so easily become a matter of interpretation, and a wrong interpretation at that.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To sustain the appeal of Surrey-Maranatha.
- 4.2 To instruct the Standing Committee for Publication of the *Book of Praise* to bring all pronouns for God in the entire *Book of Praise* into conformity with the NIV.

ADOPTED

Article 110 – Appeals from Mr. M. Vantil

1. Material

Appeals from Mr. M. Vantil (8.5.o, 8.5.p, 8.5.q).

2. Observations re: Admissibility

- 2.1 Synod Winnipeg 1989 (Article 34, C.2) states that “When members withdraw from the federation of churches they indeed disrupt the way of appeal as accepted in Article 31 CO. However, special circumstances may allow dealing with an appeal to a major assembly.”
- 2.2 The “special circumstances” in view in the Acts of Synod Winnipeg 1989, Article 34, are identified in Article 34, Observations 2. There it is stated that a previous synod had declared an appeal from a withdrawn member admissible “in the hope that it might lead to reconciliation with the consistory.”

3. Considerations re: Admissibility

- 3.1 The right to appeal the decisions of church assemblies is a privilege of membership in the church.
- 3.2 It is clear from the materials that Mr. Vantil withdrew himself from the church at Aldergrove while he was under church discipline.
- 3.3 Mr. Vantil’s decision to withdraw himself from the church at Aldergrove terminated the process meant to lead to reconciliation; hence the “special circumstances” of Synod Winnipeg 1989 do not apply in this case.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to declare Mr. Vantil’s appeals inadmissible.

ADOPTED

In accordance with Article 32 CO, two members of Synod abstained from voting.

**Day 11 — Afternoon Session
Tuesday, May 25, 2010**

Article 111 – Reopening and Adoption of Articles 90-100 of the Acts of Synod

Rev. Aasman opened the meeting and noted that all members of Synod were present. Articles 90-100 of the Acts were then adopted. Following some general discussion for input for one of the committees, the meeting was adjourned for supper.

**Day 11 — Evening Session
Tuesday, May 25, 2010**

Article 112 – Reopening

Rev. Aasman reopened the meeting, noted that all members of Synod were present, and welcomed guests who came for the plenary session.

Article 113 – SCBP: Contract Premier Printing**1. Material**

Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (SCBP) Report to Synod 2010, Section One, 2.1 (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The SCBP informs Synod that it presently operates under contractual relationship with Premier Printing Ltd., Winnipeg MB. This contract expires on 28 February 28, 2012.
- 2.2 The Committee seeks approval from Synod to negotiate the continuation of this contract for an additional five years with an expiry date of February 28, 2017.

3. Consideration

Since the next Synod will D.V. take place in 2013, the SCBP needs approval in order to negotiate this contract before that date.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to grant this approval and that the SCBP report concerning this in their Report to Synod 2013.

ADOPTED**Article 114 – SCBP: Promotion of the *Book of Praise*****1. Material**

- 1.1 SCBP Report, Section One, 3.0 (8.2.j).
- 1.2 Letters from Guelph (8.3.J.4), Cloverdale (8.3.J.40), and Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.3.J.41).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Two churches emphasized the matter of the promotion of the *Book of Praise* among the churches and in the English speaking world.

- 2.2 One of these churches also wishes to see the development of materials to promote musical accompaniment in the worship services.
- 2.3 One church proposes that Synod consider appointing a western sub-committee to focus on this effort. The added benefit of such a committee would be more involvement from the western churches in the work of the SCBP.
- 2.4 In its report the SCBP notes the expressions of interest in our *Book of Praise*. During the past three years, the committee responded to various requests for information regarding the *Book of Praise*, and also dealt with a number of requests to copy, in whole or in part, the Psalms and Hymns as well as other parts of the *Book of Praise*. These requests originated from within as well as from outside of our federation of churches. The committee is delighted that there remains considerable interest at home and abroad in the Anglo-Genevan Psalter. The committee anticipates it will advertise the revised Psalm and Hymn sections more widely once these have been adopted by the churches. The committee published a press release on two occasions to keep the churches informed about the progress of the work of the committee. The committee requests Synod that the mandate to foster an increased awareness of the existence of the *Book of Praise*, among others in the English-speaking world, be continued.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Synod considers that the SCBP has been promoting the *Book of Praise*, but has also been quite involved in working on a revised *Book of Praise*.
- 3.2 Synod also considers that a final edition of the *Book of Praise* will not be available until at least after 2013.
- 3.3 Synod sees no need at this time for appointing a *Book of Praise* promotion subcommittee.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To continue to instruct the SCBP to continue to promote awareness of the *Book of Praise* in the English-speaking world as much as possible.
- 4.2 To promote the authorized provisional *Book of Praise* among the churches as it is being tested for a final edition

- 4.3 To encourage the SCBP to develop and promote materials for the musical accompaniment in the worship services.

ADOPTED

Article 115 – SCBP: Contact with the FRCA

1. Material

- 1.1 SCBP Report, Section One, 4.0 (8.2.j).
- 1.2 Letters from Grand Valley (8.3.J.9) and Coaldale (8.3.J.11).
- 1.3 *Acts of Synod Legana*, Article 42, VI (Final Acts on the FRCA Website).

2. Observations

- 2.1 A couple of churches have drawn our attention to the need to communicate to our sister churches in Australia to give them ample opportunity to comment on a revised *Book of Praise*.
- 2.2 The only official communication of the SCBP with the FRCA has been about the copyright of the current *Book of Praise*.
- 2.3 Synod Legana 2009 of the FRCA has instructed its deputies to “scrutinize the revised sections for the *Book of Praise* especially the completely revised Psalter, and that portion of the 28 additional hymns to be adopted at the CanRC synod 2010” and “to invite comments from the churches on these revisions” (Article 42).

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Our sister churches in Australia exclusively use the *Book of Praise* for their worship.
- 3.2 They are interested in being involved in the development of our *Book of Praise*.
- 3.3 It would be considerate and prudent to include the FRCA in the final revision process.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To instruct the SCBP to continue to maintain good contact with the Australian Deputies for the *Book of Praise*.
- 4.2 To make available to the FRCA deputies the provisional edition of the *Book of Praise*, and to give the Australian churches opportunity to comment on this version to the SCBP via Synod Armadale 2012.

- 4.3 To empower the SCBP to incorporate helpful input of the Australian churches in the proposal for the finalized edition of the *Book of Praise* to be presented to Synod 2013.
- 4.4 To report on the contacts with the FRCA to Synod 2013.

ADOPTED

Article 116 – SCBP: Corporate Status

1. Material

SCPB Report, Section One, 5.0 (8.2.j).

2. Observation

The committee has maintained its status as a corporation; all necessary documents for this purpose have been kept up to date. This also includes filing the Annual Income Tax forms with Revenue Canada. This is a legal requirement even though the committee does not operate under an annual budget, and the Corporation does not generate an income or profit.

3. Consideration

The committee requests Synod that the mandate to maintain its corporate status be continued for the purpose of protecting the interests of the CanRC in matters concerning the *Book of Praise*.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to mandate the SCBP to maintain its corporate status.

ADOPTED

Article 117 – SCBP: Correspondence from Churches

1. Material

Report SCBP, Section One, 6.0 (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The committee has served as the address to which correspondence regarding the *Book of Praise* could be directed.
- 2.2 The committee requests that the mandate to receive, scrutinize and evaluate the contents of correspondence from the churches be continued and to report to the next General Synod as to the validity of the suggestions made.

- 2.3 The committee received permission of Burlington-Ebenezer to transfer archives containing materials relating to the *Book of Praise* of earlier years from their facilities to the committee's central archives at the Theological College in Hamilton.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 For the purpose of receiving correspondence concerning the *Book of Praise*, it would be beneficial for the SCBP to maintain its present mailing address:
 Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise* (SCBP)
 c/o Theological College
 110 West 27th Street Hamilton, Ontario, L9C 5A1
- 3.2 It would also be good for the SCBP to maintain its email address for electronic correspondence: bookofpraise@canrc.org.
- 3.3 For the purpose of reference it would be beneficial to maintain the central archive for correspondence related to the *Book of Praise* at the Theological College library.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to direct the SCBP:

- 4.1 To maintain the reported addresses and location of the archives.
- 4.2 To receive, scrutinize and evaluate the contents of correspondence from the churches
- 4.3 To archive this correspondence.

ADOPTED

Article 118 – SCBP: Involvement of Dr. N. H. Gootjes

1. Material

SCBP Report, Section One, 7.2 (8.2.j).

2. Observation

The SCBP notes that since March 2008, Dr. N.H. Gootjes has been unable to participate in the committee's activities due to illness.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Dr. Gootjes offered his resignation in February of 2009, and the SCBP accepted his resignation with regret, but noting with thankfulness to God that Dr. Gootjes was able to contribute expertly to the committee's work for more than six years.

- 3.2 The SCBP commends Dr. Gootjes and his family into the continuing care of our heavenly Father and recommends that Synod formally thank Dr. Gootjes for his work as a member of the SCBP.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To take note of Dr. Gootjes resignation from the SCBP due to illness.
 4.2 To express deep gratitude to Dr. Gootjes for his faithful work as member of the SCBP for more than six years.
 4.3 To commend Dr. Gootjes and his wife and family to the Lord's mercy and care.

ADOPTED

Article 119 – SCBP: Appointments

1. Material

- 1.1 Letter church of Langley (8.3.J.31).
 1.2 SCBP Report, Section One, 7.0 (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Langley suggests that the SCBP “be mandated to seek out more people with poetic abilities to help in subsequent revisions and editions of the Psalter.”
 2.2 Langley also suggests that Synod not grant the committee's request to renew the terms of the entire committee for more three year terms, but that beginning immediately, the committee begin a process of turnover. Langley states that its suggestion to not grant the SCBP appointment request “is intended to promote new insights and approaches into the thinking of the Committee.” They do agree, however, that to have four of the five members retire in one year would not be wise, and suggest it would be better if only one or two retired, thus providing continuity among the majority of the committee.
 2.3 The SCBP reports that upon the resignation of Dr. Gootjes from the committee due to illness, in line with Acts General Synod 1989, Article 167, Dr. A.J. de Visser was appointed to replace him on the SCBP.
 2.4 The SCBP proposes to Synod to appoint A.J. de Visser to three 3-years terms (to 2019) and to reappoint C. van Halen-Faber and

D.G.J. Agema to one 3-year term (to 2013), and C.J. Nobels and G.Ph. Van Popta to two 3-year terms (to 2016). The SCBP states that its recommendation for appointments allows for staggered member renewal and adds: “Four of the Committee members are due to complete their term in 2010. The work is at a critical stage with respect to implementing the various changes to the *Book of Praise*; therefore continuity is highly desirable.”

- 2.5 The SCBP also requests Synod to reappoint F. Ezinga and K. Dieleman as music and language advisors respectively.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The church of Langley offers no reason for suggesting the appointment of more people with poetic abilities, and K. Dieleman has been reappointed to give advice concerning language.
 3.2 Langley reasons that a turnover in the SCBP would provide a variety of approach, but does admit that continuity is also important.
 3.3 Dr. A.J. de Visser is a recent appointee to the committee.
 3.4 In light of the decision to publish a provisional *Book of Praise* and to mandate the SCBP to receive and recommend any improvements to this publication for a final edition after 2013, it would be prudent to have continuity in the committee until then.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 Not to accede to the two requests of Langley
 4.2 To appoint and reappoint as requested by the SCBP in its report.
 4.3 To reappoint the two advisors as proposed.

ADOPTED

Article 120 – SCBP: Improving the Revised Psalms

1. Material

- 1.1 Letters from Orangeville (8.3.J.5), Grand Valley (8.3.J.9), Winnipeg-Grace (8.3.J.12), Carman East (8.3.J.13), Chilliwack (8.3.J.16), Willoughby Heights (8.3.J.24), Attercliffe (8.3.J.25), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.J.26), Surrey (8.3.J.29), Abbotsford (8.3.J.37), Lincoln (8.3.J.38), and Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.3.J.41).
 1.2 SCBP Report, Section Two, 8.0 (8.2.j).

2. Observation

The twelve letters from the churches listed above generally indicate agreement with proceeding with the publication of the revised Psalms. Many churches however offer specific suggestions that they would like to see incorporated, since they see them as improvements.

3. Consideration

The input and suggestions for improvement, which in many cases are very detailed, are matters that are more appropriately passed to the SCBP for review and consideration.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to pass the detailed material submitted by the churches to the SCBP for their consideration and review.

ADOPTED

Article 121 – SCBP: Proceeding with the Revised Psalms

1. Material

Letters from Grand Valley (8.3.J.9), Coaldale (8.3.J.11), Calgary (8.3.J.17), Burlington-South (8.3.J.18), Edmonton-Immanuel (8.3.J.19), Willoughby Heights (8.3.J.24), Attercliffe (8.3.J.25), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.J.26), Taber (8.3.J.27), Surrey (8.3.J.29), Abbotsford (8.3.J.37), Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.3.J.41), and Aldergrove (8.3.J.42).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The thirteen letters from the churches listed above generally indicate agreement with proceeding with the publication of the revised Psalms.
- 2.2 The recommendations in the letters are in support of the publication of the Psalms in the *Book of Praise* on a provisional basis for use in the church with a final approval at Synod 2013. This will allow some further testing of the Psalms before final approval.
- 2.3 The comments from the churches range from considering the SCBP committee report version fully ready for use, to ready for use with small exceptions to be considered, to needing more review and testing.
- 2.4 No church in this group is opposed to the notion of progressing, but most look forward to having the opportunity of a final review before a final approval.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The committee has reviewed these letters.
- 3.2 The committee in the proposal responding to the SCBP report provides a mechanism to approve a provisional version of the *Book of Praise* for use in the churches, with a possibility for revisions based on the submissions received by Synod. Further, the committee makes provision for the SCBP to make corrections to the approved provisional version of the *Book of Praise* as reported by the churches once this provisional version is published and being used.
- 3.3 The plan developed by this committee addresses the recommendations and provides a method of dealing with the changes expressed in the letters by passing them to the SCBP.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To request the SCBP to encourage the churches to identify errors in the approved provisional edition of the Psalms in a timeframe that allows the SCBP to review the materials received and to incorporate those the committee deems appropriate in a final version of the Psalms for final approval by Synod 2013.
- 4.2 To instruct the SCBP to consider the concerns and input received by Synod and passed on to them and to incorporate them as they deem appropriate in the proposed final version to be presented to Synod 2013.

ADOPTED

Article 122 – SCBP: Revision of Current Hymns

1. Material

- 1.1 Letters from Guelph (8.3.J.4), Grand Valley (8.3.J.10), Chilliwack (8.3.J.15), Owen Sound (8.3.J.20), Willoughby Heights (8.3.J.24), Attercliffe (8.3.J.25), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.J.26), Taber (8.3.J.27), Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.3.J.41, Appendix 2).
- 1.2 SCBP Report, Sections Three, and Six, 13.10 (8.2.j).
- 1.3 Letter from SCBP dated 20 April 2010 re: wording Hymn 46 (new Hymn 57).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Most of the matters raised by the churches in these letters were

in regard to the revisions proposed by the SCBP to hymns in the current hymn collection. As such, many deal with particular words or expressions.

- 2.2 The SCBP observes that the proposed wording of the first line of Hymn 57 (formerly 46) is grammatically incorrect, and proposes the correct wording (“We thank You Father, You have planted ...”).
- 2.3 There will be time for the SCBP to consider the churches’ concerns and suggestions before the final edition of the *Book of Praise* is approved for publication, D.V., by Synod 2013.
- 2.4 Some of the churches objected to the exclusion of two stanzas from current Hymn 27.
- 2.5 The SCBP observes that “the question-answer format of Romans 8:31-36 makes it very difficult to sing it in such a way that the meaning remains intact. This applies especially to stanzas 2 and 3. For example, the first line of stanza 2 may lead us to (mis)understand that it is Christ Jesus who condemns us...”
- 2.6 The churches at Chilliwack, Grand Valley, Guelph, Owen Sound, Willoughby Heights and Winnipeg-Redeemer observe the following: the question-answer format is in the scriptural text, and it is in fact retained in stanza 1; the question mark at the end of the third line does not belong; we lose a lot of content in this song if we ... remove Romans 8:34-36; it is inappropriate to leave out a portion of the passage; ambiguity is given by SCBP as a ground to remove these stanzas, but ambiguity seems to be permissible in other hymns; the removal of these stanzas can lead to confusion.
- 2.7 Some of the churches objected to the exclusion of a stanza from current Hymn 60.
- 2.8 The SCBP observes that “this Hymn is full of awkward and archaic language” and proposes that “in order to strengthen this Hymn” besides altering the language, the 4th stanza be omitted.
- 2.9 The churches at Chilliwack, Grand Valley, Willoughby Heights and Winnipeg-Redeemer observe that stanza 4 is beautiful and the archaic language could easily be adapted; stanza 4 speaks clearly of the truth of God as our Creator and the Sustainer of the creation. Two of the churches present adapted versions of stanza 4 for consideration.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Because many of the suggestions and concerns raised by the

churches are of a technical nature, and because the SCBP will have time to consider these concerns and suggestions as they prepare a hymn section for final adoption, D.V., to Synod 2013, it would be appropriate to pass them on to the SCBP for consideration.

- 3.2 Since the rewording of the first line of Hymn 57 (formerly 46) is grammatically correct, we should adopt it.
- 3.3 When concerns are expressed regarding more substantial changes, it is appropriate for synod to give direction to the SCBP.
- 3.4 The proposed changes to Hymns 27 and 60 are more substantial, and therefore, it would be appropriate for synod to consider what has been proposed, and the churches’ concerns about these changes, in order to provide the SCBP with clarity.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To pass on to the SCBP for their consideration, the technical suggestions and concerns of the churches regarding the proposed revision to the current hymn section of the *Book of Praise*.
- 4.2 To adopt the proposed rewording of Hymn 57 (formerly Hymn 46).
- 4.3 To instruct the SCBP to retain the deleted stanzas (2,3) of current Hymn 27, taking into consideration the suggestions of the churches.
- 4.4 To instruct the SCBP to reconsider the deletion of stanza 4 of current Hymn 60, keeping in mind the suggestions of the churches.

ADOPTED

Article 123 – SCBP: Music Notation and Melodies for Hymns of the *Book of Praise*

1. Material

Letter to General Synod from the SCBP, February 2010 (8.2.j.v).

Part A Technical matters

Part B Two significant improvements

re: alternate melody for Hymn 31 (currently 26)

re: new melody for Hymn 46 (currently 37).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The SCBP proposes several improvements to musical notation of the hymns of the *Book of Praise*, as recommended by the synodically appointed musical advisor and other musical experts.

- 2.2 Acts of Synod Winnipeg, Article 146, states, “It is not in the province of General Synod to decide on technical matters concerning musical notations.”
- 2.3 The SCBP observes that the melody currently used for Hymn 26 is used twice in the hymn section of *Book of Praise* (currently Hymns 26 and 37). They report that their “music experts recommend that we add the beautiful historical (rhythmic) version of this melody.”
- 2.4 The SCBP proposes to include the rhythmic version of the melody as an alternate melody for current Hymn 26 (proposed Hymn 31).
- 2.5 The churches have not had the opportunity to see or test this alternate melody.
- 2.6 The SCBP observes that although the melody currently used for Hymn 37 is “beautiful, it does not suit the words.” The hymn is a song of praise; the current melody was written for the time of Lent.
- 2.7 The SCBP proposes to match another melody to Hymn 37: Thornbury, “a beautiful melody from the Anglican tradition and a much more fitting match for these words.”
- 2.8 The churches have not had the opportunity to see or test this melody (Thornbury).

3. Consideration

When it comes to such technical aspects as musical notation, synod should accept the judgment of the SCBP. However, when it comes to the question of alternate or new melodies, the churches should have opportunity to test them and provide the SCBP with input regarding the suitability of the new or alternate melodies.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To receive for information the improvements to musical notation as proposed by the SCBP.
- 4.2 To approve the inclusion of these proposed melodies (rhythmic version as alternate melody for Hymn 26 [new 31]; and Thornbury as the new melody for Hymn 37 [new 46]) in the provisional edition of the *Book of Praise*, so that the SCBP can receive reactions from the churches before a final decision is made on these melodies.

ADOPTED

Article 124 – Hymn: We Come O Christ to You

1. Material

- 1.1 Letters from Ancaster (8.3.J.46), Attercliffe (8.3.J.25), Carman East (8.3.J.3), Chilliwack (8.3.J.14), Neerlandia (8.3.J.23), London (8.3.J.30), and Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.3.J.41, Appendix 3).
- 1.2 SCBP Report, Section Four, 10.3.II.1 (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Some of the churches objected that this hymn is not Trinitarian, and thus not suitable for that section of the Hymnary.
- 2.2 Some of the churches raised doctrinal questions about some of the expressions in the hymn.
- 2.3 One church objected to the use of an adjective as a noun, in stanza 3, line 2, in which Christ is described as “the one eternal True.”
- 2.4 One church suggested that the tune was difficult.
- 2.5 As this hymn is under copyright, it is not possible to make changes to the text.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Some of the churches objected that this hymn was not Trinitarian. The SCBP has placed this hymn of praise to Christ in the appropriate section of the revised Hymnary
- 3.2 In light of the words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 11:28 and John 6:37, the hymn properly speaks about “coming to Christ.” In light of the words of Colossians 1:16-17, as well as John 14:6, the hymn properly speaks of Christ as Creator, and the one in whom we find our life. The hymn likewise appropriately directs praise to Christ, as do, for example, the “songs” of Rev. 5:9-10, 12.
- 3.3 While this is indeed unusual to refer to Christ as “the one eternal True,” it is understood as a poetic way of expressing what Christ claimed about himself when he said, “I am the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6), and as such, is appropriate. The meaning is clear enough. Furthermore, as noted in Observation 2.5, the hymn is under copyright, and we cannot make changes to the text.
- 3.4 The tune is not itself difficult or complicated, but, unfamiliar. With use, the tune will become more familiar, and more “singable.”

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to approve the inclusion of the Hymn **We Come O Christ**

to **You** in the expanded hymn section of the *Book of Praise* as recommended by the SCBP.

ADOPTED

Article 125 – Hymn: Christ the Lord is Risen Today

1. Material

- 1.1 Letters from Ancaster (8.3.J.36), Attercliffe (8.3.J.25), Kerwood (8.3.J.43), Neerlandia (8.3.J.23), and Willoughby Heights (8.3.J.24).
- 1.2 SCBP Report, Section Four, 10.3.II.2 (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Some of the churches object to the use of incomplete sentences in this hymn.
- 2.2 Some of the churches objected to the statement in stanza 2, line 3 “Once He died, our souls to save,” suggesting that this is contrary to our confession that Christ saves us body and soul.
- 2.3 There were also some objections to the use of the expression from I Corinthians 15:55, as if the hymn confuses what we have already received in the resurrection of Christ and that which remains to be given, i.e. the resurrection of the body.
- 2.4 One church criticized the melody for “excessive syncopation” (Guideline 11).
- 2.5 One church suggested that the hymn does not meet Guideline 7 (that the music of the church should be free from artificiality, sentimentality and individualism).

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The meaning of the incomplete sentences is clear.
- 3.2 In referring to Paul’s words in I Corinthians 15:55, the hymn clearly points to the resurrection of the body.
- 3.3 We sing these words in anticipation of Christ’s return. Further, we note that we sing these words in the resurrection hymn, currently #26, Christ has risen, Hallelujah!, in stanza 1, line 6.
- 3.4 The melody seems entirely appropriate for the expression of the church’s joy in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.
- 3.5 No evidence was offered to support the claim that the hymn does not meet Guideline 7.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to approve the inclusion of the Hymn **Christ the Lord is Risen Today** in the expanded hymn section of the *Book of Praise* as recommended by the SCBP.

ADOPTED

Article 126 – Hymn: God Gave to Us This Day of Days

1. Material

- 1.1 Letters from Chilliwack (8.3.J.14), Willoughby Heights (8.3.J.24), Attercliffe (8.3.J.25), and Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.3.J.41, Appendix 3).
- 1.2 Two of the churches proposed some changes to the wording of this hymn.
- 1.3 SCBP Report, Section Four, 10.3.II.3 (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Some of the churches objected that this hymn does not meet Guideline 11 (“The melodies and harmonies of the church must be suitable for congregational singing, avoiding complicated rhythms, excessive syncopation, and a wide range of pitch”).
- 2.2 One of the churches objected that there were weak and incorrect statements.
- 2.3 One of the churches objected that the subject of Christ’s resurrection is already well-covered in hymns in the current collection.
- 2.4 Some of the churches found the reference to “this day of days” (stanza 1, line 1) unclear. Does it refer to the day of Christ’s resurrection, or to the Sunday?

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The tune is unfamiliar, but as it becomes more familiar it will also become more “singable.”
- 3.2 No evidence was offered to support the charge that there were weak and incorrect statements.
- 3.3 In view of the central place of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ in his work of salvation, it is appropriate to include several songs on that subject.
- 3.4 It seems clear that the reference in the opening line is to the Sunday, which is also a weekly celebration of Christ’s resurrection and our new life in him.

- 3.5 It is not appropriate for synod to enter into discussions involving proposed changes to words.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To approve Hymn # 33 **God Gave to us This Day of Days** for inclusion in the expanded hymn section of the *Book of Praise* as recommended by the SCBP.
- 4.2 That the proposed wording changes be passed on to the SCBP for consideration and possible implementation.

ADOPTED

Article 127 – Hymn: Christ Jesus Lay in Death’s Strong Bands

1. Material

- 1.1 Letters from Ancaster (8.3.J.36), Attercliffe (8.3.J.25), Carman East (8.3.J.3), Chilliwack (8.3.J.14), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.J.26), Fergus North (8.3.J.33), Grand Valley (8.3.J.10), Neerlandia (8.3.J.23), London (8.3.J.30), Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.3.J.41, Appendix 3), and Taber (8.3.J.27).
- 1.2 SCBP Report, Section Four, 10.3.II.4 (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 This hymn is about the death and resurrection of Christ.
- 2.2 One of the churches objected to the reference to Christ standing at God’s right hand, since we generally read and speak about him sitting at God’s right hand.
- 2.3 One of the churches objected to the description of Christ as “the sun that warms and lights us; By His grace does He impart eternal sunshine to the heart.”
- 2.4 Several churches, referring to the opening line of the hymn, objected to the “Lutheran” concept of Christ’s status during the time that his body lay in the grave.
- 2.5 Some churches objected that this hymn failed to meet Guideline 5. They point to such expressions as “When life and death contended, the victory remained with life” (stanza 2, line 1-2) and “His death has swallowed up our death” (stanza 2, line 3).
- 2.6 One of the churches wondered why the hymn was being proposed when there were so many concerns raised in connection with it.

- 2.7 Some churches observed that God does not “invite” us to keep the holy day; rather, he commands us to do so.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 In Acts 7:55, Stephen testifies that he saw Christ standing at the right hand of God. Therefore there is nothing unscriptural in this expression.
- 3.2 In Numbers 24:27, Malachi 1:7, II Peter 1:19, and Revelation 22:16, the Lord Jesus is identified as the Sun, or the Morning Star; in II Peter 1:19 the apostle speaks about the Sun of Righteousness rising in our hearts. Therefore, there is nothing objectionable about speaking about Christ and his work in this way. Furthermore, in current Hymn 26 in the second stanza, we sing to Christ as “Sun of Righteousness and Glory, Dawning with Thy healing light.”
- 3.3 As pointed out by the SCBP in its rationale, what is said in the first line is biblical and clearly conveys what we confess in LD 16, that Christ’s burial testifies that he really died. There is nothing unscriptural about what is expressed in these words.
- 3.4 Stanza 2 is clearly about the victory of Christ over death, and that is also the kind of language that Paul uses in I Corinthians 15, when he speaks about the resurrection of Christ. It is an appropriate way to speak about what Christ did when he died and rose again.
- 3.5 While it is true that many concerns have been raised in connection with this hymn, the real issue is: What is the true weight of the concerns? And: Do the objections expose unscriptural or other wrong expressions in the hymn? The objections which have been raised have been adequately answered in the light of Scripture and our Confessions.
- 3.6 God’s commands are at the same time invitations, and vice versa. To set them over against each other is to create a false dilemma. The word “invite” reflects something of the gracious character and intention of God’s demand. Thus, the use of the word “invite” in speaking about God’s command to keep the holy day is appropriate.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to approve the Hymn **Christ Jesus Lay in Death’s Strong Bands** for inclusion in the expanded hymn section of the *Book of Praise* as recommended by the SCBP.

ADOPTED

Article 128 – Hymn: Since Our Great High Priest, Christ Jesus**1. Material**

- 1.1 Letters from Attercliffe (8.3.J.25), Carman East (8.3.J.3), Neerlandia (8.3.J.23), and Willoughby Heights (8.3.J.24).
- 1.2 SCBP Report, Section Four, 10.3.II.7 (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 This hymn is about the ascension and high priestly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2.2 Some of the churches objected that the subject is already well covered in the existing hymn section.
- 2.3 Some of the churches objected that it is not proper to speak about Christ as our friend (fourth stanza, second line).
- 2.4 One church objected that there are some obscure expressions (Guideline 5).
- 2.5 One church objected that the musical range is too great (Guideline 11).

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The ascension of Christ is so central and significant for his work of salvation that it is good to have several songs on the subject.
- 3.2 This hymn is clearly based on Hebrews 1:3-4, 4:14-16, 12:2.
- 3.3 The Lord Jesus speaks of his disciples as his friends (John 15:15). See also James 2:23. It seems logical that we may also speak of him as our “Friend.”
- 3.4 The “obscure expressions” referred to by one of the churches are expressions that are scripturally sound, as indicated by the ad hoc committee’s considerations on this concern.
- 3.5 The ad hoc committee addressed the issue of the musical range, and indicates that though the 10 note range of the melody may make it difficult for some to sing, it is quite learnable.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to approve the Hymn **Since Our Great High Priest, Christ Jesus** for inclusion in the expanded hymn section of the *Book of Praise* as recommended by the SCBP.

ADOPTED

Article 129 – Hymn: For the Bread Which You Have Broken**1. Material**

- 1.1 Letters from Carman East (8.3.J.3), Neerlandia (8.3.J.23), Fergus North (8.3.J.24), Attercliffe (8.3.J.25), and Ancaster (8.3.J.36).
- 1.2 SCBP Report, Section Four, 10.3.II.9 (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 This hymn is about the Lord’s Supper.
- 2.2 Two of the churches proposed wording changes.
- 2.3 Some of the churches stated that the subject of this hymn is already well covered by selections in the existing hymn section.
- 2.4 One of the churches proposed several changes in the wording of this hymn.
- 2.5 Some of the churches suggested that the song was shallow and simplistic.
- 2.6 One church observes that this hymn speaks of the Lord’s Supper in a Reformed manner, and could be used as a doxology following the celebration of the Lords Supper.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 In view of the frequency with which we celebrate the Lord’s Supper, it is good to have several songs about the meaning of the sacrament in our hymn section.
- 3.2 Neither the SCBP nor the ad hoc committee identified any concern with respect to the words which one church proposes to change.
- 3.3 While the content of the song may be characterized as simple, that is not the same as saying that it is shallow or simplistic. Nor is its simplicity to be considered a fault. The hymn is clearly in the form of a prayer, and is clear and understandable in what it says.
- 3.4 It is not appropriate for the synod to enter into discussions involving proposed changes to words.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To approve the Hymn **For the Bread Which You Have Broken** for inclusion in the expanded hymn section of the *Book of Praise* as recommended by the SCBP.
- 4.2 That the proposed wording changes be passed on to the SCBP for consideration and possible implementation.

ADOPTED

Article 130 – Hymn: Until He Comes**1. Material**

- 1.1 Letters from Ancaster (8.3.J.36), Attercliffe (8.3.J.25), Neerlandia (8.3.J.23), and Willoughby Heights (8.3.J.24).
 1.2 SCBP Report, Section Four, 10.3.II.10 (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 This hymn is about the Lord's Supper.
 2.2 One of the churches recommends that this hymn be included with some wording changes.
 2.3 One of the churches suggests that there is some doctrinal error in this hymn, since it is not covenantal, putting too much emphasis on what we do.
 2.4 One of the churches points out that this hymn generated mixed feedback from the churches and that it is not needed.
 2.5 The SCBP points out that this hymn brings out the focus of the Lord's Supper on the expectation of Christ's return much more clearly than the existing Lord's Supper hymns do.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The focus of this hymn on the expectation of the Lord's return adds an important element to our Lord's Supper songs.
 3.2 The ad hoc committee particularly remarks that this hymn does not "so much speak about what we do but rather what Christ has done for us with his death on the cross."
 3.3 It has not been proven that a wording change is needed to make the meaning of the hymn clear.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to approve the Hymn **Until He Comes** for inclusion in the expanded hymn section of the *Book of Praise* as recommended by the SCBP.

ADOPTED**Article 131 – Hymn: Day of Judgement Day of Wonders****1. Material**

- 1.1 Letters from Ancaster (8.3.J.36), Attercliffe (8.3.J.25), Neerlandia (8.3.J.23), and Fergus North (8.3.J.35).
 1.2 SCBP Report, Section Four, 10.3.II.19 (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 This hymn deals with the return of Christ to judge the living and the dead.
 2.2 Some churches object that the hymn is doctrinally unclear because it says that on the last day, we will say "This God is mine" (stanza 2, line 2), and we ask Christ: "Own me in that day as Thine" (stanza 2, line 3), contrary to what we confess in Lord's Day 1.
 2.3 Some churches object to the fact that this hymn says that sinners' hearts will be confounded (stanza 1, line 3), when in fact on that day, sinners will not be confounded but terrified.
 2.4 One of the churches objects to the statement that "At His call the dead awaken, rise to life from earth and sea," questioning whether it is proper to say that all the dead rise to life.
 2.5 One church objects to the words: "All the evildoers shaken by His looks prepare to flee," since they will not be able to flee.
 2.6 One church objects to the expression: "See the Judge our nature wearing," since it may suggest that Christ did not truly take on our human nature, and share in our flesh and blood.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 While it is true that as we confess in LD 1 Christ does already own us, as the ad hoc committee notes in its remarks, it is not wrong or incorrect to pray for what we already have. Certainly it is biblical for a believer to confess that God is "my God." Cf. Thomas' confession in John 20:28, and Paul's words in Philippians 4:19.
 3.2 Luke 21:25 speaks about nations being in perplexity at the return of Christ. Therefore it is not incorrect to say that sinners' hearts will be confounded on that day.
 3.3 In Article 37 BC we confess that the wicked will "become immortal." In that respect it is not incorrect to say that all the dead rise to life.
 3.4 Revelation 6:15 speaks about the human race hiding "in caves and among the rocks of the mountains" on the great day of the wrath of the Lamb. Therefore it is not incorrect to say that evildoers will prepare to flee on that day. We also note that the hymn does not say that they will flee; only that they prepare to flee.
 3.5 I Corinthians 15:54 and II Corinthians 5:2-4 speak about us "being clothed" with an imperishable and immortal nature, and with our heavenly dwelling. Clearly the meaning is not merely that

we will in some temporary or superficial way “wear immortality or imperishability,” but that our nature will in fact be changed. Therefore, it is acceptable to speak about Christ having taken on our nature as “wearing our nature.”

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to approve the inclusion of the Hymn **Day of Judgement Day of Wonders** in the expanded hymn section of the *Book of Praise*, as recommended by the SCBP.

ADOPTED

Article 132 – Hymn: Now Blessed be the Lord our God

1. Material

- 1.1 Letters from Attercliffe (8.3.J.25), Carman East (8.3.J.3), and Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.J.26).
- 1.2 SCBP Report, Section Four, 10.3.II.25 (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 This hymn is a doxology.
- 2.2 The churches who submitted comments on this hymn object to its inclusion because it is a partial paraphrase of Psalm 72, so that the full message of the psalm is obscured, and, its content is redundant, since it is already included in the Psalms.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 It is not in principle incorrect or unfaithful to Scripture to paraphrase the words of Scripture, or to sing parts of the Psalms. We often sing selected stanzas of the Psalms in the worship service.
- 3.2 The text of this hymn is particularly appropriate as a doxology.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to approve the Hymn **Now Blessed be the Lord our God** for inclusion in the expanded hymn section of the *Book of Praise*, as recommended by the SCBP.

ADOPTED

Article 133 – Hymn: Glory be to the Father

1. Material

- 1.1 Letters from Ancaster (8.3.J.36), Attercliffe (8.3.J.25), Carman East (8.3.J.3), and Chilliwack (8.3.J.14).
- 1.2 SCBP Report, Section Four, 10.3.II.28 (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 This hymn is a doxology.
- 2.2 Some churches object that the content of this hymn is already well-covered in the current collection of Psalms and Hymns.
- 2.3 Some churches object to the fact that the words of this hymn are “taken from the Roman Catholic mass.”

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Since this hymn is a doxology, simplicity is a virtue. At the same time, the hymn reflects the orthodox and universal confession about the Triune God, so that the hymn is also profound and doctrinally faithful.
- 3.2 The text was composed in the 2nd century. It is therefore anachronistic to speak of it as being taken from the Roman Catholic mass. In fact, the inclusion of this hymn, particularly in view of its ancient origin underlines the catholicity of Christ’s church throughout all ages.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to approve the Hymn **Glory be to the Father** for inclusion in the expanded hymn section of the *Book of Praise*, as recommended by the SCBP.

ADOPTED

Article 134 – Hymn: We Praise You, Lord

1. Material

- 1.1 Letters from Langley (8.3.J.31) and Owen Sound (8.3.J.20).
- 1.2 SCBP Report, Section Four, 10.3.II.11 (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 This hymn is about baptism.
- 2.2 The SCBP decided not to include this hymn for the following

reasons: it is not immediately clear that this song speaks about baptism; the doctrine of the covenant does not come out explicitly; awkward expressions may convey incorrect theology; e.g., when it speaks about the child being “grafted into the vine” it “may suggest that the child is a foreign element which is now ‘grafted’ on the original vine.”

- 2.3 The SCBP notes that there are many more appropriate Psalms and Hymns that can be used at baptism.
- 2.4 There are no “baptism hymns” in the current hymn section of the *Book of Praise*.
- 2.5 Langley observes that this hymn is very fitting for baptism, and states that “grafted into the vine” does not convey incorrect theology, pointing to the language of Scripture in John 15, Isaiah 5:7, Romans 11:17-24, and to the language used in Lord’s Day 7. Langley sees little difference between the words “ingrafting” and “incorporating.”
- 2.6 Owen Sound believes that this hymn speaks biblically and covenantally about baptism.
- 2.7 Langley and Owen Sound both observe that though there are Psalms that may be used in connection with baptism, the same may be said with respect to the Lord’s Supper. Yet we do have hymns intended for use with the Lord’s Supper, while there are currently no hymns intended specifically for use with baptism. It seems inconsistent to have hymns for use with the Lord’s Supper hymns, but not hymns for use with baptism.
- 3. Considerations**
- 3.1 While it is true that there are Psalms and Hymns that may be used in connection with baptism, it is also true, as Langley and Owen Sound observe, that the same may be said with respect to the Lord’s Supper. Yet in the current hymn section, we do have hymns intended for use with the Lord’s Supper, but no hymns intended specifically for use with baptism. It does indeed seem inconsistent to have hymns for use with the Lord’s Supper, but not hymns for use with baptism.
- 3.2 The Lord Jesus speaks of branches that are “in him” in John 15:2, and it is clear that these branches may subsequently, because of disobedience, be “cut off” by the Father. Understood in light of these words of the Lord Jesus, it is not incorrect to thank the Father that our covenant children are “grafted to the vine.”
- 3.3 While the hymn does not speak explicitly about baptism, when sung

in the worship service in connection with baptism, its relevance will be clear enough.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to approve the Hymn **We Praise You, Lord** for inclusion in the expanded hymn section of the *Book of Praise*, contrary to the recommendation of the SCBP.

ADOPTED

Article 135 – Hymn: Our Children Lord in Faith and Prayer

1. Material

- 1.1 Letter from Langley (8.3.J.31).
- 1.2 SCBP Report, Section Four, 10.3.II.12 (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 This hymn is about baptism.
- 2.2 There are currently no hymns on baptism in the *Book of Praise*.
- 2.3 The SCBP proposes that this hymn *not* be included in the expanded hymn section of the *Book of Praise*.
- 2.4 The SCBP decided not to include this hymn for the following reasons: this hymn speaks about parents presenting their children before the Lord at the time of baptism, which may be open to misinterpretation. It notes the remark of the ad hoc committee that “The word ‘present’ is not scriptural.” Infants are baptized because they belong to the covenant. Further, “there are already Psalms and Hymns that present a biblical and clearly covenantal message.”
- 2.5 Langley observes that it is appropriate to speak of parents presenting their children to the Lord at baptism, since that is what parents are obliged to do, and what they are literally doing at baptism.
- 2.6 In Luke 2:22, Scripture speaks about Joseph and Mary taking the Lord Jesus to Jerusalem to “present him to the Lord.”

3. Considerations

- 3.1 In view of the expression in Luke 2:22, we judge that it is not incorrect to speak about parents presenting their children to the Lord.
- 3.2 We do have hymns intended for use with the Lord’s Supper, while there are currently no hymns intended specifically for use with baptism. It seems inconsistent to have hymns for use with the Lord’s Supper, but not hymns for use with baptism.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to approve the Hymn **Our Children, Lord, in Faith and Prayer** for inclusion in the expanded hymn section of the *Book of Praise*, contrary to the recommendation of the SCBP.

ADOPTED

Article 136 – Hymn: O God, Great Father, Lord and King

1. Material

- 1.1 Letter from Langley (8.3.J.31).
- 1.2 SCBP Report, Section Four, 10.3.II.13 (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 This hymn is a baptism hymn.
- 2.2 There are currently no baptism hymns in the *Book of Praise*.
- 2.3 The SCBP proposes that this hymn not be included in the *Book of Praise*.
- 2.4 Langley observes that it would be good to include more baptism hymns in the *Book of Praise*.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 While it may well be true that it would be good to include more baptism hymns in the *Book of Praise*, that does not provide grounds for including this particular baptism hymn in the *Book of Praise*.
- 3.2 Langley has not interacted with the grounds given by the SCBP for the exclusion of this hymn.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to approve the recommendation of the SCBP that Augment Hymn # 13 **O God Great Father Lord and King** not be included in the *Book of Praise*.

ADOPTED

Article 137 – Hymns: O Gracious Lord and Lord, Today Bless this New Marriage

1. Material

- 1.1 Letter from Chilliwack (8.3.J.14).
- 1.2 SCBP Report, Section Four, 10.3.II.15 (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 These hymns are intended to be used when couples get married.
- 2.2 Chilliwack observes that we have no hymns about marriage in the *Book of Praise*.
- 2.3 Regarding Augment #14, the SCBP notes that this hymn is not about marriage as a subject, but is in fact a prayer for a blessing on the couple being married, and therefore would not be appropriate for use in the public worship services.
- 2.4 Regarding Augment #15, the SCBP observes that most churches consider that hymns intended for use in wedding ceremonies should not be included in the *Book of Praise*.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 These hymns are intended specifically for use in the context of a wedding ceremony. The *Book of Praise* was created as the songbook for the worship services of the churches. Since marriages are virtually never solemnized in the worship services, they need not be included in the *Book of Praise*.
- 3.2 There is freedom for those who are getting married to choose songs for the wedding ceremony from a variety of sources.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to approve the recommendation of the SCBP that Augment Hymn # 14 **O Gracious Lord** and Augment Hymn # 15 **Lord, Today Bless This New Marriage** not be included in the *Book of Praise*.

ADOPTED

Article 138 – Hymn: Jesus with Your Church Abide

1. Material

- 1.1 Letter from Langley (8.3.J.31).
- 1.2 SCBP Report, Section Four, 10.3.II.16 (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 This hymn is a prayer to the Lord Jesus on behalf of his church on earth as she carries out the task he entrusted to her.
- 2.2 The SCBP observes that it is not correct to suggest, as the hymn seems to do in the 4th stanza, that the church can be held responsible for “fields unwon,” i.e. for the fact that conversions did not occur.

- 2.3 Langley observes that while the church cannot be held responsible for fields unwon, she is responsible when she has neglected her missionary task, and does need to seek forgiveness.

3. Consideration

The specific request that the Lord Jesus pardon the church “for fields unwon,” especially when it follows the request that he forgive the church “for work undone,” is open to misunderstanding, as if the church may indeed be considered responsible when those who hear her preaching are not in fact converted.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to approve the recommendation of the SCBP that Augment # 16 **Jesus With Your Church Abide** not be included in the *Book of Praise*.

ADOPTED

Article 139 – Hymn: The Strife is O’er, the Battle Done

1. Material

- 1.1 Letter from Langley (8.3.J.31).
1.2 SCBP Report, Section Four, 10.3.II.22 (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 This hymn is a celebration of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2.2 The SCBP notes that this hymn adds little new material on the topic of Christ’s resurrection to the hymn section. Further, the committee notes that the expression in the third stanza, “The three sad days are quickly sped” is not found anywhere in Scripture.
2.3 Langley observes that this hymn has been well-received and joyfully sung in the congregation there. They further observe that the expression, “The three sad days are quickly sped” do appropriately convey the joy and hope that we have because of Christ’s resurrection.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The arguments presented by the SCBC against the inclusion of this hymn are not strong. Stating that a hymn adds little new material is

not an argument against including that hymn. Pointing out that some words used in a hymn are not “found anywhere in Scripture” does not make those words unscriptural. The words in question reflect, in a poetic way, the swift and decisive character of Christ’s victory over death.

- 3.2 The melody of this hymn is completely in keeping with the joyful subject of Christ’s resurrection. It would be an excellent addition to the hymn section of the *Book of Praise*.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to approve Augment # 22 **The Strife is O’er, the Battle Done** for inclusion in the expanded hymn section of the *Book of Praise*, contrary to the recommendation of the SCBP.

ADOPTED

Article 140 – Hymn: Alleluia! Alleluia!

1. Material

- 1.1 Letters from Langley (8.3.J.31), Grand Valley (8.3.J.10), Chilliwack (8.3.J.14), and Tintern (8.3.J.28).
1.2 SCBP Report, Section Four, 10.3.II.24 (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 This hymn celebrates the promise of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2.2 The SCBP notes in its remarks that some churches commented on the challenge of singing the triads correctly. They further note that the “overall feedback ... suggests that this is not a strong hymn for use in a worship service.”
2.3 In its considerations, the ad hoc committee did not report any strong objections to the text of this hymn.
2.4 The church at Grand Valley observes that the congregation enjoyed singing this hymn, and they believe that it would enjoy frequent use in worship.
2.5 Chilliwack observes that this is a solid hymn, with a melody that is both beautiful and easy to learn.
2.6 Langley observes that singing the triads is a challenge, but they are easily learned.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The arguments presented by the SCBP against the inclusion of this hymn are not strong. The main remark seems to focus on the triads, but the churches requesting the inclusion of this hymn report that their congregations found the melody singable and beautiful. Thus the main ground adduced by the SCBP seems weak.
- 3.2 The hymn includes a reference and working out of the expression of I Corinthians 15:21-22, about Christ as “the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.”
- 3.3 The melody of this hymn is joyful and triumphant, and well-suited to the subject of the second coming of Christ.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to approve Augment # 24 **Alleluia! Alleluia!** for inclusion in the expanded hymn section of the *Book of Praise*, contrary to the recommendation of the SCBP.

ADOPTED**Article 141 – SCBP: Copyright****1. Material**

SCBP Report to Synod 2010, Section Four, 10.3.III (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The SCBP explains that in adherence to copyright law, royalties will need to be paid for the use of four of the hymns proposed, i.e., Augment numbers 1, 7, 8 and 17.
- 2.2 These royalties amount to approximately \$0.125 per printed copy. This will apply also to future reprints of the *Book of Praise*. At each printing, the committee will ensure that these costs are paid out of the *General Fund* of the churches.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 These royalties need to be paid for each printing the copyrighted hymns used in the *Book of Praise*.
- 3.2 The funds should be paid out of the General Fund as this is a matter for the churches in common.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to authorize the SCBP to pay the amounts for copyright as required for the printing of the provisional *Book of Praise*.

ADOPTED**Article 142 – Direction re: Hymns****1. Material**

- 1.1 SCBP Report, Section Four, 10.3.IV (8.2.j).
- 1.2 Letters from Elora (8.3.J.1), Carman East (8.3.J.2), Hamilton-Cornerstone (8.3.J.46), Cloverdale (8.3.J.40), Spring Creek (8.3.J.28), Glanbrook (8.3.J.32), Surrey-Maranatha (8.3.J.29), London (8.3.J.30), Langley (8.3.J.31), Flamborough (8.3.J.22), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.J.26), Attercliffe (8.3.J.25), Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.J.21), Guelph (8.3.J.4), Burlington-Fellowship (8.3.J.18), Grand Valley (8.3.J.10), Orangeville (8.3.J.6), and Grassie (8.3.J.7).

2. Observations

- 2.1 At this point the SCBP is seeking direction from the Synod with respect to the question whether, with the addition of some new hymns, the search for additional hymns is completed, or whether the churches are looking for more hymns to be added in the future. The SCBP has noted that 28 hymns had been made available to the churches by way of the Augment, but only 14 are being proposed at this point. There may still be a desire to “augment” the hymn section further.
- 2.2 Some churches prefer that the committee cease its work of obtaining more hymns. Some emphasize the need to ensure that the Psalms predominate in worship. Most of these churches reason along the practical line of Orangeville, namely that “to leave the mandate open ended would potentially lead to constant changes in new printings of the *Book of Praise*.”
- 2.3 Some churches advocate the inclusion of more hymns and some include the rationale of Synod Chatham 2004 to cap the total number of hymns at 100. One church requests that the SCBP review and choose from hymns that are being sung in the churches of NAPARC, since selecting hymns from churches that we recognize as faithful and have a relationship with will foster closer ties, while making

the selection process easier. This church also requests the SCBP to provide the rationale used for choosing hymns, along with the complete list of hymns considered when the 28 Augment hymns were chosen so that churches know which songs were reviewed and why they were excluded previously.

- 2.4 The SCBP seeks direction from synod as to whether or not it should continue searching for more hymns to be added in the future.
- 2.5 The SCBP recommends that, if mandated to continue their search, churches will consider carefully new hymns which may enhance corporate as well as family and personal worship, and that such hymns be presented by individual members to local consistories, and then forwarded, complete with the rationale, to the SCBP.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 None of the letters from churches give principal reasons for not obtaining any more hymns than proposed.
- 3.2 The decision of Synod Chatham 2004 (Article 115, 6.1.1) not to exceed 100 hymns remains in place at this time. It illustrates that the Psalms will continue to receive primary emphasis in the worship services, and as such will continue to guide the committee in its work.
- 3.3 The adopting of a definitive *Book of Praise* at this time does not exclude that more hymns may be submitted and examined by the SCBP and tested by the churches in a supplement and added in a future edition of the *Book of Praise*.
- 3.4 It would be useful to review the hymnaries of churches with which we have contact and also to make available to churches the songs which have previously been reviewed and the rationale for rejecting them.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To instruct the SCBP to seek, receive, evaluate and recommend additional hymns to be compiled and proposed at a future date for testing by the churches, and for possible recommendation to a future Synod.
- 4.2 To instruct the SCBP upon request to make available to churches the songs which have previously been reviewed.

ADOPTED

Article 143 – Publication of the *Book of Praise*

1. Material

- 1.1 Letters from Guelph (8.3.J.4), Grand Valley (8.3.J.9), Coaldale (8.3.J.11), Winnipeg-Grace (8.3.J.12), Hamilton-Providence, (8.3.J.8), Chilliwack (8.3.J.16), Burlington-Fellowship (8.3.J.18), Edmonton-Immanuel (8.3.J.19), Neerlandia (8.3.J.23), Willoughby Heights (8.3.J.24), Taber (8.3.J.27), London (8.3.J.30), Langley (8.3.J.31), Glanbrook (8.3.J.32), Abbotsford (8.3.J.37), Cloverdale (8.3.J.39), Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.3.J.41), and Lynden (8.3.J.44).
- 1.2 SCBP Report, Section 6, 12.2 (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Though quite a number of churches expressed the desire to see a finalized publication of the *Book of Praise* after Synod 2010, at least ten churches urge synod to give the churches more time to test the revised Psalter and hymns as well as the additional hymns being proposed from the Augment. A number of these churches suggested that a provisional edition of the *Book of Praise* be printed for the purpose of testing in the churches, and for final revision and for adoption by Synod 2013.
- 2.2 One church addressed Synod concerning the possibility that the present version of the NIV may no longer be published after 2011. This could mean that the churches may again need to revise the wording of the Scripture references mentioned in the *Book of Praise* before a final version is printed.
- 2.3 One church also proposed further testing of a revised *Book of Praise* in order to give the FRCA ample opportunity to comment on it.
- 2.4 A church has also pointed out that the need for more deliberate and lengthy testing of the proposed revisions should outweigh the Standing Committee's concern about "financial implications," for if the churches rush to a final decision in 2010, the financial implications could be just as considerable if, over the next years, churches find weaknesses and shortcomings in the work which then have to be corrected in constantly updated and corrected versions.
- 2.5 The church at Cloverdale requested General Synod to provide clarity with respect to the use or testing of the revised psalm versifications by the churches.
- 2.6 The SCBP (Report Section 6, 12.2) requests General Synod to authorize the committee to publish a new edition of the *Book of*

Praise containing the revised Anglo-Genevan Psalter and the hymns adopted by General Synod as outlined above.

2.7 Some churches noted that General Synod Smithers 2007 (Article 148) did not make a clear decision to provisionally approve the revised and updated Psalms for a period of testing and that this caused uncertainty among the churches, and that many churches request clarity about this matter.

2.8 The SCBP also requests Synod adopt the committee's proposal regarding the renumbering of the Hymns for publication in the next *Book of Praise*.

3. Considerations

3.1 Many churches have considered it unwise to introduce revised Psalms to the congregational worship which they felt had not formally been approved for use in this context.

3.2 It is impossible for Synod Burlington-Ebenezer to give satisfactory consideration and do justice to all the details contained in the submissions regarding any part of the *Book of Praise* within the short time General Synod is convened.

3.3 Synod takes note of the wish of the majority of the churches who have expressed the desire for a longer period of time to consider additional changes proposed by the SCBP. It would not be wise to proceed to a final edition at this time as proposed by the SCBP.

3.4 Synod considers that publishing a provisional edition at this time, though more costly in the short run, will be more prudent in the long run, as the final edition will have been well-tested and corrected by the time of printing after 2013.

3.5 A provisional edition would allow a further time of testing and refining and getting used to the revised Psalms and Hymns as well as the additional hymns.

3.6 It needs to be made clear to the churches that this provisional edition of the *Book of Praise* is for use in the worship services in the churches.

3.7 It would be beneficial for churches and members who will be testing the provisional *Book of Praise* to be able to access the revised *Book of Praise* electronically on the web.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

4.1 To pass on to the SCBP the letters of the churches with proposed

changes to the Psalter and to the hymn section they have proposed, and to empower the SCBP to incorporate any changes they deem to be improvements to their proposed *Book of Praise*.

4.2 To instruct the SCBP:

4.2.1 To publish a provisional edition of the complete *Book of Praise*, including the changes adopted by this synod, with a renumbered hymn section, for use in the churches according to Article 55 CO. This provisional edition has been sufficiently prepared for the purpose of evaluation and will be amended by the SCBP and presented to Synod 2013 for final approval and printing.

4.2.2 To communicate to the churches that they determine for themselves how to purchase and distribute the copies of this provisional *Book of Praise*, noting that if churches purchase copies of this edition for all the members of their congregations, a discount on the cost is available from the publisher.

4.2.3 To make the provisional *Book of Praise* available also electronically.

4.2.4 To communicate with the CanRC, as well as the deputies of the FRCA, and seek and consider further suggestions for improvements to the *Book of Praise*.

4.2.5 To present a final version of the *Book of Praise* to Synod 2013 for approval and prepared for publication. The actual direction to publish will come from synod.

ADOPTED

Article 144 – SCBP: Process of Choosing Hymns

1. Material

Letter from Guelph (8.3.J.4).

2. Observations

2.1 The church of Guelph asserts that “throughout the report it is apparent that a judgment-call process was utilized by the committee as to what qualified as ‘classic hymns’ versus ‘changeable hymns’ (hymns that were not classic enough to merit preservation).” They consider that “it is unfortunate that the utilization of a judgment-call” process resulted in inconsistent criteria to change non-copyrighted hymns.” They want Synod to take note of the inconsistent criteria used.

- 2.2 Guelph opines that the SCBP did not interact sufficiently with the recommendations of the *Ad Hoc* committee with this option in their report and wishes to bring to Synod 2010's attention that the recommendations of an appointed sub-committee were not adhered to or sufficiently interacted with in the SCBP final report.
- 2.3 Guelph also recommends that Synod 2010 address the difference of opinion that exists in our churches regarding the use of hymns so as to avoid division in our churches on such a matter.
- 3. Considerations**
- 3.1 No convincing evidence is provided by Guelph to support their assertion that the SCBP used inconsistent criteria when it came to the choosing of non-copyrighted hymns. Guelph admits this is more a matter of perception when the letter speaks of "an appearance of imbalance in their (SCBP's) considerations."
- 3.2 The SCBP has been working with the materials for a long time and was not bound to the recommendations of its own subcommittee. If the church of Guelph disagrees with proposed changes, they had and have opportunity to address those proposed changes before the final edition of the *Book of Praise*.
- 3.3 There may be differences of opinion as to the use of hymns in the churches, but churches (and members) have all agreed to abide by Article 55 of the Church Order and are bound by that regulation with the proviso of Article 31. The actual selection of hymns to be sung in worship is left up to the local churches.
- 4. Recommendation**
- That Synod decide:
- 4.1 Guelph has not proven that the SCBP has used inconsistent criteria in its changing of non-copyrighted hymns.
- 4.2 The Report shows that the SCBP certainly did interact with its subcommittee even if it did not agree with it in most cases.
- 4.3 It is not in the province of a synod to address differences of opinion about matters which have been agreed to in the CO, and which the churches agree to uphold with the proviso of Article 31 CO.
- 4.4 The selection of songs from the *Book of Praise* to be used in worship is a local consistory matter

ADOPTED**Article 145 – SCBP: Harmonization****1. Material**

Letter of Burlington-Fellowship (8.3.J.18).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Burlington-Fellowship states that they are disappointed with the SCBP decision to drop the four-part harmonization in the 14 hymns selected. They urge Synod to reverse this decision.
- 2.2 Burlington-Fellowship requests that the four-part harmonization also be considered for the remaining hymns as well as the Psalms.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The matter of working at harmonization of the *Book of Praise* was part of the mandate given to the SCBP by Synod 2007, but then as part of its promotion instructions (Acts Synod 2007 Article 148, 4.4.3).
- 3.2 This matter is not mentioned in the SCBP report to this Synod.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to instruct the SCBP to take up the matter of the harmonization of the hymns and also the Psalter and make a specific proposal to Synod 2013 as to how this can be addressed.

ADOPTED**Article 146 – SCBP: Common Songbook****1. Material**

Letters from the churches of Carman West (8.3.C.6), Grand Valley (8.3.J.9), and Neerlandia (8.3.J.23).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The church of Neerlandia church indicated that any proposed changes to our existing *Book of Praise* should also meet with the scrutiny and approval of the URCNA song book committee before publication.
- 2.2 The church at Grand Valley noted that we should not rush into the adoption of the proposed Psalms, since the purpose of preparing and presenting an updated psalm section was, according to Synod Smithers 2007, Article 148, paragraph 4.1.2, that it be included in the common songbook.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 It would be beneficial if our provisional *Book of Praise* were submitted to the URCNA songbook committee for their review, as we would hope that it would be considered in the development of a common song book.
- 3.2 The inclusion in a common song book was not the sole reason for the revision of the Psalms. As well, the work on a common songbook basically came to a standstill after Synod Schererville 2007 of the URCNA. The SCBP did not see this as a valid reason to abandon its mandate to continue revising the Psalms as instructed by Synod Smithers 2007.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to instruct the SCBP to attempt to involve the common songbook committees in its review of the provisional *Book of Praise*.

ADOPTED**Article 147 – SCBP: Overleaf Notation****1. Material**

Letter from Elora (8.3.J.1)

2. Observation

The church of Elora states that although it is beneficial to have the music for the first stanza on the overleaf, it does cause confusion because it is not immediately evident that the stanza with the music is not necessarily the first stanza of the Psalm (e.g. stanza 7 of Ps 18). This could be clarified by adding the word “continued” at the top of the page.

3. Consideration

The SCBP addresses this on page 11 of their report: visual cues are provided to indicate overleaf notation stanzas.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide that Elora’s concern has been addressed.

ADOPTED**Article 148 – SCBP: Bias of Report Language****1. Material**

Letter from Guelph (8.3.J.4).

2. Observation

The church of Guelph wants Synod 2010 to promote balance in the language of committee reports to avoid undue bias being inferred.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 One church has complained about this matter, and this does not seem to be an issue among the other churches.
- 3.2 Synod does not see how a committee can work towards a decided report without words such as “archaic.”

4. Recommendation:

That Synod decide this matter does not need further attention.

ADOPTED**Article 149 – Closing**

Rev. J. Visscher read 2 Cor 4:7-18, gave a meditation, and led in prayer. All then sang Hymn 56:1,2,3, after which the meeting was adjourned.

**Day 12 — Morning Session
Wednesday, May 26, 2010**

Article 150 – Opening

Rev. Aasman opened the meeting and welcomed all the guests, also noting the arrival of students from John Calvin Christian School in Burlington. He read from Zechariah 4 and led in prayer. All then sang Psalm 66:1,6. Roll call was then held and all members of Synod were present.

Article 151 – CCU Church Order Subcommittee re: Proposed Joint Church Order (PJCO)

1. Material

- 1.1 Report from CCU Church Order Subcommittee to General Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 (8.2.b).
- 1.2 Following is a list of the churches who have submitted letters with input of clarification or revision of the PJCO.
Letters from Hamilton-Providence, Toronto, Carman East, Guelph,

Elora, Chatham, Orangeville, Grassie, Grand Valley, Coaldale (2 letters), Winnipeg-Grace, Calgary, Chilliwack, Edmonton-Immanuel (2 letters), Owen Sound, Fergus-Maranatha, Flamborough, Neerlandia, Willoughby Heights (2 letters), Attercliffe, Surrey, Carman West, London, Langley, Glanbrook, Fergus North (4 letters), Ancaster, Yarrow, Abbotsford, Lincoln, Winnipeg-Redeemer, Cloverdale (4 letters), Dunnville, Aldergrove, Lynden, and Barrhead. (Agenda items 8.3.B.1-46).

2. Observations

- 2.1 In its main report the committee notes that it worked closely with the Committee re: Church Order appointed by the Synod Escondido 2001 (and continued by Synod Calgary 2004 and Synod Schererville 2007) of the URCNA. Since Synod Smithers, the combined committees met twice in Burlington, ON, once in Chino, CA and once in Dutton, Michigan.
- 2.2 On October 25, 2007 the committee sent a letter to the Canadian Reformed Churches to encourage feedback that has been processed through the consistories, and to remind them of the March 1, 2009 deadline for input. The Joint Committee received fifty-two submissions regarding PJCO 2007 as submitted to General Synod Smithers and General Synod Schererville. Thirty-five of these submissions came from Canadian Reformed Churches. By far the majority of these came directly from the consistories. A few were submissions authored by individuals but “passed along” by their consistories as worthy for consideration by the committee. Seven of the thirty-five submissions were received after the March 1, 2009 deadline set by Synod Smithers 2007.
- 2.3 In order to evaluate the input received, the Joint Committee decided that the United Reformed brothers would make recommendations to the Joint Committee regarding input from the United Reformed Churches in North America and the Canadian Reformed brothers would make recommendations to the Joint Committee regarding input from the Canadian Reformed Churches.
- 2.4 After reviewing all the input from the churches, received both via correspondence and via the regional conferences, the Joint Committee was able to revise PJCO 2007 and draft a new document which was labelled PJCO 2010.
- 2.5 Regarding PJCO Article 36 (Psalms and Hymns), General Synod

Smithers expressed a strong preference for the majority position, while General Synod Schererville expressed a strong preference for the minority position.

- 2.6 The Joint Committee arranged for four sets of regional conferences, seeking to give as many churches of the federations as possible the opportunity to attend a conference. The first conference was held in Ancaster, Ontario, Canada on April 18, 2008. The second set of conferences was held in Western Canada: on October 25, 2008 in Abbotsford, British Columbia; on October 27, 2008 in Edmonton, Alberta; on October 28, 2008 in Lethbridge, Alberta; and October 29, 2008 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The third set of conferences was held in Iowa-Michigan, USA: on March 11, 2009 in Rock Valley, Iowa; on March 12, 2009 in Lynwood, Illinois; on March 13, 2009 in Wyoming, Michigan. The fourth set of conferences was held in California, USA: March 23, 2009 in Visalia; and March 24, 2009 in Chino.
- 2.7 To facilitate the dissemination of the PJCO and the four column comparison document to the churches, the committee set up a web site to which it also posted the Press Releases and some other matters. The address of this website is <http://sites.google.com/site/churchorderpjco/>. On this website there is also a link to a bookstore which from time to time carries the very important *Church Order Commentary* (1941) written by Idzerd VanDellen and Martin Monsma. The Joint Committee found this English commentary very helpful, particularly because of how it provides historical context and background. The committee encouraged the churches to consult this commentary when trying to understand and evaluate the PJCO.
- 2.8 A number of the letters deal with minor corrections relating to sentence structure, grammar, word changes, additions and deletions. A number of these corrections sent in to the committee were not adopted and now these churches are sending them onto General Synod. Other letters deal with more substantive issues, some of which did go to the committee, but the churches are not satisfied.
- 2.9 The committee recommends, in concert with the Church Order Committee of the URCNA, that “Synod adopt the PJCO 2010 as the Church Order for a united federation of the URCNA and the CanRC,” and that “Synod reappoint the current committee for the sake of continuity...”

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The report of the committee indicates that the work could be carried out in a spirit of brotherly harmony and growing understanding between the brothers of the United Reformed Churches and of the Canadian Reformed Churches.
- 3.2 Seeing it is not the task of Synod to do committee work, the letters from the churches that deal with minor matters and linguistic questions should be referred back to the Church Order Committee (COC) for final consideration and evaluation.
- 3.3 A considerable number of letters, however, deal with the same major items and thus require input and direction from General Synod. Among these are the following:

Article 4 – Preparation for the Ministry.

- A. Theological Education – Seeing as this article is incomplete, the following wording is proposed to the Joint Order Church Committee for its consideration and adoption: *“The churches shall maintain an institution for the training for the ministry and shall support theological education that is properly accountable to the churches.”*
- B. Licensure - A number of our churches raise questions about a student being able to exhort after only completing one year of theological education. This objection is related to the fact that students from Hamilton need three years of theological education before they can exhort in our churches. It should be noted that there is an obvious discrepancy here between our respective churches that no doubt should be discussed and resolved. At the same time it should be noted that students coming from Mid- America take at least three courses in Homiletics in their first year of study and that more attention is given to the preparation of sermons. With regard to (Westminster) California, the catalogue appears to indicate that only one course in Homiletics is required. In light of these different approaches the COC committee should give serious consideration to

raising the minimum requirement to two years before granting licensure to exhort.

Article 25 – D. Mutual Oversight

It can be questioned whether a classis needs to inquire of the churches whether or not “Confessionally Reformed Schooling is promoted.” The committee is advised to leave the matter of schooling to the local churches and not make it a matter of classical concern.

Article 36 – Psalms and Hymns

From the letters received, it becomes obvious that all the churches which wrote support the Majority Report and thus would like to see the renditions of the Psalms and Hymns “approved by general synod.” The COC is urged to decide accordingly.

At the same time, the COC realizes that exceptional situations can arise as is the case of a church plant being done among different ethnic groups that do not worship in English. In such cases the advice of classis should be sought before proceeding to use alternative Psalms and Hymns.

Article 43 – Admission to the Lord’s Supper

A considerable number of churches wrote to Synod Burlington-Ebenezer commenting on the current wording of this Article. Many of these comments highlight dissatisfaction with the expression “biblical church membership” and wonder what it means and how it will be applied.

The churches in our federation are reminded that the elders of the local church are directly responsible for the doctrine and life of their members. Visitors, on the other hand, constitute “exceptions” and it needs to be understood that “exceptions” are always hard to regulate.

Notwithstanding this, the COC is asked to consider the following:

- a) The printing of this article in three paragraphs would clarify the fact that the first part deals with the responsibility of the consistory, the second part with the participation of members, and the third part with the admission of visitors.

- b) The admission of visitors from churches with which we maintain ecclesiastical fellowship is best served by a letter of testimony, but it should be understood that very few churches in North America are familiar with such a practice.
- c) The admission of visitors from other churches has historically been viewed as an exception to the rule and needs to be regulated locally by the elders.
- d) A number of churches cite those biblical passages that refer to the testimony of two or three witnesses (Deut 19:15; John 5: 31, 8:13, etc) and thus conclude that a verbal testimony is insufficient. It should be noted, however, that these passages all deal with legal or judicial proceedings. There is disagreement as to whether these passages can be applied to the celebration of the sacrament.

The COC is urged to adopt the following re-wording of the Article:

The consistory shall supervise participation at the Lord's Supper.

Only those members who have made public profession of the Reformed faith and lead a godly life shall be admitted by the consistory.

Visitors who profess the Reformed faith may be admitted to the Lord's Supper provided that the consistory secures from them a satisfactory testimony about their doctrine and life, in either written or verbal form.

Article 45 – The Church's Evangelism Calling

The committee should take another look at the style and content of this Article. The present wording is awkward. The COC is asked to give due consideration to the following wording:

Each church shall fulfill its evangelistic calling in faithfulness to the Word of God and by relying on

the Holy Spirit. It shall make known the good news of Jesus Christ to those in its area who do not know God or are estranged from him and his service with the aim of having them join the church through profession of faith.

Article 57 – B. The Departure of Members

Numerous churches disagree with the fact that a departing member needs to submit a "written request" in order to receive a letter of testimony.

Several churches also disagree with the requirement that the consistory send a letter of testimony to a local church.

The wording should be changed by the PJCO to:

Upon request, a letter of testimony shall be given to those members who are departing to a church with which the federation has ecclesiastical fellowship.

The consistory may send a copy of this letter to such a church, requesting it to accept them under its spiritual care.

The departure of members shall be properly announced.

3.4 From the letters received, it appears that the status of the PJCO needs to be clarified. Currently the Canadian Reformed Churches are governed by the Church Order adopted at General Synod 1983, and it will remain so until such time as a future General Synod decides that agreement has been reached on merger. Then, and only then, will the text of the Joint Church Order be finalized and implemented.

3.5 While the committee recommends that the PJCO 2010 be adopted, it should be noted that there are a number of unfinished matters that need to be resolved before final adoption can be given.

At this time sufficient work has been done to warrant the provisional adoption of the PJCO. This provisional adoption indicates our strong commitment to unity with the URCNA.

In addition, it alerts our churches to the fact that they need to pay close attention to this foundational document.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

4.1 To thank the Church Order Committee for the great amount of work

that it has done over the last number of years.

- 4.2 To adopt the PJCO *provisionally* as the Church Order for a united federation of the United Reformed Churches in North America and the Canadian Reformed Churches.
- 4.3 To reappoint the current Church Order Committee.
- 4.4 To mandate the Church Order Committee as follows:
 - 4.4.1 To give a final evaluation of the letters from the churches.
 - 4.4.2 To finalize those matters deemed to be yet unfinished (see: Article 4 PJCO).
 - 4.4.3 To adopt the recommendations under Consideration 3.3 in consultation with the committee of the URCNA.
 - 4.4.4 To prepare a final edition for Synod 2013, sending it to the churches six months prior to synod.

ADOPTED

Article 152 – New Name for the Theological College

- 1. Material**
 - 1.1 Report of the Board of Governors of the Theological College (8.2.1).
 - 1.2 Letter from Winnipeg-Grace (8.3.L.3).
- 2. Observations**
 - 2.1 The Board adopted a proposal to change the name by which the College operates or is known, from “Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches” to “Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary,” and seeks Synod’s approval for this name change. Its recommendation is:
To approve the College continuing under the operative name of “Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary” without any change to its legal name.
 - 2.2 Winnipeg-Grace recommends that Synod reject the recommendation from the Board of Governors to change the name of the Theological College to “Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary.” Winnipeg-Grace argues that dropping the words “of the churches” implies the college is no longer “of the churches,” but rather just “Canadian Reformed.”
- 3. Consideration**
The name “Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary” is indeed shorter. But

the Board does not give evidence that the character of the name is more in line with current North American usage. The Board does not demonstrate that this name is already being used informally.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to reject the Board’s request to approve the College continuing under the operative name of “Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary.”

DEFEATED

Article 153 – New Name for the Theological College

- 1. Material**
 - 1.1 Report of the Board of Governors of the Theological College (8.2.1).
 - 1.2 Letter from Winnipeg-Grace (8.3.L.3).
- 2. Observations**
 - 2.1 The Board adopted a proposal to change the name by which the College operates or is known, from “Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches” to “Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary,” and seeks Synod’s approval for this name change. Its recommendation is:
To approve the College continuing under the operative name of “Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary” without any change to its legal name.
 - 2.2 Winnipeg-Grace recommends that Synod reject the recommendation from the Board of Governors to change the name of the Theological College to “Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary.” Winnipeg-Grace argues that dropping the words “of the churches” implies the college is no longer “of the churches,” but rather just “Canadian Reformed.”
- 3. Considerations**
 - 3.1 The Board of Governors proposes that Synod adopt the name “Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary” as the operational name of the College, while retaining “The Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches” as the legal name. This answers the objection of Winnipeg-Grace.
 - 3.2 The name “Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary” is a fitting

and appropriate name. The words “Canadian Reformed” identify it with the churches, the word “Theological” describes its area of study, and the word “Seminary” underlines the fact that it is an institution in which men are trained for the ministry of the gospel.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to adopt the name “Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary” as the operational name for the College.

ADOPTED

Article 154 – Reformed Churches in New Zealand (RCNZ)

1. Material

- 1.1 Report from the CRCA re: RCNZ (8.2.m).
- 1.2 Letters from Fergus-Maranatha (8.2 m.14), London (8.2.m.30), and Lincoln (8.2.m.36).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Smithers, 2007 decided (Article 66, Recommendation 5):
 - [5.1] To recognize that the RCNZ is a faithful church of God and accept the invitation of the RCNZ to enter into a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship (EF) according to the established rules.
 - [5.2] To write a letter addressed to the next synod of the RCNZ communicating this decision and including the request that the RCNZ take note of and take seriously the concerns of the FRCA regarding the CRC-Australia.
 - [5.3] To send a delegate (delegation) to the next synod of the RCNZ in order to present this letter to formalize relations and visit the churches.
- 2.2 Our CRCA wrote a letter addressed to the 26th Synod of RCNZ communicating the decision of Synod Smithers to enter into a relationship of EF. This letter included a request that the RCNZ take note of and take seriously the concerns of the FRCA regarding the CRC-Australia.
- 2.3 Our CRCA also sent one delegate to the 26th Synod of the RCNZ, held in Hastings.
- 2.4 Regarding the relationship with CRC-Australia, Synod Hastings decided:

- [1.] To continue our sister-church relationship with the CRC-Australia.
 - [2.] To continue the meetings between the CER (Committee for Ecumenical Relations) of the CRC-Australia and our IRC (Interchurch Relations Committee).
 - [3.] To send two delegates to the next synod of the CRC-Australia.
- 2.5. Regarding the CRC-Australia, Synod Hastings decided: “That Synod convey to the CRC-Australia through the Interchurch Relations Committee that our sister-church relationship continues under strain due to their approval of the practice of ordaining women to the office of deacon.”
 - 2.6 Regarding relations with the FRCA Synod Hastings decided:
 - [1.] To acknowledge with sadness that we have been unable to make progress towards a sister-church relationship with the FRCA.
 - [2.] To inform the FRCA that we cannot accept that our -church relationship with the CRC-Australia should be an impediment to the FRCA accepting our offer.
 - [3.] To continue our offer of sister-church relations with the FRCA.
 - [4.] To convey these decisions to the FRCA by correspondence.
 - [5.] To send a delegate to the next synod of the FRCA.
 - 2.7 Regarding theological education, it is clear that the RCNA has less confidence than it previously did in the program of study at the Reformed Theological College in Geelong. For this reason, our CRCA writes that the “CanRC might more explicitly offer the services of the Theological College in Hamilton as a possible alternative for the theological education of the RCNZ students for the ministry.”
 - 2.8 Regarding the CanRC, Synod Hastings decided:
 - [1.] To express our appreciation to the CanRC for their acceptance of our invitation to enter a sister-church relationship with them.
 - [2.] To continue to work closely with the CanRC in connection with the mission work in PNG.
 - [3.] To send a delegate to the next synod of the CanRC.
 - 2.9 The church at Fergus-Maranatha submits that in observance of Rule 3 of EF, more consideration should have been given to the FRCA and

their ongoing dialogue with the RCNZ before entering into EF with the RCNZ. Because of the relationship between the RCNZ and the CRC-Australia, which ordains women as deacons, Fergus considers that EF was premature and should be rescinded.

- 2.10 The church at London submits that the decision to enter into a relationship of EF with RCNZ is inconsistent with the manner in which the OPC was dealt with when they had a relationship with the CRC in North America. London also asks that Synod mandate our CRCA to include in their communications with the RCNZ a “note of encouragement to continue with their admonishments of the CRC-Australia regarding the issue of women in office and consider ending the relationship if there is no progress.”
- 2.11 The church at Lincoln indicates that it agrees with the recommendations of the CRCA in regard to the RCNZ.
- 3. Considerations**
- 3.1 The CRCA has been diligent in implementing and maintaining the relationship of EF with the RCNZ.
- 3.2 It is true that the relation between the RCNZ and the CRC-Australia remains a matter of concern as long as the latter churches maintain the practice of ordaining women as deacons. Even though the CRC-Australia does not consider deacons to be part of the session, the Bible does speak of deacons as men in passages such as 1 Tim. 3:8-12. For these reasons, it is important that the CRCA would continue to encourage the RCNZ to break off relations with the CRC-Australia if that federation is unwilling to end the practice of ordaining women as deacons.
- 3.3 It is important to recognize that one cannot equate the CRC-Australia with the CRC-North America. While the CRC-North America has also opened the office of elder to women, the CRC-Australia only allows this in the case of deacons and specifies clearly that the deacons are not part of the ruling body of the church (Acts Smithers 2007, Article 66, Consideration 4.2). Because of the significant differences between these churches, London is incorrect when it says that the establishment of EF with the RCNZ was inconsistent with the manner in which the OPC was dealt with when they had a relationship with the CRC in North America.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To continue the relation of EF with the RCNZ under the adopted rules.
- 4.2 To continue to monitor the relation between the RCNZ and the CRC-Australia and encourage the RCNZ to seriously re-evaluate its relationship with the CRC-Australia in light of its continuing practice of ordaining women to the office of deacon.
- 4.3 To encourage the RCNZ to keep seeking ways to grow closer towards the FRCA.
- 4.4 To invite the RCNZ to become better acquainted with the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary in Hamilton.

ADOPTED

Article 155 – Reformed Churches – Restored (RCR)

1. Material

- 1.1 Report from the CRCA re: the RCR (8.2 m).
- 1.2 Overtures from the churches of Edmonton-Immanuel (8.3.M.11) and Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.M.20).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The report of the CRCA regarding the RCR is as follows: “Synod 2007 decided not to accept the request of the RCR to acknowledge them as sister churches. Synod also decided to admonish the RCR in a brotherly manner for its unlawful separation. In accordance with the instruction of Synod, a letter of admonishment was sent in June 2007. Since that time, there has been no response from the RCR. The CRCA did receive a copy of a new publication entitled *Continua* (Vol. I, January 2009). This publication contains part 1 of a projected four part series critiquing the decision of Synod 2007 not to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCR.”
- 2.2 The CRCA gives no recommendations to Synod regarding the RCR.
- 2.3 Since Synod Smithers 2007, some congregations have left the RCR.
- 2.4 Edmonton-Immanuel recommends that Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 decide:
- [1.] To renew contact with the RCR;
- [2.] To acknowledge the RCR desire to remain faithful;
- [3.] To remain informed about the development in the RCR;

- [4.] To encourage the RCR to discuss the issues and struggles of concern with the RCN in humility and love;
- [5.] To make a recommendation to Synod 2013 that the RCR be recognized as a sister church.
- 2.5 Edmonton-Immanuel comes to these recommendations in light of the following considerations:
- 2.5.1 In light of how the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands continue to occupy a unique place in the life and history of the Canadian Reformed Churches the CRCA should have contacted the RCR and discussed its lack of response to the letter of admonition and the RCR's critique of the decision of Synod Smithers to not enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCR.
- 2.5.2 Synod Legana of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) decided the following with respect to the RCR:
- a) To acknowledge the RCR desire to remain reformed.
 - b) To remain informed about the development in the RCR.
 - c) To continue contact and encourage the RCR to discuss the issues and struggles of concern with the RCN in humility and love (p. 91 of the decisions of Synod Legana 2009).
- 2.5.3 CanRC concerns regarding the RCN, as shared by the FRCA and the RCR, continue and increase.
- 2.6 Fergus-Maranatha recommends that Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 decide:
- 2.6.1 To express regret over the lack of effort taken to encourage reconciliation between the RCN and RCR;
- 2.6.2 To mandate the CRCA to have face-to-face meetings with the RCR to understand their documented concerns and provide a documented response;
- 2.6.3 To rescind the decision of Synod 2007 to declare the RCR schismatic.
- 2.7 Fergus-Maranatha comes to these recommendations in light of the following considerations:
- 2.7.1 The CRCA report gives no evidence that the mandate of Synod Smithers 2007 to "seek ways to facilitate reconciliation between the RCN and RCR" was fulfilled, and the CRCA does not recommend to renew this mandate.

- 2.7.2 The CRCA did not respond in detail to the documentation submitted by the RCR to Synod Smithers 2007.
- 2.7.3 Just as the decision by Synod 2007 not to maintain ecclesiastical fellowship with the Free Church of Scotland Continuing (FCC) hindered reconciliation efforts with the Free Church of Scotland (FCS), the decision to declare the RCR schismatic can certainly be expected to hinder efforts towards reconciliation with the RCN.
- 2.7.4 The CRCA report indicates that it is difficult to gain a clear perspective on how the decisions of synod are being implemented in the RCN. By more diligently investigating the concerns raised by the RCR about the RCN, the CRCA may be able to engage in real dialogue with the RCN on the outstanding matters.
- 2.7.5 Synod 2007 should have had face-to-face contact with representatives of the RCR prior to declaring the church schismatic. Discipline allows time for a party to explain their actions and react to instruction or admonishment.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The report of the CRCA is indeed very brief. In light of the mandate of Synod Smithers 2007 not only to refuse ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCR, but also to admonish the RCR in a brotherly manner for its unlawful separation, one could have expected the CRCA to have pursued contact also after it became apparent that no response to the letter of admonition was forthcoming. If the committee in fact did so, this action did not get reported. In any case efforts should continue to facilitate reconciliation between the RCR and RCN as mandated by Synod Smithers 2007.
- 3.2 The CRCA has received the first part of a four part series critiquing the decision of Synod 2007 not to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCR. It is not clear if this is an official response from the RCR. If it is, then hopefully a response can be composed and there can yet be dialogue with the RCR on this matter.
- 3.3 Given how the RCR has arisen in connection with developments in the RCN, it would be prudent at this time to entrust the new temporary sub-committee of the CRCA also with the matter of contact with the RCR.
- 3.4 To acknowledge the RCR's desire to remain faithful and to speak of

entering ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCR would at this time be premature in light of the decision of Synod Smithers regarding the RCR (Synod Smithers, Article 143), and in light of fragmentation occurring in the RCR.

- 3.5 It would be prudent to monitor developments in the RCR in close consultation with other sister churches that are also seeking to help.
- 3.6 While there are points of comparison between the schism in Scotland and the schism in the Netherlands, there are also significant differences. Most importantly, the RCR clearly indicated that it saw the RCN as a false church. Fergus-Maranatha's assertion that "the decision to declare the RCR schismatic can certainly be expected to hinder efforts towards reconciliation with the RCN" assumes that Synod Smithers 2007 erred in its decision to declare the RCR schismatic. Fergus-Maranatha, therefore, should have appealed Article 143 of Synod Smithers.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To give the matter of contact with the RCR to the responsibility of the temporary sub-committee of the CRCA to deal with the RCN.
- 4.2 To mandate this sub-committee of the CRCA:
- 4.2.1 To dialogue with the RCR in order to come to a comprehensive understanding of their concerns and actions.
- 4.2.2 To continue to seek ways to facilitate reconciliation between the RCR and RCN.
- 4.2.3 To do all this in close contact with the FRCA and the OPC.
- 4.2.4 To submit a comprehensive report of its activities to the churches six months prior to the next general synod.

ADOPTED

Article 156 – ICRC

1. Material

Report from the CRCA re: ICRC (Agenda 8.2.m).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Smithers 2007 (Article 132, Recommendation 4.3) decided:
- [4.3.1] To continue the participation of the Canadian Reformed Churches in the ICRC and send two voting delegates and

two advisory members to New Zealand in 2009.

- [4.3.2] To convey synod's decision on Article IV.1.a. of the Constitution to the corresponding secretary of the ICRC.
- [4.3.3] To use the opportunities presented at the conference to interact with and gather information from delegates of other churches.
- [4.3.4] To submit a report of the 2009 ICRC to the next synod with an evaluation and recommendations.
- 2.2 In October 2009 a conference was held at Christchurch, New Zealand under the theme, "The Vitality of the Reformed Faith." The Reformed Churches of New Zealand very hospitably hosted this conference.
- 2.3 Given the convenience of this venue for arranging many meetings with sister churches from around the world, the CRCA did not ask two professors from the Theological College to attend this time. Instead it ensured that the delegation of four consisted entirely from CRCA members. Unfortunately only three were able to attend since one of the delegates became sick.
- 2.4 Highlights from the conference:
- 2.4.1 Four very worthwhile presentations were made.
- 2.4.2 Five more churches became members: the Reformed Churches of Brazil, the Heritage Reformed Congregations, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of India, the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing), the Independent Church in Korea. This brings the total membership to 30. The membership of the Reformed Churches of Brazil was sponsored by the CRCA. At the previous conference the FCC was denied membership in the ICRC since it had initiated legal action against the Free Church of Scotland (FCS), but this legal action had ceased and the FCS was not opposed to the FCC becoming a member.
- 2.4.5 The conference, upon recommendation from the CRCA and without any dissenting voice, appointed a committee to review all aspects of the Conference. The CRCA decided to make this proposal since in its view the ICRC will soon have been in existence for 25 years. This marks an opportune time to assess whether or not the ICRC has lived up to its potential, and to improve the usefulness of the Conference. Two members of the CRCA, Dr. John Vanderstoep and

- Dr. James Visscher were appointed to this eight member committee, and Dr. Visscher was appointed its chairman.
- 2.4.6 An extensive report on the mission activities of the member churches was received. The CRCA intends to make this report available to all our mission sending and supporting churches. It cannot be made generally available since a part of the report is confidential in nature. The report recommended calling a meeting of representatives of the world mission agencies of the ICRC member churches to exchange information and explore ways for possible multilateral cooperation. It recommended the gathering of information on short term theological teachers to promote awareness regarding existing resources. The report also highlighted that regional mission conferences were held in various parts of the world except North America. The CRCA finds this regrettable: “there is much to discuss from missions to theology, from diaconal aid to theological education.”
- 2.4.7 Regarding the proposed change of Article IV.1.a of the constitution, procedural difficulties led the Conference to refer the matter to the Review Committee for further study and recommendation. As per the instruction of Synod Smithers 2007, the CRCA delegates voted against the amendment.
- 2.4.8 Rev. Cornelius VanSpronsen was re-appointed as the Corresponding Secretary, and br. Henk Berends was re-appointed as the Treasurer.
- 2.4.9 The Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales was appointed to host the next conference in September 2013 in Cardiff, Wales.
- 2.4.10 The Conference clearly manifested the catholic character of the Church of our Lord.
- 2.5 While attending the ICRC at Christchurch, members of the CRCA met with delegates from the Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia (CRCI), the Reformed Churches of India, the FCS, the FCC, the Independent Reformed Church in Korea (IRCK), the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK), and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN). The CRCA plans to recommend that more time be made available at future conferences for this purpose.

- Informal contacts were had with delegates from nearly all the member churches.
- 2.6 The CRCA found the conference very worthwhile to attend. It states that the benefits for the Canadian Reformed Churches are increasing: “Our churches are becoming more and more active in the area of missions and we are convinced that the help, advice and assistance of other member churches will prove invaluable for us in the future.”
- 2.7 The CRCA highlights that neither the FRCA nor the ERQ are members of the ICRC, and urge Synod Burlington-Ebenezer to go on record as encouraging these churches either to re-join (FRCA) or join (ERQ) at this time, given how all the decisions of the ICRC are advisory, how we are small churches in a large world, how we need each other’s prayers, counsel, and resources, and how the Conference serves as one way to spread the Reformed faith.
- 2.8 The CRCA recommends that Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 decide:
- [1.] To continue the membership of the Canadian Reformed Churches in the International Conference of Reformed Churches.
 - [2.] To instruct the CRCA to send a delegation to the next Conference scheduled to meet, the Lord willing, in Cardiff, Wales in 2013.
 - [3.] To seek ways to organize regular regional conferences of the ICRC members in North America, doing this, if possible, in co-operation with the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC).
 - [4.] To encourage both the Free Reformed Churches in Australia and the Reformed Churches in Quebec to apply for membership in the ICRC.
- 3. Considerations**
- 3.1 We may note with gratitude that the ICRC was able to have another worthwhile conference and to serve as a good venue for meetings/ contacts with many other Reformed Churches around the world.
- 3.2 That the committee sent a full delegation of its members to the conference was prudent.
- 3.3 We may note with gratitude that the federation of Reformed Churches of Brazil now also has membership in the ICRC.
- 3.4 The CRCA’s recommendation that the ICRC undergo a review

appears to have been warranted, given how its recommendation was adopted without opposition from any of the member churches. Hopefully this review will serve to make the ICRC more beneficial to the churches.

- 3.5 Regarding the lack of regional ICRC mission conferences in North America, it should be kept in mind that NAPARC meetings are also held.
- 3.6 Regarding Article IV.1.a of the Constitution, no further action is needed until the review committee comes with recommendations.
- 3.7 Though it would be desirable from our perspective to have the FRCA and the ERQ as member churches of the ICRC, to go on record as encouraging this could come across as insensitive to both the FRCA and the ERQ. The FRCA had its own reasons for leaving the ICRC and the ERQ is a very small federation with limited resources.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To thank the CRCA for all its work.
- 4.2 To mandate the committee to:
- 4.2.1 Continue the membership of the CanRC in the ICRC.
- 4.2.2 Instruct the CRCA to send a delegation to the next Conference scheduled to meet in Cardiff, Wales, in 2013.

ADOPTED

Article 157 – Reformed Churches in Brazil (RCB)

1. Material

- 1.1 Report E from CRCA re: The Reformed Churches in Brazil (8.2.m).
- 1.2 Letter from Attercliffe (8.3.M.26).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Smithers 2007 mandated the CRCA to continue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCB under the adopted rules, either directly or via the sending churches for mission in Brazil (Acts, Article 128).
- 2.2 The CRCA reports to Synod 2010 that it informed the RCB of the decision to continue ecclesiastical fellowship. However, it also reports that due to barriers of language and due also to the heavy workload of the Brazilian ministers and missionaries, contact with the RCB has been sporadic.

- 2.3 The CRCA Report mentions that in May 2008, a Council (Synod) of the RCB decided to suspend contact “for the time being” with the IPB due to the disunity this issue had generated in the RCB and because of the lack of time, money and personnel to more thoroughly investigate the IPB.
- 2.4 Also at the May 2008 Council, encouraging reports were heard concerning two existing churches which had recently embraced the Reformed faith and were now seeking entrance into the RCB. It was decided that one of these churches would be received as a sister church with entrance into the federation in 2010, while the other would be visited by the Church Visitors who would report to the next Council.
- 2.5 The CRCA sent a letter of greeting and encouragement to the Council which took place on Oct. 13-16 of 2008. In addition, the CRCA was represented at this Council by Rev. C. VanSpronsen. His subsequent report to the CRCA highlights the many contacts of the RCB and the strong interest shown in the Reformed faith both by existing congregations and individuals in the work and life of the RCB. The RCB are diligent in using many different means to spread the Reformed faith (radio broadcasts, internet presence, symposia, and the activities of the Reading Room in Recife). His report also mentioned that the RCB suffer from a lack of manpower and financial resources. Furthermore, there is much work in the area of church discipline.
- 2.6 The CRCA reports that in November of 2008, a letter was received from the RCB asking that the CanRC sponsor the RCB in their application to join the ICRC. The CRCA agreed to this request. The membership application of the RCB was received by the 2009 assembly of the ICRC.
- 2.7 Attercliffe recommends that the CanRC intensify contact with the RCB and strive to help these churches with advice in preserving unity.
3. Considerations
- 3.1 It appears that the CRCA has fulfilled its mandate in regard to the RCB.
- 3.2 In view of the strong links between the RCB and the CanRC, and in view of the challenges facing the RCB, every effort should be made to have contact with the RCB and to provide encouragement to these

churches and their leaders. Where language is a barrier, the CRCA can work through contacts in those churches which maintain mission works in Brazil (Surrey-Maranatha and Hamilton-Cornerstone).

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To express gratitude for the continued faithfulness and growth of the RCB.
- 4.2 To mandate the CRCA:
 - 4.2.1 To continue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCB under the adopted rules.
 - 4.2.2 To use every opportunity to have contact with the RCB and to provide encouragement to these churches.

ADOPTED

Article 158 – Financial Report Synod Smithers 2007

1. Material

- 1.1 Financial Report of Synod 2007 Smithers (8.1.j).
- 1.2 Audit Report from the church at Houston (8.1.k).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The Finance Committee of Synod Smithers 2007 submits a report detailing the finances of Synod 2007. The committee itemized the report as follows:

Receipts:

Regional Synod East	\$28,035.00
Regional Synod West	\$28,035.00
Interest	\$11.64
Recycled water bottles	\$26.46
BVCU Green Money	\$40.00
Total Receipts	\$56,148.10

Expenses:

Acts of Synod	\$16,793.10
Office Supplies	\$1,288.97
Misc.	\$534.05
Rentals	\$3,817.93

Travel - East	\$16,025.12
Travel - West	\$7,779.93
Postage	\$1,170.62
Stationery	\$1,888.87
Food	\$4,479.82
GST	\$2,365.48
Total Expenses	\$56,143.89

Receipts over Expenses \$4.21

- 2.2 The church at Houston reports: “In our audit we found all the funds accounted for. All receipts, including those for the delegates’ expenses and records of payment were found to be in good order and nothing was found lacking in this area. Bank statements provided were reconciled to the funds received and expenses paid out. All cheques were also accounted for.”

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The financial records and the audit indicate that all financial matters relating to Synod Smithers have been handled satisfactorily.
- 3.2 A Finance Committee needs to be appointed to take care of the finances of Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To accept the report of the Finance Committee of Synod Smithers 2007 and to thank the committee for the work done.
- 4.2 To accept the audit report of Houston and to thank this church for this report.
- 4.3 To appoint to the Finance Committee for Synod Burlington-Ebenezer: M. Kampen, G.J. Nordeman, and H.J. Sloots.
- 4.4 To charge the Finance Committee for Synod Burlington-Ebenezer to report to the next synod.
- 4.5 To appoint the church at Burlington-Fellowship to audit the books of the Finance Committee of Synod Burlington-Ebenezer and to report to the next synod.

ADOPTED

Article 159 – Letter from Chatham-Ebenezer**1. Material**

Letter from Chatham-Ebenezer (8.1.p).

2. Observation

Chatham-Ebenezer, having reviewed the Acts of Synod Smithers, decided to address some concerns to Synod Burlington-Ebenezer regarding how General Synod operates. Chatham-Ebenezer states: “While this correspondence may be interpreted as critical in nature, the purpose is to provide constructive criticism and perhaps be of assistance to any future decisions.”

3. Consideration

Chatham-Ebenezer requests no specific action from Synod other than to take note of its concerns as it goes about its work.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to receive this correspondence for advisement.

ADOPTED**Article 160 – The Text of the Lord’s Prayer****1. Material**

Letter from Ancaster with respect to the text of the Heidelberg Catechism, LD 45 (8.3.J.47).

2. Observation

Ancaster comes to Synod with “a request concerning a point in the text of the Lord’s Prayer as found in the latest edition of the (H.C), LD 45.” It states “this edition follows the NIV translation which does not conform to the original Greek text as given us by our Lord Jesus Christ. We propose that you decide to correct the mistake and bring it in accordance with the original formulation.”

3. Considerations

- 3.1 While it is true that the original Greek text makes frequent use of the conjunction “and,” proper English usage does not always require its translation.
- 3.2 It is hard to see that the absence of this one instance of a conjunction in the Lord’s Prayer leads to an incorrect interpretation.

- 3.3 The request to change the English text of the NIV when it comes to the Lord’s Prayer would set a precedent and may well lead to more requests to depart from this recommended translation for what some would consider questionable reasons.
- 3.4 To change the text of the Lord’s Prayer in Lord’s Day 45 of the Heidelberg Catechism, which is taken from the NIV, would represent an overreaction on our part.
- 3.5 It is clear from Ancaster’s letter that an elaborate interpretation is connected to this one instance of a missing conjunction and that not all biblical scholars would agree with this interpretation.
- 3.6 It should be noted that Ancaster’s letter is in regard to the text of the Heidelberg Catechism as found on the Canadian Reformed website and not the text in the 2006 edition of the *Book of Praise*. The future editions will follow the NIV text.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide not to grant the request of the Church of Ancaster.

ADOPTED**Article 161 – Letters against the Finalization and Implementation of Revised Psalms****1. Material**

Letters from Willoughby Heights (8.3.J.24), Barrhead (8.3.A.17), and Lynden (8.3.J.44).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The churches at Willoughby Heights, Barrhead and Lynden recommended that Synod 2010 not make a final decision to adopt the revised Psalms. They gave the following reasons for their recommendations:
- 2.1.1 Many have committed the Psalms as we have them in the 1983 *Book of Praise* to memory. Therefore we should only make changes if they are truly improvements, and necessary. Some of the proposed changes provide no improvement to the text of the Psalms. Some of the proposed changes are not necessary.
- 2.1.2 The churches have not had enough time to test the revisions, and provide input to the SCBP.

- 2.1.3 The SCBP should also consider revising some of the “difficult tunes” in the Psalter.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 These churches indicate that additional time is needed to get as much input from the churches as possible.
- 3.2 Revisions were not solely initiated by the consideration or desire for a common song book.
- 3.3 Synod considers that the publication of an authorized provisional version of the Psalms is a practical way to test them. Without publishing this version we are concerned that some congregations would not use the time to test the Psalms in the congregation and the same complaint about lack of testing would arise in Synod 2013.
- 3.4 The request for revised melodies will be passed on to the SCBP for their consideration.
- 3.5 The concern expressed about memorized Psalms would preclude virtually any changes from being made.
- 3.6 Article 55 CO shows that what is sung in the worship services is a matter of the churches in common.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to approve the revised Psalms for inclusion in the provisional *Book of Praise* to be used in the worship services of the churches as per Article 55 CO.

A proposed amendment to insert “for usage” instead of “to be used” in the Recommendation was **defeated**.

The entire proposal was then put to a vote and **ADOPTED**.

Article 162 – SCBP: Typographical Errors

1. Material

Report from the SCBP (8.2.j.4).

2. Observations

- 2.1 A number of typographical errors were discovered by the SCBP. This letter identifies the corrections.
- 2.2 Two improvements were also made in the text of two Psalms.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The SCBP has continued to review the proposed *Book of Praise* as presented in their report to the churches and Synod. In the course of their continuing work, typographical errors were discovered. These should be corrected.
- 3.2 The committee also recommends two improvements.
- 3.3 The most correct versions of the Psalms section available should be published.
- 3.4 The SCBP recommends that Synod:
- 3.4.1 Adopt this revised Psalter, including the revised preface, for full use by the churches and
- 3.4.2 That this revised Psalter be published in the next edition of the *Book of Praise*.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to approve the corrections made by the SCBP of the typographical errors identified in their letter of February 2010.

ADOPTED

Article 163 – Hymn: Jesus Shall Reign

1. Material

- 1.1 Letters from Neerlandia (8.3.J.23) and Langley (8.3.J.31).
- 1.2 SCBP Report, Section Four, 10.3.II.6 (8.2.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 This hymn is about the ascension and kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is a paraphrase of parts of Psalm 72.
- 2.2 The SCBP recommends that this hymn not be included in the expanded hymn section of the *Book of Praise*, since it was criticized by many churches as an inaccurate rendition of Psalm 72.
- 2.3 The SCBP further reports that churches found the melody of this hymn to be good, but that its content was “too generic,” “too vague,” “lacked a clear scriptural basis,” and leaves out “the clear antithetical elements of Psalm 72.”
- 2.4 Langley proposes that this hymn be included, since it is comprehensive and fitting in its context. They suggest that it is a poetic and fitting reflection on and response to Christ’s exaltation.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 It is not incorrect to paraphrase scriptural words as the basis for a hymn. The real question is whether the hymn is faithful to Scripture in what it says.
- 3.2 “Jesus Shall Reign” is based on parts of Psalm 72, and is faithful to Scripture in what it says. As Langley correctly indicates, it is “a fitting reflection on and response to Christ’s exaltation.”
- 3.3 The melody of “Jesus Shall Reign” is triumphant and beautiful, and appropriate for a hymn celebrating the ascension and kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to approve Hymn # 6 **Jesus Shall Reign** for inclusion in the expanded hymn section of the *Book of Praise*, contrary to the recommendation of the SCBP.

ADOPTED**Article 164 – Hymn index with Scripture References****1. Material**

Letter from Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.J.26)

2. Observation

Burlington-Ebenezer requests Synod to instruct the SCBP to insert the Hymn Index with scripture references as per attached. They reason that the text references are with the hymns themselves, but it is very helpful to have this also available at a glance.

3. Consideration

Synod considers that it would be helpful to add a hymn index with Scripture references.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to instruct the SCBP to prepare a Scripture index for the hymns, to be included in the proposed *Book of Praise* for presentation to Synod 2013.

ADOPTED

**Day 12 — Afternoon Session
Wednesday, May 26, 2010**

Article 165 – Opening

Rev. Aasman opened the meeting. All were present.

Article 166 – Adoption of Articles 101-111 of the Acts of Synod

Articles 101-111 of the Acts were adopted after some minor changes.

Article 167 – Appointments**1. Board of Governors****1.1 Academic Committee**

1.1.1 From Eastern Canada: E. Kampen (2013), J. Ludwig (2019), J. VanWoudenberg (2013) (Substitutes: M.H. Van Luik, R. Wynia in that order).

1.1.2 From Western Canada: R. Aasman (2019), A.J. Pol (2016), W.B. Slomp (2013) (Substitutes: A. Souman, T. Lodder in that order).

1.2 Finance and Property Committee: A. Bax (2016), B. Hordyk (2019), H.C. Kampen (2016), L. Jagt (2013), K.J. Veldkamp (2013) (Substitute: C. Medemblik).

2. Committee for Pastoral Training Program Funding

The church at Guelph.

3. Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA)

3.1 H. Leyenhorst (2013), R.A. Schouten (convener) (2016), A. Souman (2019), J. VanLaar (2019), J. Vanderstoep (2013), W.M. Wielenga (2013).

3.2 Subcommittee for Contact with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands: J. de Gelder, J. Moesker (convener), G.J. Nordeman, C. Van Dam.

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

4.1 For Subcommittee East: R. A. Faber (convener) (2013), E. Kampen (2016), C. Poppe (2019), D. Vandeburgt (2019).

4.2 For Subcommittee West: P. H. Holtvlüwer (2016), J. Kuik (2013), J. Poppe (2019), H. Van Delden (2019).

5. Committee for Church Unity (CCU)

5.1 Coordinators: W. den Hollander and C. VanderVelde

5.2 Subcommittees:

5.2.1 Church Order Subcommittee: G. Nederveen, G.J. Nordeman,

- J. VanWoudenberg (convenor) A. Witten.
- 5.2.2 Theological Education Subcommittee: B. Faber, J.L. van Popta, K.J. Veldkamp, J. Visscher (convenor).
- 5.2.3 Common Songbook Committee: the Standing Committee of the *Book of Praise*
- 5.2.4 Creeds and Forms Committee: C. Bouwman (convenor), T. Lodder, T.G. Van Raalte.
5.2.4.1 (Advisor: J. Van Vliet).
6. **Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (SCBP)**
D. G.J. Agema (2013), A.J. De Visser (2019), C.J. Nobels (2016), C. VanHalen-Faber (2013), G.Ph. van Popta (2016) (convenor).
Advisors: F. Ezinga (music), K. Dieleman (language).
7. **Committee on Bible Translations (CBT)**
P. Aasman (2016), R. Bredenhof (2019), W. Bredenhof (2019), D. deBoer (2019), S.C. VanDam (2019), M.H. Van Luik (convenor) (2013).
8. **Committee for Official Website**
W. Bredenhof (convenor) (2019), C. Lane (2013), J. Koopmans (2019) H. Sikkema (2013).
9. **Churches for Days of Prayer and Article 54 CO**
The churches at Burlington-Waterdown and Edmonton-Providence.
10. **General Fund**
The church at Carman East.
11. **Church to Manage Needy Students Fund**
The church at Grassie.
12. **Archive Church**
The church at Burlington-Ebenezer.
13. **Archive Inspection**
The church at Burlington-Waterdown.
14. **Audit Finances of Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010**
The church at Burlington-Fellowship.
15. **Address Church**
The church at Burlington-Ebenezer.
16. **Committee for Printing of the Acts**
The clerks of Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010.
17. **Convening Church for Next Synod**
The church at Carman West (May, 2013).

ADOPTED

Article 168 – Remuneration Dr. W. Helder

1. Material

Letter from SCBP dated October 2009 (8.2.j.6).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Smithers (Article 148 par. 4.1.3) mandated the SCBP to “engage Dr. Helder to work with the Committee to update the psalm section and provide a fair remuneration for the work involved.”
- 2.2 Synod Smithers (Article 149, par. 4.4.1) mandated the SCBP “to also review the suitability of individual hymns that we already have in the *Book of Praise*, for possible change, deletion or improvement.”
- 2.3 The SCBP reports for synod’s information that it concluded an agreement with Dr. Helder with respect to the goal of his work, copyright matters, and amount and arrangements for remuneration. (See SCBP letter).
- 2.4 The SCBP reports further that Dr. Helder requested confidentiality in this matter.

3. Consideration

The SCBP has concluded the arrangement with Dr. Helder, as mandated by Synod Smithers, and submits this letter for our information. It is appropriate to maintain confidentiality in this matter.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To express deep appreciation for the good cooperation and considerable work of Dr. Helder.
- 4.2 To receive the letter of the SCBP for information.
- 4.3 To keep the contents of the agreement confidential.

ADOPTED

Article 169 – Letter to Synod London 2010 of the URCNA

The Coordinators recommend that General Synod Burlington-Ebenezer “address Synod London 2010 in writing, pledging our commitment to seeking federative unity and asking whether the URCNA in word and deed is committed to do the same.” (Rec. 7:5, Report, page 17).
Synod decided to send the following letter:

The General Synod
of the
Canadian Reformed Churches
meeting in
Burlington, Ontario, Canada
May, 2010

To the United Reformed Churches in North America
and
to the General Synod of the United Reformed Churches in North America
meeting from July 27 - 30, 2010 in London, Ontario, Canada

Esteemed Brothers,

We greet you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and wish to inform you that, as your brothers in the Lord, it is our fervent prayer that the King of the church will richly bless the work of your General Synod of London.

We are taking the somewhat unusual step of writing to you about the state of our discussions in pursuit of ecclesiastical unity. In this way we hope to share our views and hopes with you.

Brothers, be assured that we do not want to come across as being overly aggressive or insensitive in these matters. We realize full well that we should not rush into a merger of our respective churches but that we need to be patient with one another in our efforts to grow closer.

In the 1990's representatives from our respective churches met over a considerable period of time to discuss a wide range of issues and came to a Statement of Agreement in 2001. This Statement served at both the General Synods of Neerlandia and Escondido as the background for entering into Phase 2 of merger discussions.

To date these discussions have borne mixed fruit. Our Songbook and Forms & Prayers sub-committees have made little or no progress. The Theological Education sub-committees have produced a report with a number of conclusions and recommendations that have met with a mixed reaction. The

Church Order Committee, composed of members from both federations, has been the most successful in coming to both our Synods with an extensive report recommending, among other things, the adoption of a new Joint Church Order.

At our General Synod of Burlington, our churches have reacted to these committees and the progress of their work (or the lack of it) by sending us numerous letters expressing support, concerns, as well as objections to various points and recommendations.

At the same time it needs to be noted that not one Canadian (American) Reformed Church has urged us to cease the discussions or to put the matter of a future merger on hold. We interpret this as a sign from our churches that there continues to be broad support for this road on which we are traveling together.

Of course, we would not want to give you the impression that there are no concerns on the part of our churches. These are certainly present. And yet there lives in our churches a deep desire to be faithful to the prayer and will of our common Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Canadian Reformed Churches have always tried, with many shortcomings, to take the high priestly prayer of our Lord as recorded in John 17, with great seriousness. Our Lord prays there for Himself, for His followers and even for future believers. About the latter, He prays that "all of them may be one" (v. 21), indeed, that they may be as one as are the Father and the Son.

Some people see this as being a reference to spiritual unity with little or no implications for organizational, structural or visible unity. We respectfully disagree and are convinced that while being spiritual in character, this unity should come to concrete expression as well. Part of our Lord's prayer includes this sentence, "may they (the believers) be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." (v.23)

It is thus our calling as churches of Christ not only to recognize the unity that exists, but also to express this unity in concrete and discernible ways. We should let the world know and see that we are one.

Besides the fact that this is our calling, we also believe that it is not by accident that the Lord has caused our paths to cross and to come this far on the road of church unity. Obviously He sees that we would benefit from one another.

As a relatively new federation, we can benefit from your drive, enthusiasm and boldness to take the Reformed faith into new areas and places as evidenced by your numerous church plants. We can learn from your doctrinal struggles. We can learn from your deeper understanding of our North American culture and how best to meet its challenges.

At the same time we may have a few beneficial things to offer you in the areas of federation building, church polity and foreign missions.

Hence we believe that with our respective strengths and weaknesses, we complement each other and can be of great service to one another. There is a real sense in which we need each other and can be a real blessing to one another.

There is more, for we also need to be sensitive to the fact that this is not just about us. This is also about the North American continent that we share and its headlong descent into secularism. The church scene around us is deteriorating rapidly and both American and Canadian societies are becoming more and more hostile to the gospel. In such an environment we need each other's help, support and encouragement.

Our calling also relates to the world and the cause of advancing the Reformed faith internationally. Brothers, we live in exciting and challenging times. Many new and struggling churches in other parts of the world are discovering the deep riches of the Reformed faith and they are looking to us as faithful Reformed churches in North America for help and guidance. They want to know more about our Confessions, to adopt our polity and to steep themselves in our heritage. As a result we as Canadian Reformed Churches are being inundated with cries of "come over and help us" from believers in China, Korea, Mexico, Singapore, and other countries. We believe that the same pressures are being felt and experienced in your midst.

The international opportunities are thus boundless but at the same time we also believe that they place us under an additional obligation when it comes

to church unity. We can hardly teach others with credibility and be a good example to them if we can no longer muster the desire and determination to deal with our remaining differences and achieve unity.

Yes, and there are some differences between us that still need work. We, from our side, would urge you to join with us in re-appointing the Joint Church Order Committee to finalize its work. We have decided to adopt provisionally the Proposed Joint Church Order. At the same time we have passed on to it several matters that require resolution. You may well decide to do the same with some of your concerns.

We would also ask you to give serious consideration to appointing a new Theological Education Committee that would find ways to incorporate the principle our churches hold dear – that the churches are responsible for the training for the ministry – as we apply that principle in Hamilton. At the same time we see the importance of continuing to be sensitive to, and supportive of the needs and concerns of the seminaries that have served your churches so well.

With respect to the work of the Songbook and the Forms and Prayers committees, we have decided to re-appoint them in the hope that they will assist our churches as we prepare for unity.

Coming to a different but related matter, it may also be beneficial if more ways were found to build bridges between our churches, and then in particular between your churches in the United States and our churches in Canada. At present there is a great deal of interaction between the churches of both our federations in Canada. Local gatherings, ministerial meetings, youth rallies, joint evangelistic efforts and pulpit exchanges are common. The same is not happening in the United States, and it may never happen seeing that there are very few of our churches south of the border. Still, there are ways to address the challenges of distance and geography and one of them is for classes to link up and to develop a practice of sending and receiving fraternal delegates whenever there is a classical meeting north or south of the border to bring greetings, answer questions and promote fellowship.

In conclusion, brothers, we would appeal to you not to place the unity discussions on hold or to terminate them. We fully realize that the road ahead is still filled with a number of challenges, but we would remind you that

much has already been achieved. From our side we can honestly say that we have learned and gained a great deal from our joint discussions over the past number of years. If there are still specific matters that make you hesitant, we would ask you to formulate them and pass them along to us for our consideration.

Thankfully and humbly, we do not labour in our own strength nor are we pursuing our own agenda. The Head and King of the church has prayed for our unity and wants us to be one, so let us soldier on with good confidence in Him and in the power of His Spirit.

May the Lord bless our joint efforts and give us the vision and boldness to work now for what will one day come to us in perfect measure, namely a church of Jesus Christ that is truly and eternally one, gathered from all the tribes, nations and peoples of the earth. To Him be the glory!

With brotherly greetings,

For the General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches meeting in Burlington, Ontario, Canada, on this 26th day of May in the year of our Lord 2010.

(Signed by all the members of Synod)

ADOPTED

Article 170 – Appeal from br. H. Voorhorst re: A Decision of Regional Synod West 2009

1. Material

Letter from Br H. Voorhorst dated May 11 2010 (8.5.y).

2. Observations

- 2.1 On Sept. 24, 2007, the Cloverdale consistory decided to “introduce the revised versification of the Genevan Psalms into the worship services as they become available.” Brother Voorhorst appealed this decision at Classis Pacific West October 7, 2008. His appeal was denied, and he subsequently appealed the matter at Regional Synod West, November 3, 2009, where his appeal was again denied. He now appeals this decision of RSW November 3, 2009.
- 2.2 Several Considerations of RSW which provided the grounds for the denial of the brother’s appeal are:

- 2.2.1 “Br. Voorhorst is working with a strict and literal interpretation of Article 55 of the Church Order. However, it is important not to separate the words of Article 55 from its intent.”
- 2.2.2 “Understood in the context of past practice, it is fair to assume that ‘soliciting input’ could involve testing in public worship.”
- 2.2.3 “Close analysis shows that there is no significant difference between the Church Order prior to and after 1983.” “Both the older Article 69 and the present Article 55 clearly limit the churches singing to synodically adopted songs.”
- 2.3 The brother points out that CO Article 55 about Psalms and Hymns clearly states: “The metrical Psalms adopted by general synod as well as the Hymns approved by general synod shall be sung in the worship services.”
- 2.4 Br. Voorhorst states that “rather than take Article 55 of the CO literally, Regional Synod West took it upon itself to redefine the article when it stated that ‘The intent of this article is to prevent independentism in the worship services of the local churches of the confederation.’” He further asserts that “It’s no longer enough to prove that a decision is in conflict with the Church Order, one must also prove that it’s in conflict with the intent of said Article.” He adds that such an intent is fluid and hard to prove or disprove.
- 2.5 Finally, the brother quotes Article 76 CO where it states that churches “shall endeavour diligently to observe the Articles of the Church Order as long as they have not been changed by a general synod.” He believes that churches are bound therefore to maintain what they have agreed upon (Matt.5:37, Eccl.5:2-6, Deut.23:21-23, Num.30).
3. Considerations
 - 3.1 RSW November 3, 2009 stated in its first consideration that the intent of Article 55 is to prevent independentism and that this means that “the churches have agreed that they will not introduce into worship songs chosen by themselves at a local level. Using versification produced by the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise* as mandated by General Synod does not constitute independentism.” We agree that this matter is not just about the exact wording of Article 55, but also about how it is applied.

- 3.2 Synod Smithers mandated the SCBP (Article 148):
- [4.1.1] To initiate a thorough review of all 150 Psalms in the 1984 text of Anglo-Genevan Psalter in the *Book of Praise*.
 - [4.1.2] To prepare and present an updated psalm section in the anticipation of being included in the common songbook.
 - [4.1.4] To solicit input from the churches at all stages of the process.
 - [4.1.5] To publish revised and updated psalm versions as they become available on a website linked to the official website of the Canadian Reformed Churches (www.canrc.org).
 - [4.1.6] To report to General Synod 2010 on the progress of the work.
- 3.3 The above shows that the instructions of Synod 2007 concerning the Psalms did not involve completely new songs, but was a Synod-mandated revision and updating of the existing versification of the Psalter as already adopted by Synod 1983.
- 3.4 This is why Synod 2007 did not make a specific decision to have the revised Psalms sung in the worship services, but only about provisionally adopting the 28 new hymns.
- 3.5 RSW therefore did not err in its decision.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to deny the appeal of brother Voorhorst.

ADOPTED

Article 171 – Appeal from Willoughby Heights re: Article 5a of the Acts of Regional Synod West 2009

1. Material

Appeal from Willoughby Heights re: Article 5a Acts Regional Synod West 2009 (8.5.j).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The church at Willoughby Heights observes that in Considerations 1, 3, and 5, Article 5.a of the Acts of Regional Synod West (RSW) 2009, RSW 2009 went against “the Church Order, Article 76 (i.e. ‘... they shall endeavour diligently to observe the articles of this Church Order as long as they have not been changed by a general synod’).”
- 2.2 The church at Willoughby Heights further suggests that what RSW 2009 says in these Considerations “could set a dangerous precedent in our churches with regard to the use of the Church Order.”

- 2.3 The church at Willoughby Heights provides the following four grounds for its charge:
- 2.3.1 Regional Synod West in its Consideration 1 reads something into this article, which it doesn’t say, by speaking about the intent of this article. The application of this article in the churches should not depend on all kinds of interpretations of the intent of this article.
 - 2.3.2 A main principle of reformed church policy is that decisions are being made by the churches, either at the local level, or the churches in common (meeting in classis, regional synod or general synod). The Church Order does not mention committees as having official status or jurisdiction in the churches. . . If article 55 CO says that the metrical Psalms adopted by general synod as well as the Hymns approved by general synod shall be sung in the worship services.’ . . It is not possible to read into that, that also a committee appointed by synod can do, what the churches decided should be done by the churches in common.
 - 2.3.3 In Consideration 3, Regional Synod West tries to prove from history what the intent of the present Church Order is. However throughout the history we see in the Canadian Reformed Churches a struggle to find their way in a new situation. . . . It is therefore not justifiable to use the history before 1983 to explain the intent of an article that was adopted in 1983.
 - 2.3.4 In Consideration 5, Regional Synod West states that “Close analysis shows that there is no significant difference between the Church Order prior to and after 1983.” However, this change from the old edition of this article to the new one, is exactly the same as our sister churches in the Netherlands made in 1978... the close analysis of the churches in the Netherlands in 1978 came to a different conclusion about the same issue, than Regional Synod West 2009 and our sister churches recognized this as a real change . . . Therefore, an interpretation of Article 55 of the Church Order based on the history before 1983 is wrong.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Article 31 of the CO recognizes the right of anyone who complains

that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly to appeal that decision to a major assembly. Willoughby Heights does not claim that it has been wronged by the decision of RSW 2009 in the appeal of br. H. Voorhorst against the decision of the consistory of Cloverdale, to use the revised Psalms in the worship services. Willoughby Heights seeks to provide a ground for its right to appeal the Considerations of Article 5a of the Acts of RSW 2009 by speaking about “a dangerous precedent” that could be set by those Considerations with regard to the use of the Church Order.

- 3.2 The dangerous precedent about which Willoughby Heights is concerned seems to be the fact that RSW 2009 spoke about “the intent” of Article 55. Willoughby Heights judges that, in doing so, RSW 2009 went “against Article 76 CO.” However, it is clear that the provisions of the CO do not address every possible situation or church orderly question that may arise. In fact, therefore, the diligent observation of the articles of the CO (Article 76) frequently requires that their provisions be interpreted, and their true intent discerned, so that they can be properly applied. In principle, therefore, it was not wrong for RSW 2009 to speak about “the intent” of Article 55.
- 3.3 In its Consideration 2, Willoughby Heights seems to suggest that RSW 2009 read into Article 55 the notion that “a committee appointed by synod can do, what the churches decided should be done by the churches in common.” In its Consideration 2, Willoughby Heights describes the rationale that RSW 2009 followed in arriving at its decision about the relevance of Article 55 to the appeal of br. Voorhorst. However, it does not show that RSW 2009 implied or claimed that “a committee appointed by synod can do, what the churches decided should be done by the churches in common.”
- 3.4 In its Consideration 3, Willoughby Heights states that RSW 2009 “tries to prove from history what the intent of the present Church Order is.” However, RSW 2009 did not try to prove from history what the *intent* of Article 55 CO is. RSW 2009 used the historical practice of the Canadian Reformed Churches to show how the provision of Article 55 (formerly Article 69) has been applied in the past. In fact, Willoughby Heights does the very same thing, when it argues that the situation pre-1983 was substantially different, because they “see in the history of the Canadian Reformed Churches a struggle to find their way in a new situation.”

- 3.5 In its Consideration 4, Willoughby Heights claims that the adoption of Article 55 in 1983 brought about a real change in regard to the singing of Psalms or Hymns not yet approved by a general synod. However, comparing pre-1983 Article 69 with current Article 55 shows that RSW 2009 correctly judged that “there is no significant change between the Church Order prior to and after 1983. Both the older Article 69 and the present Article 55 clearly limit the churches’ singing to synodically-adopted songs.” The issue, therefore, is not simply “What does the article say?” It is rather, “How should the churches apply Article 55 to the use of Psalms and Hymns which have not been approved by a general synod, but have been given to the churches for testing?” It was proper, therefore, for RSW 2009 to use the historical practice of the churches in that regard in order to come to a conclusion about br. Voorhorst’s appeal.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to deny the appeal of Willoughby Heights.

ADOPTED

Article 172 – Printing of the Acts

1. Material

Letter from Langley (8.1.r).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Langley notes that the printing of synod reports and the Acts constitute a large part of synod expenses (Acts 2007, Article 161, which reveals that the printing of the Acts of Synod 2004 cost \$14,832.00, out of a total budget of \$30,221.50). Langley also observes that due to inflation, the costs for the Acts of Synod 2007 would be even higher.
- 2.2 Langley also notes that most members of the churches have ready access to internet.
- 2.3 Langley proposes that the Acts of Synod 2010 be published in digital form on the federational website and also requests that the Website Committee be instructed to make all past Acts available on the federational website.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The cost of publishing the Acts of Synod is significant. As Langley points out, the cost for the Acts of Synod 2004 was \$14,832.00. In addition, Synod 2010 learned that the cost of the Acts 2007 was \$16,793.10 (See Acts of Synod 2010, Article 158).
- 3.2 People today are increasingly accustomed to accessing information digitally.
- 3.3 Synod 2010 has already decided to instruct the Website Committee to work towards publishing all the past Acts of Synod in digital form (see Article 73).
- 3.4 It would be good to keep in mind the needs of those who do not have access to the internet and the feelings of those who simply prefer to have a printed copy. As churches, we should encourage reading and study of the Acts to the fullest extent. For this reason, it would not be wise to publish the Acts only in digital form. Church members should have the possibility of ordering printed copies.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 That the Acts of Synod 2010 should be published digitally on the federational website and that printed copies be made available upon request of the churches.
- 4.2 That the cost of printing the Acts be carried by the local churches which request them.
- 4.3 To direct the second clerk to advise the consistories of the churches of this policy change and cost allocation.

ADOPTED**Article 173 – Reformed Churches of Korea (RCK)****1. Material**

- 1.1 Report from the CRCA re: RCK (8.2.m).
- 1.2 Letters from Coaldale (8.3.M.8), Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.M.16), Lincoln ((8.3.M.36), and Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.3.M.37).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The CRCA received a letter dated July 17, 2009 from the RCK, officially requesting ecclesiastical fellowship with the CanRC.
- 2.2 The letter contained information about the RCK: The federation was

established in 2008 and consists of five congregations with a total of 200 members. They have adopted the Three Forms of Unity and the Dort Church Order. The federation has a complete Psalter, set to Genevan melodies. The churches use the (translated) liturgical forms of the CanRC. Several ministers of the CanRC have visited RCK congregations.

- 2.3 The CRCA replied to this letter by stating that although we were thankful for the RCK's commitment to the Reformed faith, the CanRC could not recommend the RCK at this time, because:
- 2.3.1 The federation is very new and we need to learn more about these churches.
- 2.3.2 We have a ecclesiastical fellowship with the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK) and we need to discuss the RCK with the PCK.
- 2.3.3 It is not clear to the CRCA why the RCK churches do not work with the Independent Reformed Churches of Korea (IRCK).
- 2.4 The CRCA received another letter from the RCK on October 17, 2009. It provided the following information:
- 2.4.1 The ministers of the RCK come from various Presbyterian churches. They perceived deformation in these churches and, united by a desire to build up a "true reformed church," they began to study the Reformed Confessions and Church Order. They frequently invited Dr. S. G. Hur to give lectures regarding the Reformed faith and life. In 2004 they came to the decision to establish a new federation.
- 2.4.2 They feel that they cannot work with the PCK because of creeping deformation in the PCK and that they cannot join the IRCK because of hierarchical elements in its church government.
- 2.5 The CRCA recommends that Synod recognize the RCK as faithful churches of the Lord and further that Synod mandate the CRCA as follows:
- 2.5.1 To continue the contact with the RCK with a view to making recommendations regarding ecclesiastical fellowship to Synod 2013.
- 2.5.2 To discuss the matter of the RCK with the PCK and with the IRCK.
- 2.6 The churches of Coaldale and Fergus-Maranatha do not think it

appropriate to seek ecclesiastical contact with the RCK because these churches do not have a relationship with the PCK.

2.7 The church of Winnipeg-Redeemer recommends not to recognize the RCK as faithful churches, but does not give grounds for its recommendation.

2.8 The church at Lincoln agrees with the recommendations of the CRCA.

3. Considerations

3.1 It would appear from the information received from the CRCA that the RCK aspires to be a faithful church of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, many questions would need to be answered before ecclesiastical fellowship could be established, including the following:

3.1.1 On what grounds, exactly, does the RCK remain separate from the PCK?

3.1.2 What does the PCK think of the separate existence of the RCK?

3.1.3 Why is the RCK separate from the IRCK?

3.1.4 Would barriers of language and geography allow for a meaningful and functional relationship with the RCK? Does the CRCA have the resources and manpower to maintain another official international relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship?

3.2 In its Report to Synod 2010, the CRCA gave a report of some discussions between representatives of the CRCA and the Fraternal Relations Committee (FRC) of the PCK. The following quotation is relevant:

The matter of church relations within Korea was also discussed. We were informed that there is virtually no contact between the PCK and the Independent Reformed Church in Korea (IRCK), at least in any official way. There were a number of reasons given, such as they (IRCK) are so small, and they do respect the PCK seminary (implication – they are not different?). There was a commitment made by the FRC to give some attention to this matter, especially in light of our position about consulting the federation that we already have a relationship with. The FRC did question why the IRCK approached the ICRC for membership before

having discussions with the PCK. In personal discussions, we learned quite a bit more about the IRCK as well as the more recent Reformed Church in Korea (RCK). Much more information will need to be gathered before an informed decision about relationships with either or both of these federations can be made.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

4.1 Not to accept the offer of the RCK for ecclesiastical fellowship but to wait until more information becomes available.

4.2 To mandate the CRCA to:

4.2.1 Continue the contact with the RCK with a view to making recommendations regarding ecclesiastical fellowship to Synod 2013, keeping in mind especially Considerations 3.1.1 - 3.1.4.

4.2.2 Report to the churches six months before the next General Synod.

ADOPTED

Article 174 – Changes to the Guidelines

Section IV.I.1

The *old* rule is as follows:

I. Voting

1. The chair shall call the roll (in any order) when a vote is taken.

Proposal to Change Section IV.1.1 as follows:

I. Voting

1. It is in the freedom of the chair to determine how the vote is to be taken: by calling the roll (in any order) or by show of hands.

Add as I.E:

For all matters of the churches in common, individual churches may address proposals or other significant submissions directly to general synod with the requirement that all such submissions are sent also

to each church in the federation no later than six months prior to general synod.

Add as I.F:

Since matters on the agenda of general synod involve the churches in common, regional synods shall distribute copies of adopted overtures to all the churches in the federation no later than five months prior to the convening of a general synod.

Add I.J:

The convening church shall arrange to have people present during Synod to assist the clerks in preparing the Acts and to do other paper work.

ADOPTED

For the complete text, see *Appendix 11*.

Article 175 – Women Voting in the Election of Office Bearers (Majority Report)

1. Material

- 1.1 Majority Report on Women's Voting (8.2.g.i)
- 1.2 Minority Report on Women's Voting (8.2.g.ii)
- 1.3 Report to Synod 1980 on Women's Voting plus the decision of Synod 1980
- 1.4 Report to Synod 1983 on Women's Voting plus the decision of Synod 1983
- 1.5 Letters from Smithers (8.3.G.1), Guelph (8.3.G.2 and 8.3.G.3) Chatham (8.3.G.4), Orangeville (8.3.G.5), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.G.6), Hamilton-Providence (8.3.G.7), Grand Valley (8.3.G.8), Coaldale (8.3.G.9), Carman East (8.3.G.10), Calgary (8.3.G.11), Chilliwack (8.3.G.12), Edmonton-Immanuel (8.3.G.13), Owen-Sound (8.3.G.14), Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.G.15), Flamborough (8.3.G.16), Neerlandia (8.3.G.17) Willoughby Heights (8.3.G.18), Attercliffe (8.3.G.19), Taber (8.3.G.20), Tintern (8.3.G.21) Surrey (8.3.G.22), Vernon (8.3.G.23), London (8.3.G.24), Glanbrook (8.3.G.25) Ancaster (8.3.G.26), Yarrow (8.3.G.27), Smithville (8.3.G.28), Abbotsford (8.3.G.29) Lincoln (8.3.G.30), Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.3.G.31), Cloverdale (8.3.G.32), Dunnville (8.3.G.33), and Lynden (8.3.G.34).

2. Observations

- 2.1 The committee which reported to Synod 1980 received the following mandate from Synod 1977 (Article 27.A, Recommendation):
 - [a.] To make a thorough study of all biblical and Church-political aspects regarding the question of women's voting rights.
 - [b.] To forward the results of their studies to the Churches one year prior to the next Synod and to invite comments to be submitted within six months after publication of the study
 - [c.] To submit their report with recommendations to the next General Synod.
- 2.2 The committee provided a lengthy report to Synod 1980. After evaluating this report, Synod appointed a new committee with the following mandate (Article 83, paragraph IV.C.3):
 - [a] To re-examine the matter, including the Study-Report presented to Synod in the light of the criticism voiced in letters to Synod and in the report of the Advisory Committee
 - [b] To give more consideration to material available in other study reports re: the place and task of women in the Church.
 - [c] To submit a report with recommendations to the next General Synod, with a sufficient number of copies to the churches.
- 2.3 Synod Smithers 2007 agreed with the church at Hamilton to "finish the mandate extended by Synod Smithville 1980" (Acts of Synod Smithers 2007, Article 136, Recommendation 5.2). Synod 2007 then mandated the Committee on Women's Voting to "examine the biblical teaching on headship and voting and also study the following questions":
 - [5.2.1] With regard to headship: What is the position of widows and single female communicant members?
 - [5.2.2] With regard to headship: What is the relationship between husband and wife when they discuss who to vote for – doesn't the husband therefore show and practice equality as joint heirs of the grace of God?
 - [5.2.3] With regard to voting: What do the Bible and our Church Order say about congregational participation in electing office bearers?
 - [5.2.4] With regard to voting: What is the relationship between congregational (a) nomination, (b) election process, (c) ratification/approbation, and (d) the final appointment by council?

- 2.4 The church at Hamilton was appointed as this Committee. It submitted both a Majority Report and a Minority Report. The Minority Report follows the same structure as the Majority Report, only providing different arguments and conclusions on some topics. The key points of both reports are dealt with together below.
- 2.5 The Majority Report states that “in keeping with the Church Order (Article 3), this report understands the process of election to be the means by which God calls men to office in the church of Christ.”
- 2.6 The Majority Report concludes:
- 2.6.1 In the New Covenant, men and women are equal before God and receive all the blessings and privileges of being members of that covenant and united to Christ (Col 3:10-11, Eph 4:24, Gal 3:28). We therefore confess that male and female believers equally share in the office of all believers as prophets, priests, and kings (HC LD 12, Q&A 32). Women too have minds filled with the Spirit and thus can exercise the New Covenant gifts of discernment and wisdom (1 Cor 2:15).
- 2.6.2 In the New Covenant, the special offices in the church, which pertain to teaching and ruling, are reserved for men.
- 2.6.3 Placing these two conclusions next to each other makes it clear that women too have a God-given responsibility to vote at congregational meetings in Christ’s church. This is an obligation placed on communicant members – those who have the office of all believers – and is not tied to the exercise of the special office. The vote is not authoritative, but is a part of the advice of the congregation. Because of this, women ought to be allowed and encouraged to participate fully in congregational life and exercise the gifts they have received as members of Christ and partakers in the Holy Spirit (HC LD 21, Q&A 55).
- 2.7 The Majority Report concludes further that female communicant members have the responsibility to participate in the election of office bearers, no less than male communicant members, under the supervision of the consistory. This responsibility extends to the voting no less than to the nomination and approbation of men for office. The Majority Report, therefore, recommends that Synod Burlington-Ebenezer (2010) accept the findings of this report and agree with its conclusion that the participation of female communicant members in all aspects of the calling of office bearers is in accordance with Scripture and the Church Order.

- 2.8 The Minority Report states in response to the Majority Report that “one cannot ... conclude that, in the office of all believers, both men and women have a similar responsibility towards voting for office bearers” (Vol. 3, p. 6). Rather, voting for office bearers “is an obligation placed by the consistory on male communicant members. The consistory delegates a responsibility, the use of a vote. It is within the jurisdiction of a consistory to involve the male members in voting for office bearers. The delegating of the responsibility to join in voting is within the authority of those in the special office and of the headship responsibility of male communicant members founded upon the creation order concept. Because of this, women ought not to be allowed and encouraged to vote for office bearers” (p. 10).
- 2.9 The Minority Report further concludes that “in both the Old and New Covenants, mature male members of the covenant community participate in the choosing of leaders in the congregation. The present practices in the Canadian Reformed Churches for the election of office bearers follow biblical practices embedded in the Belgic Confession and the Church Order. Furthermore, there is no evidence that scriptural views of election by the congregation are transgressed by our present practice” (p. 19).
- 2.10 The final conclusion of the Minority Report is that based on a study of “headship and voting,” female communicant members do not have the responsibility according to biblical directives nor church orderly requirement, to participate in the election of office bearers. The Canadian Reformed Churches should maintain previous general synod decisions and our present practice of allowing only male communicant members, under the direct authority and supervision of the consistory, to join them in the vote for office bearers. Meanwhile the nomination and approbation of men for office remains within the jurisdiction of all church members.
- 2.11 The Minority Report recommends that:
- 2.11.1 Synod Burlington-Ebenezer (2010) uphold previous general synod decisions and present practices in the Canadian Reformed Churches and not allow the participation of female communicant members in the voting for office bearers.
- 2.11.2 The mandate given by General Synod Smithers to: “examine the biblical teaching on headship and voting and also study the following questions...” has hereby been fulfilled.

- 2.12 Letters were received from thirty-four churches as follows:
- 2.12.1 Smithers, Flamborough and Vernon support the Majority Report. Burlington-Ebenezer does as well and suggests that Synod leave this matter in the freedom of the churches.
- 2.12.2 Elora leaves the decision in the wisdom of Synod. Hamilton-Providence could not come to a definitive conclusion, but is uncomfortable with the Majority Report. Glanbrook is divided on the issue and asks Synod to provide scriptural guidance in this matter. Taber feels that both reports are inconclusive. They would like to see a more detailed study carried out.
- 2.12.3 Guelph feels the Majority Report lacks balance in general. In particular, the prohibition of 1 Cor 14:35 is more general than merely to that of exercising “the special teaching and ruling office in the church, the office of elder and minister.” Guelph points out that the Majority Report leaves open the possibility for women to be ordained to the office of deacon since it does not mention deacons in its explanation of this text. Guelph also points out that to conclude from “the whole multitude” in Acts 6:3-6 that women should be included in choosing men for office, means then the children cannot be excluded either. Guelph criticizes the Minority Report for explaining voting as “decision making” when in fact it is only input.
- 2.12.4 Chatham and Calgary strongly agree with the Minority Report. Chilliwack does not favour the conclusions of the Majority Report.
- 2.12.5 Grand Valley feels that the appointment by Smithers 2007 of the very church that asked for the issue to be revisited as Committee is regrettable. They feel that the churches should stay the course and not accept the recommendations of the Majority Report.
- 2.12.6 Orangeville supports the Minority Report and points out a number of faulty arguments in the Majority Report, among which are: implying that the Reformers and the Church Order had women’s voting in view is unfounded; associating voting with the office of all believers is not derived from Scripture nor supported by Lord’s Day 12 where this office is confessed.

- 2.12.7 Coaldale calls into question the Majority Report’s interpretation of Nehemiah and 10, along with that of 1 Tim 2:11, and 1 Cor 14:33-35. It finds the explanation given unsubstantiated from the text. Coaldale urges Synod to adopt the conclusions of the Minority Report.
- 2.12.8 Carman East supports the view that the vote for office bearers is an act of authority in the church. C.O Article 3 stipulates that “those elected shall be appointed.” Therefore Carman East feels that the vote is binding and authoritative. They do not support the recommendations of the Majority Report.
- 2.12.9 Edmonton-Immanuel does not support the Majority Report. It feels that the reasoning is flawed and that based on CO Article 3, the vote for office bearers is authoritative. Owen Sound and London agree with the position of the Minority report. They also feel that there is strong support for viewing the vote for office bearers as authoritative.
- 2.12.10 Fergus-Maranatha does not agree with the findings of the Majority report. They recommend not to appoint another study committee unless new scriptural grounds are presented.
- 2.12.11 Neerlandia feels that the Majority Report’s exegesis of Acts 6 is weak. They ask Synod to maintain the existing practice in the churches.
- 2.12.12 Willoughby Heights feels that the matter of women’s voting is improperly on the agenda of Synod 2010. They recommend not to change the existing practice because it could divide the church.
- 2.12.13 Attercliffe asks Synod 2010 to adopt the Minority Report and not to allow the women to vote. They feel that by adopting the Minority Report, Synod will put the matter to rest.
- 2.12.14 Spring Creek asks Synod to uphold the present practice in the churches. Surrey feels that if the present reports are the best that the churches can come up with, then we should let the matter rest. If the present practice has not proven to be unbiblical, then it should not be changed.
- 2.12.15 Ancaster supports the conclusions of the Minority Report. They feel that the push to have women vote is influenced by “the spirit of the age.”

- 2.12.16 Yarrow is disappointed with both reports. They pose many questions but offer no positive stand. Any decision, according to Yarrow, must be accompanied by guidelines.
- 2.12.17 Smithville feels that the burden of proof rests on those who want change. They feel that the lessons of history need to teach us that women's voting in the churches should not be supported. Synod Smithers' mandate has been fulfilled.
- 2.12.18 Abbotsford feels that both reports are inconclusive. They ask Synod to appoint another committee to study the issues in depth. They do not endorse a position at present.
- 2.12.19 Lincoln does not support the positions of the Majority Report that the women of the Old and New Testament participated in the casting of lots or votes. They ask Synod to maintain the present practice.
- 2.12.20 Winnipeg-Redeemer feels that neither report gives compelling reasons to adopt their position. They do not support the Majority Report and advise Synod to provide well-grounded and scriptural advice to the churches.
- 2.12.21 Cloverdale rejects the conclusions of both reports. They recommend to leave this matter in the freedom of the churches and feel that any Synod decision about this matter would be hierarchical.
- 2.12.22 Dunnville is unanimous in its support of the Minority Report. They present what they consider to be strong biblical arguments which would deny the vote to the women of the congregation.
- 2.12.23 Lynden has concerns about how the Majority Report defines "male headship." They feel the Majority Report creates an artificial divide between headship in the home and the authority of office bearers in the church. By showing a limited understanding of "covenantal headship," Lynden feels that the Majority Report fails to show that our present system is not scriptural.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Smithers 2007 gave the committee a specific mandate, namely to examine the biblical teaching on headship and voting. Smithers considered that this part of the mandate from 1980 had not been completed. The committee appointed by Smithers 2007 has done this

- and in that way fulfilled both the original mandate of 1980 and so also the mandate given by Smithers 2007.
- 3.2 The Majority Report concludes that headship is not an obstacle to women participating in the election process, because "the vote is not authoritative, but is part of the advice of the congregation." On the one hand, it is correct to state that voting is not a matter of authority. Christ rules the church by his Word and Spirit through his appointed office bearers: deacons, elders and ministers who together "form the council of the church" (Belgic Confession, Article 30). The Report to Synod 1983 made it clear that one principle regained in the Reformation was "the rights of the congregation to choose its own office bearers" (Acts 1983, p.401). This principle is embedded in the Belgic Confession Article 31, "We believe that ministers of God's Word, elders and deacons ought to be chosen to their offices by lawful election *of the church...*" Christ provides men in the congregation equipped for various offices (Eph 4:11ff). The consistory, according to Article 3 CO, must always involve the congregation as a minimum through the process of approbation. According to the same Article, the consistory is not obligated to but *may* involve the congregation through voting. When it does, the consistory puts forward a slate of names of brothers whom it deems suitable to office. Voting of the congregation is then the way by which the congregation can "choose men to their offices." According to Article 3 CO, the consistory is obligated to appoint these men whom the congregation chooses. Election differs from nomination and approbation in that the consistory is bound by the outcome.
- 3.3 Both reports agree that the matter of who speaks for the congregation is a matter of who *represents* the congregation. The congregation is made up of all believers and their children (Belgic Confession Article 34), and yet no one advocates that every single member of the church (men, women, children, communicant and non communicant) actually vote, but rather that some portion of the congregation speaks for the whole through the vote. The Majority Report believes it is scriptural to allow both male and female communicant members to represent the congregation in choosing office bearers (p.247). However, it provides no single, unambiguous scriptural example where females were called upon to represent God's people, much less to give official voice to the will of the people in the matter of choosing or ordaining office-bearers.

- 3.4 It is different with male representation of the congregation. The Minority Report is correct in pointing out that in Scripture males regularly represented the whole congregation of God's people. This representation was done for different purposes at different times. In Numbers 1:44, one man from each tribe was chosen as leader, "each one representing his family." In Numbers 13, one man representing each tribe was sent out to spy the land (cf. Josh 3:12). In 2 Corinthians 8:23, Paul describes the men traveling with Titus to Corinth as "representatives of the churches and an honour to Christ." No comparable examples of female representation of the congregation have been brought forward.
- 3.5 Representative men also acted on behalf of the congregation when it came to anointing or choosing office bearers. In obedience to God's command in Deuteronomy 17:15, the "men of Judah" and the "elders of Israel" appointed the man whom God had earlier chosen when they anointed David king over themselves (2 Sam 2:4 & 5:3). A clear NT example is when Peter, addressing the group of believers which included women (Acts 1:14), specifically singles out the male members with the double masculine address "men, brothers" (Acts 1:16, *Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί / andres adelphoi*) and asks them to choose candidates to replace Judas as Apostle. These *male* members of the church then chose and put forward two candidates suitable to replace Judas (Acts 1:23), one of whom was then selected by lot. It is undeniable that in these examples of selecting or appointing men for office it was the men and only the men of the congregation who acted on behalf of the whole congregation. No unambiguous biblical example demonstrating that females too represented the congregation has been raised. In voting today the congregation gives voice to its choice of the gifts provided by the Lord Jesus. It is fully in line with Scripture that the men do this on behalf of and for the well-being of the congregation.
- 3.6 Reports to Synods 1980 and 1983 have shown that there is no direct biblical *prescription* for who should choose on behalf of the congregation. This should make us careful. What we have in Scripture are examples, a *description* of what took place in certain situations of choosing. Some examples may be unclear as to who did the choosing (e.g., Acts 15:22) but at least two examples (see above) do not include the sisters in choosing or appointing. Therefore it is certainly not being disobedient to God's Word to allow only men to represent the congregation in voting.

- 3.7 We must recognize as well that we have ecclesiastical fellowship with churches that allow women to participate. This has never been a matter that was seen as an obstacle to recognizing each other as faithful churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. But a practice elsewhere is not for that reason alone recommendable for ourselves. For over 400 years the Reformed churches in the Netherlands and later in Canada followed the example of Scripture in calling upon the men to represent the congregation in choosing for office bearers and no one has shown this to be unscriptural. The current practice is quite in line with biblical precedent.
- 3.8 The key premise of the Majority Report, namely that "voting belongs properly to the office of all believers" (p.234), has not been proven. Lord's Day 12 does not make a connection to voting or to representing the congregation. It is this faulty premise which leads to the faulty conclusion that also the sisters are *obligated* to vote (Vol. 1, p. 237). This is simply not true. It would make the existing practice of male-representation of the congregation in voting actually contrary to Scripture and thus a sin which clearly is not the case (see above). On its central point the Majority Report is significantly flawed.
- 3.9 The Majority Report has not proven that women's voting is biblically demanded, nor has it shown how it would be an improvement over the current practice. The Majority Report does not demonstrate that male-only voting has been detrimental to church life or dishonouring to the Lord in any way, shape, or form. This practice has served the churches well for hundreds of years. If a current practice is to be changed, those who propose the change have the burden of proof: Is the current practice against God's Word or does the Bible require the change? Is there something not good about the current practice that would be improved with a change? Neither the Majority Report nor the 1983 Report (which advocated the same) supply this proof.
- 3.10 Of the thirty-four churches which wrote to Synod, only four support the conclusions of the Majority Report. The vast majority of these churches express the desire to maintain the current practice. Because the current practice is in line with biblical example and has not been shown to be detrimental, this desire of the churches ought to be respected.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To thank the committee for the work done and conclude that the mandate given by Smithville and Smithers is fully completed.
- 4.2 To maintain the current practice of male communicant member voting.

DEFEATED

Article 176 – Women Voting in the Election of Office Bearers (Minority Report)

The following *amended* minority proposal was **ADOPTED**.

1. Material

- 1.1 Report from the Committee on Women's Voting (majority) 8.2.g.i
- 1.2 Report from the Committee on Women's Voting (minority) 8.2.g.ii
- 1.3 Letters from Smithers (8.3.G1), Guelph-Emmanuel (8.3.G.2), Elora (8.3.G.3), Chatham (8.3.G.4), Orangeville (8.3.G.5), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.G.6), Hamilton-Providence (8.3.G.7), Grand Valley (8.3.G.8), Coaldale (8.3.G.9), Carman East (8.3.G.10), Calgary (8.3.G.11), Chilliwack (8.3.G.12), Edmonton-Immanuel (8.3.G.13), Owen Sound (8.3.G.14), Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.G.15), Flamborough (8.3.G.16), Neerlandia (8.3.G.17), Willoughby Heights (8.3.G.18), Attercliffe (8.3.G.19), Taber (8.3.G.20), Spring Creek (8.3.G.21), Surrey-Maranatha (8.3.G.22), Vernon (8.3.G.23), London (8.3.G.24), Glanbrook (8.3.G.25), Ancaster (8.3.G.26), Yarrow (8.3.G.27), Smithville (8.3.G.28), Abbotsford (8.3.G.29), Lincoln (8.3.G.30), Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.3.G.31), Cloverdale (8.3.G.32), Dunnville (8.3.G.33), and Lynden (8.3.G.34).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Smithers 2007 mandated the Committee on Women's Voting to "Examine the biblical teaching on headship and voting and also study the following questions" (Acts, Article 136, Recommendation 5.2):
 - [5.2.1] With regard to headship: What is the position of widows and single female communicant members?
 - [5.2.2] With regard to headship: What is the relationship between

husband and wife when they discuss who to vote for – doesn't the husband therefore show and practice equality as joint heirs of the grace of God?

- [5.2.3] With regard to voting: What do the Bible and our Church Order say about congregational participation in electing office bearers?
 - [5.2.4] With regard to voting: What is the relationship between congregational (a) nomination, (b) election process, (c) ratification/approbation, and (d) the final appointment by council?
- 2.2 The church at Hamilton was appointed as this Committee. It submitted both a Majority Report and a Minority Report.
 - 2.3 The Majority Report emphasizes "voting" or "election" as mentioned in Article 3 CO as a means, or a step in the process by which God calls to office in the church of Jesus Christ.
 - 2.4 The Majority report evaluates the matters of male headship and of equality between man and woman, first in the Old Testament and then in the New Testament, and comes to the following conclusions:
 - 2.4.1 The headship of men is not absolute, but operates within the relationships ordained by God: that of husband and wife (marriage), and that of office-bearer and communicant member (church).
 - 2.4.2 Male and female believers, who are both created in the image of God, are equal before God, and equally share in the office of all believers as prophets, priests and kings.
 - 2.4.3 The divinely ordained differences between men and women in the church lead to the rule that the special offices in the church are clearly reserved for men only (1 Tim.2:11-15 and 1 Cor.14:33b-35).
 - 2.4.4 Women too have a God-given responsibility to vote at congregational meetings in Christ's church, and thus it is the covenantal obligation of all communicant members to participate in the voting for office-bearers.
 - 2.4.5 There is no evidence that Scripture views election by the congregation as an expression of authority in the church.
 - 2.5 The Majority Report concludes that Article 31 BC, as a summary of what the Bible teaches about governance in the church, does not present the voting for officers in the church as an expression of authority. The BC honours Christ as the only Head of the church,

with the ministers, elders and deacons exercising his authority and discipline. The vote for electing office bearers is therefore a matter of giving advice or expressing the preference of the congregation, in submission to the God-given authority of the office bearers, who nominate and appoint men to office.

- 2.6 The Majority Report also discusses voting procedures in the 16th century, and points at expressions in some literature from the time just after the Reformation, like “the whole congregation,” “the consent of the people,” and “the voices of all.”
- 2.7 The Majority Report evaluates the stipulations in Article 3 of the CO of the Canadian Reformed Churches and notes that in each of the three steps of choosing office bearers the consistory with the deacons calls the “congregation” to participate without distinguishing between male and female communicant members at any point. The consistory retains its authority over the complete process.
- 2.8 The Majority Report, therefore, recommends that Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 accept the findings of this report and agree with its conclusion that the participation of female communicant members in all aspects of the calling of office bearers is in accordance with Scripture and the Church Order.
- 2.9 The Minority Report follows the structure and the wording of the Majority Report, but presents opposing conclusions. It states that voting for office bearers is an obligation placed by the consistory on male communicant members. The consistory delegates a responsibility, the use of a vote.
- 2.10 The Minority Report, therefore, recommends that Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 uphold previous general synod decisions and present practices in the Canadian Reformed Churches, and not allow the participation of female communicant members in voting for office bearers.
- 2.11 Article 3 of the CO mentions “the congregation” five times. It is generally agreed that four out of these five times it means “all (communicant) members,” whereas one time out of these it is the practice in most of our churches to read it as “male communicant members only.”
- 2.12 Six churches request Synod to appoint another study committee. Four churches express support for the conclusion of the Majority Report. One church recommends leaving the decision to the local church. Four churches lean towards supporting the recommendation

of the Minority Report. Nineteen churches express strong support for the conclusions of the Minority Report. They criticize and reject the Majority’s Report’s arguments regarding male headship in the church, the authority of the congregational vote, the often inconclusive exegesis of various key passages in Scripture about the role of women in the church, and the involvement of women in choosing leaders of God’s people in the Old Testament and New Testament, the interpretation of Article 3 CO, as well as the fact that the Majority Report ignores a well-established practice of more than 400 years.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Although it is unfortunate that neither the Majority Report nor the Minority Report interact with the history of the matter of women’s voting as it has unfolded in reports and decisions since Synod Toronto 1974, the committee cannot be blamed for this, since it was not part of the mandate given by Synod Smithers. This could be reason to appoint a new study committee with a broader mandate. However, the majority of letters from the churches urges Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 to bring the matter of women’s voting to a conclusion.
- 3.2 The exegetical studies and evaluations of a number of Scripture passages, in particular in the Majority Report, about male headship and gender equality versus divinely ordained differences between man and woman in marriage and in the church may be interesting, instructive, and even correct. However, neither one of the two reports makes clear what the connection is between these Scripture passages and the current practice of choosing office bearers in the Canadian Reformed Churches according to Article 3 CO.
- 3.3 Both reports correctly affirm that, according to 1 Tim.2:11-15 and 1 Cor.14:33-35, the special offices of minister, elder and deacon in the church are reserved for men only.
- 3.4 The Majority Report fails to prove from Scripture and/or the Church Order that women *must* vote for office bearers, and that therefore women have a God-given responsibility to vote at congregational meetings in Christ’s church, and that it is the covenantal obligation of all communicant members to participate in voting for office bearers. That is why the often-used expression “Women’s Voting Rights” is in fact a misnomer. Neither male nor female members of

- the congregation have the *right* or even the *obligation* to vote for office bearers. It is a privilege that, according to Article 3 CO, *can* be granted by the consistory with the deacons. It can, therefore, not be proven that with the current practice the churches are disobedient to God's Word.
- 3.5 The Minority Report fails to prove from Scripture and/or the Church Order that women are *not allowed* to vote for office bearers. Unfortunately the argumentation in the Minority Report barely goes beyond stating simply the opposite of the conclusions of the Majority Report, introduced by expressions like "it may be assumed...." Or: "it may not be concluded...." Or: "no firm conclusion can be made that women voted for office bearers, in fact it is most logical to suggest, given the spirit of the time, that only the men voted or elected." Or: "to suggest that voting by women did occur cannot be conclusively deduced from the scriptures."
- 3.6 Both reports show that it is significant to study key texts in Scripture regarding the role of women in the church and the matter of male headship. But when it comes to voting for office bearers, the application of these texts is controversial and inconclusive. The fact that for more than 30 years the assemblies of the Canadian Reformed Churches have not been able to bring the matter of women's voting to a closure, so that this issue continues to divide the churches, is caused by the reality that there is no clear connection, or at best a remote connection between these Scripture passages and our voting procedures. This makes the exegetical sections of both reports hardly relevant or decisive for the matter of women's voting.
- 3.7 In trying to find biblical support for our current voting procedures, the Majority Report and the Minority Report, as well as many of the churches that voiced objections against one or both of the reports, fail to make a careful distinction between what is descriptive and prescriptive in passages like Acts 1, Acts 6, and others, also in the Old Testament, that tell about choosing leaders for God's people.
- 3.8 The Minority Report does not prove that the consistory with the deacons delegates a responsibility, or its authority when it gives the congregation the opportunity to elect men from those nominated for office. The statement in the Minority Report: "Authority may be delegated by involving the congregation yet remains with the council of the congregation at all times," is puzzling and confusing. The Minority Report does not give evidence that it is even possible

- for a consistory (with or without deacons) to delegate its God-given authority. It is at least foreign to Reformed church polity.
- 3.9 The adopted Church Order does not mention the congregational meeting as an ecclesiastical body with either original or delegated authority. In Reformed church polity the consistory does not have the hierarchical power to ignore the congregation when it makes decisions. That would be the Roman Catholic system. In this structure priests and bishops rule with absolute authority, which makes a congregational meeting impossible. In the Congregational system the congregational meeting is the highest authority, with the consistory simply executing what the congregation decides by majority vote. In Reformed church polity the consistory is the only governing body, established by Christ as the Head of the church to govern according to his Word. A congregational meeting is then a public consistory meeting in which the consistory, before it makes or implements important decisions, hears and consults the members of the congregation. This is done, because all communicant members of the congregation have the office of all believers. In the congregation only the consistory has governing authority to lead and make all decisions. The congregational meeting is not a second governing authority besides or over the consistory, but the consistory voluntarily agrees to respect the voice of the congregation, as expressed in Article 3 CO with the phrase that "those elected *shall* be appointed by the consistory with the deacons...."
- 3.10 Since neither the Scriptures nor the Confessions provide *instructions* regarding the participation of women in the voting for office bearers, it is understandable that the Church Order does not specify either who should participate in the election regulated in Article 3 CO.
- 3.11 When the Minority Report, as it evaluates the process of the calling to office, outlined in Article 3 CO, states that the inconsistency in our practice (the sisters are encouraged to take part in nomination and approbation, but are barred from voting) highlights the importance given to the election by vote, it assumes what needs to be proven, namely that there are good grounds for this inconsistency.
- 3.12 The observation that the participation of only the male communicant members of the congregation in the election of office bearers has been a well-established practice in the churches of the Reformation for more than 400 years, is not a convincing argument to state that women are not allowed to vote in the election of office bearers. For

it does not answer the question whether this practice was based on biblical grounds, or that it was the result of the influence of the prevailing culture of the day in the previous centuries, when the church did not act much differently from the standards in public society when it came to the role and position of women.

- 3.13 The Minority Report, as well as some of the churches, emphasizes that of the three steps of the calling to office in which the congregation is involved (nomination – election – approbation), the election is the most significant step, with a unique, different character, since it gives the congregation an authority to which the consistory with the deacons must submit. However, careful reading of Article 3 shows that the only steps that the CO really requires as decisive are appointment by the consistory with the deacons and approbation by the congregation. Giving the congregation the opportunity to participate in the nomination is optional. Asking the congregation to select a number from a list presented by the consistory with the deacons is also optional. The first option is to present as many candidates as there are vacancies and ask the congregation for approbation without election. In other words: a brother can become an office bearer without being elected by the congregation, but never without being appointed by the consistory with the deacons and without being approved by the congregation.
- 3.14 The fact that sisters participate in voting for office bearers has never been an obstacle for the Canadian Reformed Churches to establish ecclesiastical fellowship with the FCS, to commit to federative unity with the URCNA and to maintain ecclesiastical fellowship with the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To thank the committee for the work done and to consider its mandate completed.
- 4.2 To affirm that based on 1 Timothy 2:11-15 and 1 Corinthians 14:33-35, and as stipulated in Article 3 CO, only male communicant members can be called to the special offices of minister, elder, and deacon.
- 4.3 That any arrangement for the election of office bearers that goes beyond what has been agreed upon by the churches in Article 3 CO is a matter of the local regulations, adopted for that purpose by the consistory with the deacons.

ADOPTED

The *original* Consideration 3.10 of the Minority Report was **deleted** by majority vote:

- 3.10 Since neither the Scriptures nor the Confessions provide instructions regarding the participation of women in voting for office bearers, it is understandable that the Church Order does not specify either, who should participate in the election regulated in Article 3. Therefore there is no scriptural ground to interpret “congregation” as “only male communicant members” just one out of the five times that it is used in Article 3 CO. The fact that this has been a longstanding tradition and practice does not negate the need to provide biblical reasons to support this interpretation.

The *original* Recommendations 4.3 and 4.4 of the Minority Report were:

- 4.3 That there are no scriptural or Church political grounds to deny the communicant sisters of the congregation the privilege to participate in the election of office bearers.
- 4.4 That any arrangement for the election of office bearers that goes beyond what has been agreed upon by the churches in Article 3 CO is a matter of the local regulations, adopted for that purpose by the consistory with the deacons.

The *original* Recommendation 4.3 above was **deleted** by majority vote, whereby Recommendation 4.4 became what is 4.3 in the amended proposal that was adopted.

Article 177 – Appeal Burlington-Fellowship re: A Decision of Regional Synod East 2008

1. Material

Appeal from Burlington-Fellowship re: the decision of Regional Synod East 2008, Article 10 (8.5.d).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Burlington-Fellowship appeals the decision of Regional Synod East 2008, Article 10: “Broader assemblies have determined that the issue of women’s voting is a matter of the churches in common and a number of General Synods have admitted the issue to their agendas, evidencing the same.”

- 2.2 Burlington-Fellowship states that this is insufficient ground from which “to conclude that the churches have arrogated to its Synods the *exclusive jurisdiction* to regulate something left by the Church Order for local regulation.”
- 2.3 Burlington-Fellowship appeals to General Synod to judge that:
- [1.] Regional Synod East 2008, Article 10.1.C is not a valid ground.
 - [2.] Article 3 of the Church Order allows local congregations to regulate eligibility standards for participation in election for office bearers.
 - [3.] Therefore Regional Synod East 2008 erred in its decision to deny Fellowship’s appeal.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Burlington-Fellowship contests one of the four grounds of Regional Synod East 2008. This particular ground appears to be foundational to the decision of Regional Synod East as it is referred to on several occasions in this decision.
- 3.2 Regional Synod 2008 used a Consideration of Classis Central Ontario, June 13, 2008, referring to the Acts of General Synods 1974, 1977, 1986, 1995, 1998, and 2001 in order to prove “that broader assemblies have determined that the issue of women’s voting is a matter of the churches in common...” Careful scrutiny of these cited Acts of General Synod indicates the following:
- 3.2.1 **Acts of General Synod 1974**, Article 27, Consideration 2. This is a mistaken reference and Regional Synod East probably meant Article 84, which deals with women voting. Article 84 has no Consideration 2. No determination was made on the question of whether women voting belongs to the churches in common.
- 3.2.2 **The Acts of General Synod 1977**, Article 27, Consideration 2, supplies an interpretation of Synod 1974: “by not ad article 30 CO refusing to deal with women’s voting rights, Synod 1974 has in fact admitted that this is a matter of common concern.” Synod 1977 used this Consideration as part of its argument for appointing a committee to study the question of women’s voting rights. It assumed that this was a matter of the churches in common, but nowhere in its Acts does it provide a basis for this assumption.

- 3.2.3 **The Acts of General Synod 1986**, Article 120, Consideration 2 and 3, do not deal with the matter of the churches in common. This reference supplies no proof.
- 3.2.4 **The Acts of General Synod 1995**, Article 51, II, B, says nothing about the churches in common. This reference supplies no proof.
- 3.2.5 **The Acts of General Synod 1998**, Articles 111, 112, do not deal with the matter of the churches in common. This reference supplies no proof.
- 3.2.6 **The Acts of General Synod 2001**, Article 101, Consideration 4.2, says: The first ground that Regional Synod presents is that “the matter of women’s voting rights has been dealt with as a matter of the churches in common. This is true. However, this in itself does not constitute a ‘new ground.’ It only confirms that this request is at the right address, namely, General Synod.” This Synod is correct when it highlights that women voting “has been dealt with” as a matter of the churches in common, but it does not in its Acts defend its position.
- 3.2.7 **The Acts of General Synod 2007**, Article 136 says in point 2, dealing with admissibility: “This item is admissible because it comes from one of the churches and deals with a matter that has been perceived as one belonging to the churches in common.” Again, no determination is made about the question whether this belongs to the churches in common, but it is described as being a matter of perception.
- This past history of the Canadian Reformed Churches indicates that the question of whether or not women’s voting belongs to the churches in common has never been determined. Over time a perception has grown, based on common practice, but the question as to whether or not it belongs to the local church or to the churches in common has never been addressed as such.
- 3.3 While General Synod 1977, Article 27, Conclusion 1, stated that “since the unity of practice is desirable, the introduction of women’s voting by a particular church on its own would be regrettable,” it did not go on to state that such a decision would be contrary to Scripture, Confession, or Church Order.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide to sustain the appeal of Burlington-Fellowship against Article 10, Appeal 1, Ground c of Regional Synod East 2008.

DEFEATED

The chair ruled that by the fact that the Advisory Committee report was defeated, the appeal was **denied**.

Day 12 — Evening Session Wednesday, May 26, 2010

Article 178 – Concluding Matters

Censure ad Article 34 CO

Rev. Aasman stated that censure ad Article 34 of the CO was not needed.

Publication of the Acts

The first and second clerks are responsible for preparing the Acts for publication.

Financial Matters

No additional financial matters were reported.

Preparation of next General Synod

Aside from changes to the Guidelines for General Synod as well as the appointment Carman West as convening church for General Synod 2013 mentioned earlier, there were no further matters needing attention.

Adoption of the final Articles of the Acts

Members of Synod were requested to review the Acts received and to forward any further corrections to the clerk. The executive members of Synod will review and adopt the final articles of the Acts.

Approval of Press Release

The press release will be prepared by the vice-chairman and approved by the executive members of Synod for publication.

Article 179 – Closing of Synod

With gratitude to the Lord, Rev. Aasman noted that Synod could take place

in brotherly harmony. He thanked the Burlington-Ebenezer Church for all the work involved in hosting the Synod, and in particular br. G.J Nordeman for all he did in facilitating the preparations and in help given during Synod. A special word of thanks was also extended to the ladies who helped in the kitchen as well as to the families who hosted delegates in their homes. On behalf of Synod, Rev. Aasman presented a gift to the Burlington-Ebenezer church. In turn, he was given the gavel and base, hand-crafted by a member of the congregation for synod, as a souvenir of his work as chairman. He also thanked the members of Synod who worked so well together and above all our heavenly Father who made this work for the coming of the Kingdom possible.

On behalf of Synod, the vice-chairman expressed appreciation to Rev. Aasman for the pleasant and efficient way in which he had chaired the sessions.

Rev. Aasman read Revelation 1:12-20 and gave a closing meditation, after which he led in prayer. All present then sang Ps 67:1 and the chairman declared Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 closed.

APPENDIX 1 – Opening Address by the Rev. Dr. G. Nederveen

Esteemed brothers in the Lord,

On behalf of Burlington Ebenezer as convening church I welcome you in our midst. We thank the Lord for bringing you here safely from far and near and for giving you health to begin your task as synod.

From the day you knew you were delegated to General Synod 2010 you have looked towards this day. Whether it was with anticipation or with trepidation I don't know—perhaps the latter as you saw all the correspondence come in. I've heard from several brothers who have served at other synods that they have never seen so much material at a general synod.

But now the starting date for Synod Burlington-Ebenezer is here and yesterday we had the prayer service to ask the Lord for his blessing upon your work. As of today you begin some intensive labour on behalf of the churches as you deal with matters that are put before you by the churches. You are facing a major task for which much wisdom is needed.

To set the stage for your work, and to help you stay focussed, I chose Psalm 93 about God's kingship as starting point. This is not the first psalm in the Book of Psalms that speaks about God's kingship, but it is the first one in a series of psalms with the exclamation: The Lord reigns. And I wish to remind you as you begin your work as synod today that the Lord needs to reign in your deliberations and decisions.

Let me briefly highlight three pointers of this psalm that basically follows the division of Psalm 93. The three key elements are: the Lord's majesty, the Lord's might and the Lord's holiness.

Psalm 93 reminds us from the outset that majesty and splendour is draped around the Lord like a festive and ceremonial robe. Another part of his attire is strength. And by stating this at the very beginning and by even doing so twice in a row, the psalmist intimates that the Lord's majesty is not only something special, but also that it has no equal. That is why in other psalms the Lord is referred to as the great King (95:3).

The reason why the Lord's majesty has no equal and why he is the great King is explained next. The world is so firmly established by him that it cannot be moved. The exact same thought is echoed in Psalm 99:10. The Lord rules over his creation and no tinkering can budge him or his creative power because the king who rules this world sits on a throne that was established long ago. The Lord God is from all eternity.

Added to that, he is the Lord on high who is mightier than the powers he has placed in nature. The Lord is the mighty one who is not affected negatively by what happens in his created world. But he does care what happens in the world. For he is not aloof from the world he governs. He cares very much that justice is done. Psalm 99 that also begins with the exclamation "The Lord reigns," tells us in verse 4: "The King is mighty, he loves justice."

This majestic Lord and King who loves justice is also someone who dwells in holiness. To safeguard his holiness he has given his people statutes that stand firm. He has given them his guidelines and directives for life that are not only stable and reliable, but that also must be honoured and followed.

All this can be summed up by saying that at the heart of the kingship psalms is the conviction that the Lord God is the centre of life. These psalms proclaim his universal reign, but he especially wants to rule in his church.

So what are the implications for you as General Synod Burlington that "The Lord reigns"? Well, on the basis of the three pointers let me make three comments as you begin your work:

First, in all your work keep in mind God's majesty. You are serving the great King who has no equal but who is at the centre of life. In your deliberations rely on the Lord who reigns to give you the right understanding and insight in doing your work for the churches. He delights in and sustains those who rely on him. That is why the "fear of the Lord" (i.e., humble trust and obedience to the Lord) is the beginning of wisdom.

Second, as you make your decisions remember that the Lord is the King who is mighty and who loves justice. You have received the task to make decisions that hopefully will settle appeals and issues, some of which are of a longstanding nature. By their very nature decisions seldom satisfy everyone but they can put matters to rest if they are made based on the right principle. That principle is: Do justice; do what is right. Your main concern is not "what would the churches like" but what is right in God's eyes. The King who loves justice also analyzes and judges the decisions you make on behalf of and for the good of the churches.

Third, respect God's holiness. He has given you the guidelines in his Word that are reliable and that help you stay on track. These statutes must be honoured and followed. The Lord is the great King over all he has made and to whom everyone and everything is subject. He has made all for his own

purpose and what we do must serve his divine purpose. Also your work as synod must serve his purpose. If it does, then it will also serve the churches.

Let me close with two final remarks. On 1 May 2010, the first of this month, it was 55 years ago that Burlington Ebenezer was instituted. That makes it the oldest Canadian Reformed Church in Burlington and for that reason Ebenezer should have hosted a general synod many years ago. But in 1986 we were bested by our neighbours up on the hill because they had newer facilities. Therefore we are happy that it finally is “our turn” and we hope that our facilities will serve you well in your work. We also hope that you will enjoy our hospitality without tempting you to linger.

You are going to do your work in Ebenezer church building. Through our 55 years we have experienced that “thus far the Lord has helped us.” The Lord who reigns has indeed been our stone of help. We pray that the Lord will also be a “stone of help” to you as you carry out the mandate given by the churches.

APPENDIX 2 – Address by the Rev. Dr. Kyon Ho KWON (PCK)

11 May 2010

Brothers in our Lord Jesus Christ
Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour

It is with much thankfulness, gratitude, and pleasure that I am able to attend Synod to bring you this message. It is a great blessing and pleasure for the Presbyterian Churches in Korea (Kosin) to have a sister church relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches.

We thank your Churches that you send delegations with Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated) and Free Reformed Churches of Australia to our General Assembly every year in order.

Personally I am a Presbyterian pastor, but I was in a congregation in a Reformed Church when I was studying at Potchefstroom University in South Africa for my doctorate degree.

As descendants who have inherited a Reformed tradition and heritage together from our faithful forefathers, our respective churches have had a fraternal relationship for a long time with your churches, and we have both been teaching the Heidelberg Catechism to our congregations. We value our relationship and we hope that we can understand each other’s needs so our friendship can become stronger.

Dear delegates,

You know that although we are very different in many aspects, we are really brothers and sister of one family, having the same heavenly Father. So we need to be fellow soldiers in resisting the various anti-Christian influences of our age.

We discussed “Admittance to the celebration of the Lord’s Supper and Confessional Membership” and we already reached the same conclusion together. Our churches agreed clearly to your Statement of Agreement reached between the OPC and you (Acts of Synod 2007, Art..86, Recommendation 4.3.3, p. 67).

According to the 2009 General Assembly’s report, we have 38 local Presbyteries, about 1,700 local churches and 470,000 congregation members.

We are striving to establish 3,000 more local churches. Also we have been trying to educate our children and young people to be armed with the Reformed faith and to put it into practice.

Dear delegates,

Besides experiencing the blessing of living in peace and wealth, we also face its dangers. Modernism in lifestyle and in thinking, secularism and materialism and the temptations of internet and television are making victims in our families and congregations in Korea.

Please pray for us that the Lord will keep our churches safe and united, based upon his Word and the Reformed confession. Pray that He will make us faithful in his service and make us a blessing to our neighbours and to the brotherhood in the world. Please pray with us for the coming of his Kingdom.

Congratulations to your 2010 Synod and I wish it will be completed successfully. I also invite your delegation to the General Assembly of the Korean Presbyterian Churches in September.

We wish you God's blessing in your ministry in your Synod and in your struggles against the modern attacks on our Godly heritage, the Reformed faith and His Church.

God may bless you and with you.

Thanks.

Dr. Kyong Ho KWON

Secretary of the fraternal and foreign affairs committee of the Presbyterian Churches of Korea

APPENDIX 3 – Address by br. Wayne Pleiter (FRCA)

12 May 2010

Esteemed brothers in our Lord Jesus Christ; on behalf of the Free Reformed Churches in Australia, we express our heartfelt greetings. Indeed what a privilege it is to be in your midst, to spend quality time amongst the brotherhood, and now to personally convey to you the warm and sincere wishes of your brothers and sisters down under.

Brothers, we sincerely thank you for the invitation to attend this, the broadest assembly of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches. All over the globe, Canadians are well known for generously opening their arms, their homes and their hearts to visitors from abroad. And from our experience thus far, we too, can confirm that we are enjoying your warm hospitality and fellowship.

It is precisely this fellowship – this unity that we share and express as Reformed churches, who openly and boldly profess the riches of the gospel – it is this fellowship that we wish to emphasize in our attendance here at Synod Burlington. Unfortunately we were not at Synod Smithers, however this time we have come with the two of us. Our last Synod Legana recognised the importance of being present at this Synod, when it aptly stated: “[that] we value our bond with the Canadian Reformed Churches and personal contact at the synodical level reinforces our contact with them.” (Art.40 ground 2a.) Brothers, we do not wish to take our sister church relationship with you for granted. As our only English-speaking sister-church we need to spend time together – first to ensure that nothing is lost in translation, and secondly to ensure that we continue to build the bond that unites us.

Indeed we have great ties and bonds to the brotherhood in Canada;

- At our last Synod in Legana, six of the eight ministers graduated from the Hamilton Theological College and ministered in Canadian churches, and 6 of the eight elders had direct Canadian ties!
- Only 11 of the 15 ministers in our federation were students of the Theological School in Hamilton.
- Collectively as delegates we have spent 27 years in Canada. (Br. Vanderven spent 15 years in Ontario while br Pleiter was in BC for 12 years) And we're talkin' a couple of young blokes here!

- Personally for my fellow delegate, br Vanderven, in his home congregation of Baldivis, more than 30% of the families in that congregation come from Canada!
- Personally, it is nice to rekindle the fond memories of working with many of you brothers during the years we spent in Canada – and now I may address you, from the other side of the pond.

Over the years, we have benefited from teachers who were trained at the Covenant Teachers College, (thank-you br. Horsman) and of course, there has been a deluge of ‘international marriages’ between the Canadians and Australians over the years – and not that we are complaining... as we both have a Canadian wife. Yes, it has mostly been a good thing, except of course all the arguments about pronunciation (of course having Canadian teachers hasn’t helped, as they were teaching our children the Canadian accent). Is it wrath or wroth, I-say-ah or I-sigh-arh, To-may-toe or Tom-mar-taa and the list goes on.

Perhaps it is safer to move away from these language differences and give you an update of what is going on in the Free Reformed Churches in Australia from a statistical perspective. Since our last visit to Synod Chatham 2004, the Lord has blessed our bond of churches with a growth in membership of over 13% (which is double your growth) for a total of 4131 members (which is a quarter of your size). Much of this is due to ongoing immigration from Canada, South Africa and New Zealand. With an increase in membership comes the increase in the number of congregations. We have 14 congregations of which two have been recently instituted (being Baldivis and Mundijong in the metro region) with a third expected in the near future in Busselton, some two hours south of Perth. A recent development is a home congregation in the north east of Australia situated in Cairns, Queensland (under the care of the FRC at Armadale). All the churches support mission work, be it in Port Moresby, Sumba or China. Even in this work, good co-operation between our churches continues under the blessing of the Lord.

Last year our churches held its General Synod in Legana Tasmania. As deputies, we have received an expanded mandate as it relates to Canada, as well as provided an expanded presence here, with two delegates. This Synod felt the need to re-focus our attention on the strong ties with have with the brotherhood in Canada. Brothers, in the brief time we have spent here, we can appreciate the immense value of personal contact with you.

To share strong personal bonds, is one thing – a beautiful thing, yet our bond finds its depth and meaning in our Lord Jesus Christ. Brothers, we are united and bonded together in that rich faith, that is so wonderfully proclaimed in

God’s Word and expressed in the Reformed confessions. Our bonds are more than ‘skin-deep’, so to say, they go to the depths of our souls.

Brothers, when we think of the heart and soul of faithful ministry, our thoughts are directed to the need for faithful instruction and pastoral training – a need that is fulfilled at the Theological College in Hamilton. And tonight, our thoughts are filled with great thankfulness as we celebrate God’s continued provision for the college – with the appointment of two new professors – indeed a historical time!

We rejoice with you with the appointment of Dr. Jason Van Vliet and Dr. John Smith. While Dr Van Vliet is not, as yet, well known amongst our churches, we are not surprised at his appointment as he has already been able to serve the College over the past year or so. Likewise we are not surprised that your Search Committee stumbled upon Dr. Smith despite the fact we hid him in the most southern part of Western Australia (just a little north of Antarctica). Brothers, we are not disappointed at the appointment of Dr Smith to the Theological College in Hamilton. Should he accept the appointment, we can assure you that we will miss him, along with the congregation in Albany, and yes we will miss his valued contributions in our bond of churches. However, the FRCA recognises that his appointment to the College will be of great benefit to the churches, in Canada, but also in Australia – so then it is our prayer, that Dr. Smith may see his way to accept this appointment.

Theological College

Indeed the churches in Australia are thankful to God for the gift of the College and it is indeed a privilege that we are able to support this work. The importance and centrality of the Theological College in Hamilton (or should we say; Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary) to the Free Reformed Churches in Australia is demonstrated in sending our students to Hamilton, our financial support to the College and indeed our prayerful support of the work done within the college. It would be fair to say, that Synod Legana made bold decisions to increase our financial support of Hamilton. With gratitude the FRCA could increase its support to bring the FRCA closer to parity with your levels of support to the college so that this important work may continue for the benefit of all our churches. Not only do we send our students to you, we also benefit from visits from your professors; next month we have the privilege to have in our midst professor Van Dam who will speak on ‘*Elders and Church Discipline*’.

Synod Legana accepted the fact that we ‘do not presently have any immediate plans to develop [our] own institution for theological training.’

(Art 17 XII. Ground. 6). While the idea of an Australian Theological College remains desirable for some within our churches, Synod Legana made acknowledgement that it will not be happening in the immediate future. This dose of realism is partly due to the fact that our churches continue to benefit from God's work at the College. We do so, also in the hope that perhaps the basis year of the program can be done in Australia or that some of the training can be done by distance learning.

Brothers our support is a heartfelt commitment to the high Reformed standards you maintain and espouse, and great appreciation for calibre of ministers it continues to produce. We would urge you to continue to be committed to these high standards, to maintain and uphold your constitution, and to consistently govern the college accordingly. Please brothers, do not let pragmatic solutions to fulfilling temporary positions undermine these standards. Synod Legana stated that 'our support of the college is based on the fact that we agree with the [College's] foundation and by-laws so that their maintenance remains highly important to us.' (Art 17. XI. Rec 1.)

There is another important principle as it relates to the College that we wish to give you encouragement and support. "Our churches maintain the principle that a church federation ought to take responsibility for maintaining a theological college (Article 17 Church Order)." (Art 40. IV. Grounds f.) In your unity discussions with the URCNA we would urge you to hold fast this principle – it is not only a principle that is valued in your federation, but one we hold dear. (c.f. Art 40. IV. 2.d)

Book of Praise

Brothers it is clear that the unity discussions with the URCNA have impacted many aspects of church life, notably the developments with the *Book of Praise*. Again the bonds we share with you run deep, as the *Book of Praise* continues to help us to personally and communally express our praise, glory and honour to our triune God, in psalms, hymns and in our confessions. Over the past number of Synods in Australia, investigations have been undertaken to work toward an Australia *Book of Praise*. Synod Legana, however, decided not to continue this work of producing an Aussie *Book of Praise* unless your *Book of Praise* 'is substantially altered such that it is no longer suitable for use by the Australian churches.' "Of itself", Synod Legana continued, "the different Church Order is not a compelling reason to produce our own Psalm Book." (Art 24. XI. 3 b and ground 6).

Synod Legana did not just place the Australian *Book of Praise* on hold so to say, it also mandated the deputies to monitor developments with the Canadian *Book of Praise* – these developments include what you are doing

with the URCNA and with the proposed addition to the Hymn section and importantly to "elicit responses from the churches regarding developments with the Canadian *Book of Praise*." (Art 24 XI 3c). The *Book of Praise* is a matter that carries much emotion – as much for us as for you and your members – and we would encourage you with much wisdom and pastoral care – so that all generations continue to sing the praise to our covenant Lord and King!

Consultation

Along with the potential changes to the *Book of Praise* that arise in your unity discussions with the URCNA, Synod Legana also instructed the deputies to 'stay informed on developments concerning the pending merger... including the proposed revisions to the Church Order.' (Art 40. IV. 2.b.) We understand that the unity discussions with the URCNA have been ongoing for over a decade now – so many discussions and so many proposals to consider – and yet, on the whole, not much about this potential merger is known amongst the brotherhood in Australia. Synod Legana wisely reminds the deputies to consider the Rules for Sister Relations and become more informed on the work you are doing with the URCNA. These same Rules for Sister Relations also means for you that, and I quote: 'in cases of substantial changes or additions to the confessions, Church order or liturgical forms... [that as]...much consultation as possible can take place before a final decision is reached'. (Art 40. IV. Ground d.) Brothers, our question is, are you really living up to this commitment, as outlined in the rules for Sister Churches? We hope that Synod Burlington will maintain these rules in its decisions, and mandate your deputies to consult with your sister churches, including our churches in Australia regarding these matters.

Changes

Speaking of changes brothers, there are some other changes that we wish to speak about – and we wish to do so carefully. Synod Legana mandated the deputies 'to seek clarification about and discuss the changing manner in which they [CanRC] deal with significant differences with other church federations in their unity discussions.' (Art 40. IV. 2.c.) Reading through the Acts of various Synods over the past years, it is clear to us, that some confessional issues, once held and defended dearly (like Fencing of the Lord's Table, Confessional Membership, and third party relationships – cf. Acts of Synod Lincoln 1992) are no longer obstacles to entering sister church relations. Of interest is the proposed change to include the new classification of "Associate Churches" in which you might formalize a relationship with numerous church federations – unbeknown to us, and to your own churches.

Brothers, perhaps we are missing something; tell us what you have learned – help us to understand you more clearly in these matters.

RCNZ

Brothers, we appreciate your continued support in another matter – this time as it relates to our ongoing discussions with the Reformed Churches in New Zealand. Indeed the report of the CRCA reveals that you have done a great deal to ensure that the RCNZ addresses our serious concerns – and we thank you for this. Yes, you know that we recognise them as true churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Art. 63 XI. 2) You know that we have had ongoing discussions with them regarding several matters that prevent us from entering into a sister-church relationship. However, the final obstacle is their sister relationship with the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia. We know you understand our difficulty with this – as your churches also considered the relationship that the OPC had with the Christian Reformed Churches in NA as an impediment to becoming sister-churches. The fact that you didn't consider this an impediment to becoming sister-churches with the RCNZ is not our point – but rather because you have had this experience in the past with the OPC, we would “encourage [you] to continue supporting [us] as much as possible in our discussions with the RCNZ’ about this matter.” (Art 40. IV. 2.e.) It is our desire that the RCNZ ‘continue to admonish the CRC of Australia and be consequential in this relationship.’ (Art 63. XI. 5.b.) Your help and support with this will be most appreciated!

RCN

The bond that we share as churches in Canada and in Australia has its history and origins back in Holland. Although the demographics in Australia is changing with the influx of Canadians, New Zealanders and South Africans, our history does begin in Holland. Together we share a ‘big’ sister there, a sister that we believe is struggling and in need of our combined support and encouragement. Our sister - the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands – continues to be dear to us, and that is why we have a heavy heart about the developments and decisions in the RCN. Synod Legana spoke of the need to ‘discuss our concerns regarding trends to unfaithfulness’ (Art 71, XI 5) It mentioned that we are to “exhort the RCN with love and care to be faithful in their approach to hermeneutics and combating the influence of a post-modern ‘spirit of the age’”(Art 71, XI 4). There are many areas of concern, concerns that we are sure you share – and indeed we do read this in the report from your CRCA committee. Brothers may we all prepare ourselves for the same struggles, we are not immune to these types of influences. Synod Legana has called upon the churches of the FRCA to ‘frequently remember the RCN in

their prayers’ (Art 71, XI 8) and we are certain that the Canadian Reformed Churches do the same. May we together, united in love stand beside our sister, to admonish, exhort and encourage her in the Lord.

Indonesia

Brothers, if you dug a hole through the centre of the earth from Burlington, you would come out near the coast of WA! And though we’re on opposite ends of the earth, we cross paths in the work of mission, the beautiful work of spreading the gospel! Of interest are your relations with the churches in Indonesia, the work in PNG and more recently with the work in China.

We are pleased with the reports of the CRCA deputies and to be frank, we also share their conclusions with regard to the Indonesian churches. We too agree that continued and increased mutual communication is of great benefit in supporting the brotherhood that live in a country where the vast majority of the people are Muslim! May our efforts in encouraging unity between the various churches in Timor & Sumba bear positive fruit in Christ’s Church gathering work.

Conclusion

Brothers of Synod, we have taken much of your time, and we appreciate the opportunity to address you here at Synod Burlington 2010 and to pass on the affectionate greetings from the Free Reformed Churches of Australia. At the same time, we heartily invite you to send delegates down under to our next Synod in Armadale 2012 DV. But brothers you need more than our heartfelt greetings and our encouragement. Therefore we pray that God will provide His indispensable blessings over this Synod and its deliberations, entrusting you into His Care, to be governed by His Wisdom and to do so according to His Word! May your work be blessed and may it serve as a blessing to the churches within your federation. May the work of Synod Burlington also serve the edification of your sister-churches. Brothers, enjoy your work, work hard for the unity of faith and for the praise and honour of Christ, the Head of the Church!

Brothers, we will close our address with the words of 2 Corinthians 13:

“Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” (2 Corinthians 13:11-14.)

Thank-you

APPENDIX 4 – Address by the Rev. John A. Bouwers (URCNA)

12 May 2010

My dear brothers in our one Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,

I count it a high honour that once again I may be here in your midst for the assembly your General Synod. This is now the second time I have had such an honour, having had the privilege of addressing your General Synod Smithers in 2007 as well. So, being something of a veteran, now, I feel a certain familiarity with, and a growing appreciation for your deliberate and deliberative ways.

My own personal experience then at now two of your General Synods also invites certain comparisons, the first one, superficial. I recall that *part* of my thrill of being able to attend Synod Smithers was finally to be able to take in some of the breathtaking beauty of the much talked about Bulkley Valley. Flying in and seeing the spectacular beauty of the Hudson Bay Mountain in the background was certainly a sight to behold. I hope I am not considered rude, then for saying that driving around the QEW to get to Burlington just doesn't seem to have quite the same cachet. The little picture in the promotional material for this Synod (and on our name tags) just doesn't compare with the splendour of the picture of the Hudson Bay Mountain Synod Smithers was passing around in their promotional packets. In fact, I think that if you look closely today at Burlington's picture I think you can see the plumes and billows of smoke belching out of the smoke stacks at the steel factories.

And indeed perhaps thinking a little bit about pollution, corruption and the effects of sin in the world can serve as something of a helpful metaphor for the challenges we are presently facing as churches on the road to the unity our Saviour enjoins of us, the unity he has prayed for. I do like the caption, theme or slogan, if you will, that Burlington has assigned to this synod: "Linked together in faith." But perhaps we as United Reformed Churches are the kinks in the linkage. Could it be that under the blessing of God we may continue to move forward together and, as it were, straighten things out on the pathway to greater Unity. To make, as the prophet would say, the crooked straight, and the rough places plain. We want to address and encourage you to that end, and we look for you to encourage us, in that same way too.

Brothers I am joined today as fraternal delegate by two other members of our committee for ecumenical relations, Rev. Peter Vellenga and Rev. Harry

Zekveld, both local Ontario men. We have also encouraged all of our local pastors to drop in if they are able to witness a Canadian Reformed General Synod first hand, to be encouraged by your careful deliberations.

I don't believe we need too much introduction as United Reformed Churches, thankfully by way of the growing unity we enjoy together as churches we are quite familiar to you by now. I have just a few statistics to give you some idea of what you are dealing with. According to our most recent directory the URCs are now made up of some 112 churches in North America including over 23,000 souls. Of those 112 churches, 38 (34%) are in Canada, or 8,500 souls (37%). Our churches in Canada are largely in areas where your churches are not far away, and our churches in the United States are, obviously, for the most part, in areas where your churches are... not. That also gives rise to some of the dynamics and challenges of the unity you and we are called to pursue.

Brothers, you have read your agenda, reports, recommendations and letters from the churches, you know how much attention unity with the United Reformed requires, and you don't need me to tell you about the challenges and difficulties we are facing. We are at something of a delicate time with regard to the unity process. We are at the point where we see many practical difficulties, where there is fatigue, frustration, and sometimes disillusionment. We see that we don't seem to be gaining momentum but losing it, we seem to be stalled. Brothers, the Lord is testing our mettle, our resolve. Here is where we need tenderness, patience, wisdom, but nevertheless at the same time we still need firm resolve, fortitude and commitment to walk on in obedience to our Saviour.

We are grateful for the recommendations of your Unity Coordinators in their report to the General Synod that are also suggestive of their agreement with this commitment to continue to seek to go forward. We are encouraged by their words to that effect in 6.8 of their report:

Now that we meet hurdles we should not give up on this. Our commitment will show in that we continue to reach out to the URCNA. Our commitment to federative unity should not diminish. Nor should we take back the concessions we made in 2007.

Thank you for those encouragements and brothers please do *continue* to encourage us and reach out to us, and patiently challenge us. Speaking of concessions, we are reminded again, aren't we that the road to unity is the road of give and take. You give, we take. Maybe it seems like that sometimes.

I realize there is some concern that has been communicated by some of the churches to this synod that Smithers may have been too concessive. In the providence of God ever since we began this process together in 2001 your synods have been held before ours, and each time decisions regarding unity have been made it might appear that you have made more concessions than we have. And once again this year, the year of our Lord 2010, you are in the same unenviable position of having to lead the way, your synod predating ours by a couple of months.

Perhaps a few things should be said in connection with all of this to put matters into perspective somewhat. First of all, in the providence of God not only do your synods usually fall before ours, but more significantly, you are also our older brothers in Christ, federationally speaking. You can speak of 60 years of history here in Canada, we are not yet fifteen. You have had 60 years to seek to convince yourselves, and the world, and the churches around you that you do not want to live in isolation, and we appreciate among Canadian Reformed people a strong sense of commitment to our ecumenical calling. We have a different recent history, being much younger, and we are still smarting and nursing our wounds from what we perceived to be hierarchical tendencies in our former denominational connection. So while from the beginning there was among us a strong commitment to a United Reformed body made up of all who hold to a like and precious faith in the Saviour with confessional integrity (that came to expression in our *name* as United Reformed Churches), there nevertheless also lingers among us a fear of where we were, resulting in a hesitancy with regard to unity with the less familiar. Admittedly there is the danger among us of excess, or of overreaction towards new extremes of congregationalism, and perhaps it might even be said that it is time for us to grow up, but it is what it is.

We would also say, in regards to concessions that, the nature of the unity you already enjoy among yourselves (even to the point of much uniformity) is such that it is inevitable if unity is to go forward that more concessions come from your side. We, as United Reformed Churches are already a broader umbrella, you might say. There is a broader diversity of practices and even of theological perspectives among us than exists among your churches. The cost of unity for you may well have to come at the price of some of that uniformity. I don't believe that that means everything, or perhaps even much of anything, would have to change among the churches that are presently Canadian Reformed, because potentially all of what you are can function under a bigger umbrella, and be greatly beneficial towards the well-being of that umbrella. The ongoing challenge for us is to seek to understand together

from out of the Scriptures and our confessions, whether our umbrella is too large, reaching out and embracing and giving shelter to unconfessional practices or ideas, or whether at times it might not be opened up high enough and far enough, not including what the confessions would allow.

Uniformity, it needs to be admitted, can be an impediment toward unity. Uniformity can also be unity that is only skin deep. Sometimes a greater sense of unity, a more profound unity comes about when there is, if I may use this term a *scriptural* multiformity (as opposed to a *sinful* pluriformity) among the churches, because that unity roots in Christ. I doubt whether any of you men drove across the prairies to get here, but as beautiful as the vistas can be there (I'm thinking later in the season – of acres upon acres of golden ripening grain, yellow canola, blue flax), I have also become partial to the multiform beauty we see round about us here in the Golden Horseshoe, the Niagara Peninsula, with all its diversity of terrain, blossoming peaches, cherries, belching smoke stacks of the steel factories notwithstanding. Let us learn among the texture of greater diversity to see and perceive our deep unity in Christ within the bounds of our confessions.

We believe that in addition to foundational directives towards unity we read together from Scripture, it should also be said that we *need* each other. Brothers, we like to believe that the unity process, marred as it has been by our own sin and shortcomings, disappointing as it has been in terms of its progress, has been deeply beneficial for both federations. Already. I think we can see that when we look around. Let us thank God brothers for the openness we have come to enjoy, for the recognition we have witnessed on each other's pulpits, we share the same commitments. For the young people who are being raised in an environment of acceptance where there used to be hostility. Thank God brothers. We thank God for the great ecumenical strides we have witnessed the Canadian Reformed Churches take over the course of these last ten years, we are so glad to stand beside you in NAPARC as well as the ICRC and look forward, with you, to continuing to challenge all of the fellow churches of NAPARC to live up to the basis and constitution which says that we will continually "hold out before each other the desirability and need for organic union of churches that are of like faith and practice."

Brothers, in the report of your unity coordinators it is also acknowledged in 6.8 that "it is clear that our progress toward federative unity with the URCNA is not going as well we had hoped." Then the brothers assert: "We believe that this is to a great extent due to the decisions of Schererville." Let us say, we ought to be able to acknowledge as churches, perhaps we were not as

sensitive as we ought to have been with regards to how those decisions would have been perceived by you in light of your own history in 1944. Perhaps we could also challenge you as churches to put your own hands into your own bosoms to acknowledge that the difficulties being experienced today can also be attributed to your *reaction* to the decisions of Schererville, reading them through *only* the lenses of what happened 1944 without an appreciation for the challenges of our own day that our churches were seeking to address.

Brothers we need to be challenged by you too, and we certainly need to grow in humility, but for you to have the sense that all of our difficulties stem from actions on the URC side vis-à-vis the decisions of Schererville, we would humbly suggest it betrays either a naïveté or a certain lack of self-awareness from your side. We say it in all humility.

We want to emphasize strongly today our earnest desire to have your body agree to the proposal to open up the floor of your synod to a time of dialogue with the representatives of our churches, the proposal that initiated with your church at Lincoln, ON. We cannot stress strongly enough how important we believe this will be. The reference we have made in the past in our dealings together at the committee level to the endings of both 2nd and 3rd John is entirely apropos here: *I had much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink. I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.* I can assure you that the Apostle John would recommend face to face communication over blogging every time!

Brothers over the years, almost invariably, and in regards to the work of the various committees, every time we have dialogued face to face we have made great strides together. I do not think it is yet appreciated how much progress was made for the cause of unity in January of this year when finally after their questions had remained outstanding and unanswered for five years, Classis SW US in California received a visit from Drs. Jerry Visscher and Jason Van Vliet. I don't think you appreciate either just how detrimental it had been to the cause of unity up until that point that those questions had been left unanswered. The reports we have received as a result of the January dialogue were glowingly positive (unfortunately that's something that didn't come out when the content of what these brothers said was reported in the periodicals). A mutual appreciation was gained for the contexts out of which our respective concerns arise. These professors of the theological college acquitted themselves very well, and a large contributor to the success was their face to face presence, and the fellowship enjoyed before and after the classis. Our URC brother, Rev. Harry Zekveld, who was present in January

to witness the event reported concerning the two Canadian Reformed brothers: *“both of them spoke very ably, ... [they] shined in terms of pastoral sensitivity and clear desire to hear the concerns. Both brothers modelled the power of debating in a Christian manner. Dr. Visscher reported that he and his colleague “appreciated the opportunity to get to know more about [the classis SWUS] approach and certainly have more appreciation for it now. Also better awareness for their background as they do for ours. These kinds of gatherings are very important.”*

Brothers, *great* progress was made! We want to replicate that kind of success and progress on the floors of our respective synods. In addition to being willing to answer some of the concerns of your churches in your presence and to enter into some dialogue with you on some of the matters, we have also brought with us the questions our churches have submitted to be addressed by your men at our synod. If you allow for a bit of the kind of discussion as Lincoln has proposed, you will lead the way for a similar opportunity to be granted at our synod. You may have the advantage of formulating a synodical letter to our synod in light of the discussions here, but as the apostle John would argue, in addition to and better than pen and ink is the face to face. Due to the nature of delegation at our Synods, if you lead the way in this way, when our synod comes along you will have opportunity to address representatives of every URC consistory to alleviate concerns, address caricatures, put fears to rest, etc. We expect the same kind of fruitful and forward-moving interchange has almost always been experienced in face to face dialogue.

Brothers, I trust you would agree that we cannot go backwards, we must go forward. We must be wise and we must be patient, but we must go forward. I was deeply encouraged, humbled and challenged, but indeed encouraged by the exhortation and prayers at your opening prayer service this week. Indeed, as in Nehemiah chapter 1, may we continue our work prayerfully, in a spirit of conscious, penitent dependence, confident of the Lord's covenant faithfulness, even as we were also encouraged in the inspired words of the Apostle Paul at the end of Ephesians 3. Let's take them to heart:

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church, and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

APPENDIX 5 – Address by the Rev. Jonathan Merica (RCUS)

12 May 2010

Esteemed Fathers and Brethren in Christ,

I bring greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ on behalf of the Reformed Church in the United States. We rejoice in our relationship as fraternal brethren, and also for your steadfast love for the Word of God, and the Biblical truths as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity. It is a certainty, that in the work of the Lord, we shall continually be tested by the Tempter, the world, and false professors of Christianity who endeavour to shake our faith.

We give thanks to God, Who will cause us to triumph in our Lord Jesus Christ. As the Apostle Paul says in I Corinthians 15:57-58, “But thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

The RCUS gives thanks to God for our ecclesiastical fellowship with the Canadian Reformed Churches of North America. I can still remember when our churches first began the process of entering into our fraternal relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches. We admired your steadfastness to the confessions and your concern for accuracy in the doctrines of Scripture.

“At the 246th Synod of the RCUS (1992), the Synod adopted the following five rules that must be agreed upon before the RCUS will establish fraternal relations with another denomination:

1. Agree to heed to one another`s doctrine, liturgy and church government, that there be no deviations from the Holy Scriptures or from the Reformed confessions.
2. Will exchange delegates at one another`s assemblies or general synods and invite them to participate as advisors.
3. Will inform one another of the decisions taken at their assemblies or general synods by exchanging minutes or at least by forwarding decisions which are relevant to the churches concerned.
4. Will inform one another in case of changes in or additions to confessions, church order or liturgical forms, if these are of a doctrinal nature. The denomination concerned will notify the other denomination of these changes so that consultations can take place if considered necessary.

5. Will inform one another regarding new relationships with third parties and membership in ecumenical organizations.”

The Apostle Paul instructing Titus in the Gospel ministry in Titus 2:1-8 says, “You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance. Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers, or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.”

The Reformed Church in the United States seeks by the grace of God to be vigilant and steadfast in the spreading of the Gospel and in the defence of the faith. The Apostle Paul in Ephesians 6:10-12 calls us to be “strong in the in the Lord , and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but with principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

It is my prayer that God will make our churches stronger in the faith in our generation, and the generation to come. We may well hope that He will, because the Gospel “is the power of God unto salvation.” The opening message of the Synod meeting was from one of my favourite passages, Psalm 93. What a comfort to know that “the LORD reigns.” The early first through the third century Christians gained comfort in their afflictions by greeting other saints with the words, “the LORD reigns.” Let us also do the same.

The Canadian Reformed Churches has set forth a good example of fidelity to the Word of God by training ministers for their churches by their own seminary. The RCUS is seeing the need to have its own seminary to train young men for our congregations. The RCUS has approved the concept of a denominational seminary. Heidelberg Seminary in Rapid City, SD is looking to fulfill this need in our churches. The RCUS also has Sacramento City Seminary in Sacramento, California training prospective pastors.

More and more we see in our culture in the United States a great moral decline. Those who oppose righteousness are becoming more bold in their attacks upon the righteous. May the Lord give us grace to stand together in holding fast to the Word of God alone for our life and doctrine. While the wicked goes the broad way of unrighteousness, we must stay in the narrow way of truth which is the way of everlasting life. May God bless our churches as we labour together for His kingdom and glory.

APPENDIX 6 – Address by Dr. Jason P. Van Vliet

17 May 2010

Br. chairman, delegates to this general synod, Board of Governors, brothers and sisters,

On May 11th, 2010, you decided officially to give leave to the Board of Governors to appoint me as professor of Dogmatology at our Theological College. I am truly humbled and honoured by this appointment.

Now, of course, some may say, “It’s no great surprise. We all knew it was coming.” In fact, in recent days, people have said to me, “It was a foregone conclusion. It’s just a rubberstamp.” And, it is true that, due to the circumstances, I have been teaching already at our College for almost one and half years. Therefore, it is understandable that people say this.

Still, this appointment is not a rubberstamp. I firmly believe that because, as delegates of the churches, you have officially given *a trust* to me. A trust of responsibility is something quite different than a stamp of rubber.

Back in 1968, Synod Orangeville officially decided to establish the Theological College for the training of ministers of the Word. However, there were also events leading up to that decision. In fact, fourteen years earlier, at Synod Homewood, the delegated brothers already recognized the need to start planning for the establishment of a Theological College. So there was almost a decade and a half of discussion leading up to Synod Orangeville’s decision. And yet, when that official decision to establish the College was actually taken, it was a most significant decision.

Now, this decision that you took last week is only about one position, a professor for the department of Dogmatology. Therefore, the decision is certainly not as big as what happened back in 1968. But the connecting line between the two is this: both decisions involved the giving and receiving of *a trust*. That trust is the responsibility to train men to be faithful, sound, solid and well-equipped ministers of the holy gospel.

As the apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, “Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful” (1 Cor 4:2). So, that is what now lies ahead of me: to be trustworthy in the task with which you have entrusted me.

For there is a “pattern of sound teaching” which must be faithfully preserved, “with faith and love in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 1:13). Under the blessing of the

Lord, it is my desire and my delight to pass on that pattern of sound teaching at our College.

It will be a challenge because, as the apostle says, we live in a time when people are not always so interested in sound doctrine. “Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear” (2 Tim 4:3). Under the blessing of the Lord, it is my desire and my delight to train the students at our College to nourish people with the solid food of Holy Scripture. Preachers are called to feed hungry souls, not to scratch itchy ears!

It is precisely in this respect that the ecumenical creeds and the Reformed confessions are such a blessed heritage to work with. The creeds and confessions are not hollow; they are solid. They are not shallow; they are deep... and simultaneously high and wide. We use those confessions a lot in class. And, quite frankly, it’s a pleasure to do so.

Sometimes theologians have a tendency to tie themselves into knots. They get caught up in all kinds of distinctions and speculations, all kinds of debates and disagreements. Yet at the end of the day, you have to slice through the Gordian knot, and get back to the firm footing of that pattern of sound doctrine, of which the apostle Paul speaks. Well, when it comes to slicing through Gordian knots, the confessions are high quality scalpels. It’s a pleasure to do surgery with them.

Returning briefly to 1 Cor 4:2, the apostle writes that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. The context there makes it clear that this trust ultimately comes from the Lord Jesus Christ and we are his servants. That’s true in this case also. As we clearly heard at the prayer service on Monday evening, the work of the church is not *our* work. It is – most emphatically – the work of the Lord. And so we pray and we serve. *Ora et labora*. In dependence. In penitence. But also in confidence.

Brothers, now that you have made it official, may I also earnestly request your ongoing prayers and the prayers of the churches, for the College... also for the teaching within the department of Dogmatology. Pray that we may prove faithful in the trust which our Saviour has given us, for the good of His Church, and the glory of His name.

And if I may, br. chairman, I would also like to take this opportunity to say a few words of gratitude. First of all, I want to publicly thank my wife and our children. It’s one thing to have a husband and a father who is busy as a minister; it’s still another to have a husband and a father who’s busy trying to

work on postgraduate degrees while being a minister. So, to Janet, my wife, and our children – Curtis, Hannah, Ruth, Abigail and Philip – I want to say “Thank-you” and “I thank the Lord for you.”

My gratitude also goes out to our parents on both sides of the family: Van Vliet and Smid. You have been a solid source of support through the years.

Also, I wish to acknowledge the professors who taught me: the professors at our College for the M.Div., and other professors who guided me through the M.Th. and Th.D. programs. One should always be careful about singling out certain individuals, but on this occasion it is fitting to specifically mention Dr. N.H. Gootjes, my predecessor, but more importantly, my own Dogmatics professor. He taught us precision in Dogmatics. No sloppy theology allowed while Dr. Gootjes was in the classroom! Therefore, I will do my best to keep this “passion for precision” alive and well at the College.

The final and fullest word of thankfulness, though, is given to our heavenly Father, for without his refreshing grace and providential guidance none of this would have been possible.

APPENDIX 7 – Address by Dr. Cornelis Van Dam

17 May 2010

An occasion such as this evening, brings back memories. Allow me a few words of reflection and gratitude.

In 1980, Synod Smithville appointed me as Professor of Old Testament. In those days there was not yet the wording: “directed the Board of Governors to appoint” or something similar. Synod simply appointed and this was, if I’m not mistaken, the last time a synod used that terminology. In any case, this synodical appointment came while I was serving the church at Surrey and I had been there for only about a year and a half. I loved the ministerial work in the midst of God’s people and certainly had no plans to leave it. The departure of my predecessor, Prof. Ohmann, to the Netherlands had been completely unexpected and so was my appointment. I accepted the appointment with some trepidation, leaving the familiar surroundings of the pastoral work and entering new academic labours. Preparing lectures while still working on my dissertation was challenging but the Lord gave health and strength and blessed it.

My former teachers became my colleagues and friends. I was privileged to work alongside the late Professor L. Selles, Dr. J. Faber, and the Rev. G. Van Dooren, the pastor of my youth, who taught Diaconiology, as well as with the Rev. W. W. J. Van Oene, who taught church history and church polity and who is still preaching in the churches. These years in the 1980’s were still pioneering years of the College and I feel a deep sense of privilege to have been able to serve during those critical first years. With only three full-time teachers and one administrative assistant, our lecture hours and diverse duties were many. Library cataloguing was a communal activity (the results of which had to be rectified years later!) and the library was scattered in the rooms of the professors and other rooms in the Queen Street building. They were unforgettable years.

In a sense my time of service ran parallel with much of the history of the Theological College. I was among the very first students and after only ten years in the parsonage, returned to the College to teach. They were years of development and blessing. Let me mention several prominent ones.

- In 1981 the Government of the Province of Ontario passed the Theological College Act which empowered the Senate to grant the degree of Master of Divinity, Bachelor of Theology, as well as Master of Theology.

- In 1984, the College received its fourth full-time professor in Dr. K. Deddens, Professor of Ecclesiology and Diaconiology.
- In 1985 the College moved from Queen Street, from the large home it had occupied since its beginning in 1969 to new roomy facilities on Hamilton’s West Mountain.
- In 1992 a professional librarian in the person of Ms Margaret Van der Velde came on board and in 2000 the expansion of the facilities was completed with the addition of a beautiful and roomy library.
- Over the years the number of students has slowly increased and we have had far more international contacts and students than we could have imagined. The onset of the internet and a College website helped this development. We have graduates in many parts of the world, in diverse cultures and languages, but all with the single purpose of being faithful proclaimers of the gospel.

During my time at the College, I have seen colleagues come and go. In 1986 Professor Selles retired and Professor Geertsema became Professor of New Testament. He in turn was followed by Dr. G. H. Visscher nine years ago. Two of my colleagues had to relinquish their duties prematurely, humanly speaking, due to poor health. Dr. J. De Jong who had succeeded Dr. Deddens in 1990 ceased teaching in 2003 and was followed by Dr. A. J. De Visser in 2004. Dr. Gootjes, who had succeeded Dr. Faber in 1990, had to stop teaching in 2008 and is now being followed by Dr. J. Van Vliet. These two instances of illness in a small faculty underline that health and strength cannot be taken for granted. It is a gift of God’s grace. No one deserves it. With that awareness reinforced, I have experienced the sad and emotional parting of ways due to health concerns of colleagues dear to me.

In these days we experience a changing of the guard. I am very happy with and grateful for the appointments of Dr. Jason Van Vliet and Dr. Jannes Smith. Both are very well qualified to teach their respective disciplines. We can truly rejoice! How the Lord has blessed us as a federation and how we are being blessed with our seminary! It is a tremendous thing when a seminary can draw on its own graduates for first rate, academically well-equipped men. Reformed theology has always placed a high premium on the very best credentials for the academic pursuit of the biblical and theological disciplines and I am confident that the Lord will use both of these men to his glory. Dr. Van Vliet has already accepted his appointment. As Dr. Smith weighs his call, may the Lord our God give him and his wife all they need to accept it and to make the transition from the parsonage which he enjoys to

the academic labours in Hamilton.

As I come closer to the end of my comments, I would be terribly remiss if I did not mention that my dear wife Joanne has been a tremendous help to me during these years of service. Whenever and wherever she could she extended a helping hand and gave unwavering support. She readily sacrificed to enable me to do my duties to the utmost of my ability. Also in public, I want to thank her most sincerely.

I would also like to thank you as representatives of the churches for the trust you have placed in me. I have done my utmost to honour that trust. It has been a most privileged and awesome experience to be part of training students to be faithful ministers of the divine Word. I also thank you for your excellent provision of our material needs.

I am grateful for the sabbatical that beckons and look forward to using it to the fullest extent possible. It is my hope and prayer that when the period of retirement comes, it will give me the opportunity to continue to work diligently for the cause of the gospel through the study of the Old Testament - in gratitude to the God of my life. We always remain in his service. What can I say but quote what is recorded in Scripture. "We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty" (Luke 17:10). May he, the Lord my God, continue to enable me to be such a servant.

APPENDIX 8 – Address by the Rev. Jack W. Sawyer (OPC)

19 May 2010

Fathers and brothers, members of the General Synod of Burlington Ebenezer, fellow fraternal delegates, and assembled brothers and sisters, *those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.*

It is my privilege to bring you warm, Christian greetings in behalf of your sister denomination, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. We rejoice in your comradeship in the faith once for all delivered to the Saints, and thank you for your continuing fellowship in NAPARC and the ICRC. We rejoice in your new relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Reformed Churches of New Zealand, a sister church of particular ecumenical and historic importance to us in the OPC. We observe with supportive interest your earnest efforts at union with the URCNA. We welcome your input in regard to our initial relationship of correspondence with the Presbyterian Church of Brazil.

In 1929 Princeton Seminary was reorganized by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA. Bible denying modernism was incorporated into the board of trustees and faculty. Led by Prof. J. Gresham Machen, Westminster Theological Seminary was founded to carry on the witness of the Reformed Faith to the American Continent and beyond. Dr. Machen had the prescience to importune upon a young migrant son of the *Afscheiding* a call to serve on the faculty. Pressed hard to answer this call, the young pastor left his charge in Michigan and took up what would become a life of service at the Seminary, and with what would soon become the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

In 1935 Prof. Machen was deposed from the ministry of the PCUSA for his refusal to obey unscriptural demands by the hierarchy of the church. This hierarchy insisted on support for an agenda of unbelief then being proclaimed at home and on the mission field. In 1936, during the height of the Great Depression, 5000 souls, out of a church of millions, separated themselves, along with those ministers and elders who had been deposed along with Machen. In 1936, in order to return to the Word of the Lord and establish a truly Presbyterian Church, a brave little group convened in Philadelphia as the first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America. (Later being sued by the PCUSA over the use of the name PCA our fathers having

little or no money to contend a lawsuit, surrendered the name PCA and would become the OPC in 1939)

The General Assembly in turn sent this young professor, now an OPC minister, to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church where he appealed to his fellow sons of the *Afscheiding* to recognize the birth of the fledgling church and embrace her as one of their own. Knowing their man, and believing his testimony, the Christian Reformed Church entered fraternal relations with the OPC. The young minister's name? Cornelius Van Til. And so would begin a blessed period of many years for fruitful interchange between two churches of two secessions and returns to the word of God. That relationship would leave its mark on our churches, making us a Presbyterian Church, yet one with a keen appreciation of the Dutch Reformed Ecclesiastical culture.

Later sadly, our Christian Reformed benefactors and brothers, charting a new course away from the Reformed confession, walked with us no more. How grateful we were then to learn that in the providence of God, other sons and daughters of the *Afscheiding* had been brought to North America. Yes, also children of a *Vrijmaking* in 1944, of which we were to learn in great detail. These churches, as their fathers before them, also have come to the aid of their fellow seceders, the OPC. How grateful we are for God's goodness in sending us a chosen sister, to aid us, lifting our hearts and our arms, in the struggle to uphold the Reformed Faith in these dark days of decline in the Western world. What joy, and what comfort, there is in your fellowship as Canadian Reformed Churches.

Mr. Chairman, the last statistical report presented to the General Assembly reported a growth among our churches of 1.22 % bringing membership to a total of 29,095 souls gathered in 325 particular and mission congregations, and served by 477 ministers, 1054 ruling elders, and 779 deacons.

Foreign mission work continued in Asia, Ethiopia, Haiti, Japan, Uganda, and Uruguay. New fields are routinely being evaluated for viability.

Twenty new home mission works began receiving denominational assistance during this period: from Broward County Florida to Honolulu, Hawaii; from San Juan Puerto Rico to Shasta Lake California and beyond. Promising Inroads for ministry were made among Indonesian, Liberian, and Hispanic communities, an encouraging development.

The Committee on Christian Education continues to support a ministerial internship program, and actively seeks to recruit young men into the pastoral

office through an innovative Timothy Conference held annually, most recently at Mid- America Reformed Seminary. Other services are rendered to the churches through the publications *New Horizons* and *Ordained Servant*. A Ministerial Training Institute is staffed by experienced ministers and elders in order to supplement seminary training. The OPC.ORG website continues to be a widely consulted tool for providing news, articles, reviews, church locations, and much more. A new Psalter hymnal, to contain all 150 Psalms, is in production. The OPC continues to partner with the PCA in support of Great Commission Publications, and is pleased to note the translation into Spanish of Sunday School curricula.

The 76th General Assembly met from May 27- June 3, 2009 at Kuyper College in Grand Rapids, MI. The Rev. William Shisko was elected moderator and served very capably. Clearly among the more significant accomplishments of the week was the approval of a revised Directory for Public Worship, after 42 years of reflection, discussion, and debate. The Directory is currently before the Presbyteries for their approval and the results will be announced to the next assembly in July.

The assembly voted to postpone indefinitely a humble petition to President Obama concerning gays in the military. This matter rather sharply divided the assembly with differing views on the spirituality of the church, and whether or not such a petition was warranted in light of WCF 31:4.

Fraternal delegates and observers from 12 denominations attended the assembly. The address by the Rev. Ludgero Morais of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil, translated from Portuguese by Dr. Augustus Lopes, was a great highlight of the Assembly, and points toward a greater working relationship between the OPC and IPB. In 2011 the OPC will celebrate the 75th anniversary of her founding with a special agenda to be proposed for the 78th General Assembly, the Lord willing.

In his book *And We Escaped*, the Rev. G. Van Dooren, one of your own, recounts how he and his congregation gathered to sing for hours and hours after their liberation from the Nazis. As I hope you recall, for him personally, the liberation was twofold: from the tyranny of an unbridled synod and its decrees, and from the tyranny of Hitler.

Among their songs was something like this:

When Zion was at last restored,
brought back from exile by the
LORD,

it seemed to us as if we dreamed. How glad were those He had redeemed!
 Our mouths were filled with loud rejoicing; we laughed and cheered, our rapture voicing.
 The other nations, too, confessed. “The LORD His own has greatly blessed.”

In His enduring faithfulness, the LORD did wondrous things for us. With shouts of gladness and delight, we gloried in His deeds of might.

Again LORD, grant us restoration, as in the Negev’s desolation the rain filled streams turn arid sand, into a green and pleasant land.

Let those who sow their seed in tears, beset by anxious cares and fears,
 at harvest time no longer weep, rejoicing in the crops they reap.
 The sower going forth in sorrow, to carry seed to field and furrow will with his sheaves come home again, exulting in the golden grain.

This was the song of your fathers in 1945, and it is of course your song in the *Book of Praise*. But this also is the testimony of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The tears of the Presbyterian conflict of the 1920’s which culminated in the loss of Princeton and defrocking of Machen gave way to the joy of the General Assembly of 1936 and the genesis of a true Presbyterian Church. As the descendents then of our own secession and liberation, we thank the Canadian Reformed Churches for their persistence in seeking Ecclesiastical Fellowship with us. We thank you for your patience in coming to understand, trust, and embrace us. We thank you for sharing our joy; and we especially invite you to join with us next year “to laugh and cheer with rapturous voice” in confession of the Lord’s great goodness to the Zion of which we are both a part, and to pray together that the Lord will continue to restore his captive ones and turn the Negev’s desolation and arid sands into a green and pleasant land. Amen.

Presented on behalf of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church by the Rev. Jack W. Sawyer, Administrator of the OPC Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations.

APPENDIX 9 – Address by the Rev. Ben Westerveld (ERQ)

20 May 2010

Esteemed fathers and brothers in our Lord Jesus Christ,

Please receive the warm Christian greetings of your brothers and sisters in the *Église réformée du Québec*, the Reformed Church of Quebec (ERQ). We praise our heavenly Father for our fellowship in the one holy catholic and apostolic faith committed once and for all to the saints (Jude 3).

For the third time, we address your synod in person. The Reverend Paulin Bédard spoke to you at the synods Fergus (1998) and Smithers (2007). My apologies for the presence of an ERQ delegate with a curiously Dutch sounding name. Born and raised in a Dutch Reformed family in Dunnville, Ontario, the Lord called me to serve his people in the province of Quebec. It is now my joy to worship the Lord our God in *la belle langue*, la language of Calvin and, according to the brothers and sisters of the ERQ, the language of heaven.

For the first time we are addressing this esteemed body as a full sister church. Synod Smithers approved the recommendation to receive the ERQ into ecclesiastical fellowship under the adopted rules, a positive response to the ERQ decision of 1997 to receive the Canadian Reformed Churches. We are grateful for your decision, as well as your reaffirmation of this decision at this synod. We pray that the Lord might use this relationship for the furtherance of his kingdom in our respective federations and the geographical regions that we serve.

The Struggles and Joys of the ERQ

It would only be appropriate to inform you of some developments within the ERQ, developments which include both struggles and joys. We reported in 2007 the closure of the church in Trois-Rivières. This year we again report the closure of our mission plant in Laval, just north of Montreal, in large part due to internal division. It appears that another closure is imminent, namely the congregation in Charny, just south of Quebec City, due primarily to a shrinking membership.

The four remaining churches of the ERQ are doing well, by God’s grace. The two urban center congregations of Montreal and Quebec City are experiencing numerical growth, due in part to new converts, membership transfers and births. We are particularly encouraged by the public profession of faith of our covenant youth. For many members, these youth represent

the second generation of the Reformed witness in the province of Quebec which had been revived during the late 1970s and early 1980s. As this second generation of believers begin to marry, we rejoice to see the third generation be born and received into the Church through covenant baptism.

Other encouraging developments in the ERQ these past three years include the formation and ordination of three elders and eight deacons for life time service, the reception of one seminary student, Winston Bosch, to give an edifying word, the bi-monthly publication of a small Reformed review *Lumière sur mon sentier* (A light on my path), and a museum exhibit in 2008-09 about the presence of Huguenot believers in colony of New France thanks to the support of several NAPARC congregations.

Inter-Church Relations

With respect to our inter-church relations, the ERQ synod of March 2010 adopted the motion to establish ecclesiastical fellowship with the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). For more than twenty-five years, the PCA has been actively involved with and supporting the missionary endeavours of the ERQ. Two additional PCA ministers will join us, Lord willing, near the end of 2010 in order to work actively in the Montreal area within the Muslim and Mandarin communities. In 2007, the General Assembly of the PCA invited the ERQ into ecclesiastical fellowship. After investigating several particular questions about PCA doctrine and practice, as well as consulting with the inter-church relations committees of the CanRC, OPC and URCNA, the ERQ synod received the PCA as a sister church.

We continue a corresponding relationship with the OPC and URCNA, as well as having face-to-face discussions. Their respective inter-church relations committees are recommending that their general assembly or synod receive the ERQ into ecclesiastical fellowship. Once the invitation is extended, we will respond, Lord willing, by establishing full sister-church relations.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation for the decision of Synod Smithers by which your federation joined NAPARC. The opportunity to sit down together with Reformed and Presbyterian federations from throughout North America provides an excellent venue to become better acquainted with one another, to remove suspicions, to build bridges of cooperation, and to encourage ecclesiastical fellowship and even organic union of member churches. We heartily encourage you to develop ties with the other NAPARC member churches. Our Lord Jesus calls us to seek unity, within our federations as well as with other federations of like faith and practice.

Please permit us to express a word of encouragement concerning the growing

relationship between the CanRC and the URCNA. We give thanks to our one Lord for this coming together of churches of like faith and practice. It may be helpful for you to realize that your French-speaking brothers of the ERQ are often perplexed by the assortment of Reformed acronyms: URC, RCUS, FRC, HRC, and CanRC (occasionally mistaken for CRC!). While they are beginning to appreciate the theological and historical differences, your brothers in the ERQ still shrug their shoulders and ask, “Why should such differences keep these Reformed Churches separate?” The small Reformed work of the Lord in the province of Quebec requires us to bear and to forebear with one another as we seek to preserve the unity of our one faith. We would encourage the same forbearance, kindnesses and certainly humility in your dialogue, cooperation and eventual union with the URCNA.

CanRC – ERQ relations

With respect to relations between the CanRC and ERQ, we applaud the zeal of the members of the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA) who have regularly visited our synods and engaged in stimulating discussions with our Inter-church Relations Committee (ICRC). We requested and received their valuable input on a proposed baptism liturgy, which was subsequently modified and then adopted by our synod in March 2008. The members of the CCCNA requested our thoughts on woman voting, the reception of the RPCNA, and the new *Book of Praise*, where we encouraged openness to contemporary praise songs and different instrumentation. While our relationship might be typified as “big sister - little sister”, it is not a patronizing “mother-daughter” relationship, for which we are very thankful.

We spent significant time discussing with members of your committee the administration of the Lord’s Supper, particularly to guests. A Ministerial Committee report to the ERQ synod declared that a verbal instruction and warning from the pulpit was not sufficient for supervising the Lord’s Table, and it recommended that the elders must meet with visitors or receive a letter of recommendation before admitting them. This proposal was defeated. A subsequent motion recommended that each local council determine how to administer the Lord’s Supper. While that motion reflected the actual practice of the ERQ, it was also defeated. It appears that the men desire a more common practice in our churches in submission to the Word of God and our Reformed confessions.

In light of this issue, we are thankful for the recommendation of your committee not to belabour unnecessarily the question regarding admission to

the Lord's Supper. Undue pressure would create a schism in the ERQ. Please remember that our federation was born from the missionary endeavours of the CRC, PCA and the Presbyterian Church of Canada. Today we work closely with the PCA, OPC, URCNA and CanRC. We are thankful for the role that each of these Churches plays in the ERQ, as well as for the blessing of having pastors from different theological backgrounds working together in the Lord's mission. At the same time, we must recognize the constant challenge of reconciling differing convictions and practices. Moreover, since we are so few in number, differences easily become personal conflicts. Consequently, with respect to the administration of the Lord's Supper, when the moment is appropriate to readdress this issue, we will most certainly consult with the CCCNA according to the rules of ecclesiastical fellowship, as well as with the respective committees of the OPC, PCA and URCNA.

Beyond the formal exchanges with the CCCNA, we are intrigued to witness growing contact between the members of our respective congregations, particularly the youth. Annual high school trips to Quebec province and the occasional involvement in mission projects are encouraging personal familiarity with and appreciation of one another. Such a development should only rejoice our hearts as ecclesiastical fellowship expresses itself in the communion of the saints.

Prayer

We would end our address with an appeal for your intercessory prayers on behalf of the Lord's work in the ERQ, even as we pray for your churches. In 2008, the ERQ celebrated its 20th anniversary. At that time, we wrote this note to sister churches in North America.

"We began with a dream to preach the full council of God and to plant Reformed churches throughout the province. Twenty years later, we realise that we are fewer in number – only five small congregations. Nonetheless, we want to celebrate the Lord's faithfulness and to thank him for preserving a Reformed confessional witness in the province of Québec. We also desire to cast a vision for the future, persevering in the work of making disciples of all nations, including the people of Quebec."

We covet your prayers as we continue to fulfil this divine mission.

With Christian greetings,

The Rev. Ben Westerveld
For the Inter-church Committee of the ERQ

APPENDIX 10 – Address by the Rev. Dirk M. Boersma (FRCSA)

20 May 2010

Greetings

Mr. chairman, delegates of Synod, brothers and sisters present,

I would like to bring you the greetings from your sister in South Africa. We congratulate you with your 60th birthday, since it was on April 16 this year that the first Canadian Reformed church was established.

Our federations are sisters and are about the same age. However, because the original SA churches that started in the 1950s are few and we have mission churches, our federation feels much younger. The average age of our churches does not come close to that of yours. So we greet you as our older sister, yet as equals before the Lord.

When I flew to Canada I saw the coast with its surf below and I was aware I was leaving one continent to arrive at another continent. We both live in coastal lands. This reminds me of the promise about the servant of the Lord in Isaiah 42:

"He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets.
A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;
he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth.
In his law the islands will put their hope."

In Hebrew the word for 'islands' also means coastal lands. Starting in Jerusalem, Jesus has been establishing his kingdom on earth and it has also arrived on the distant shores of America and Africa.

From one coastland to another, I would like to greet you in the name of our Lord and Saviour, who has promised to bring justice everywhere. We, in the coastal lands put our hope in him, because in his kingdom we find life and we know we find our purpose: to worship the living God and enjoy him forever. The churches we represent are privileged to be his instrument when they are faithful to Him.

Our churches are grateful for the invitation to attend your synod. We have historic ties and most importantly we are one by our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am personally grateful that I can be present and enjoy your warm hospitality

and the brotherly love. I have witnessed your strong desire and effort to remain faithful to God's Word and to do this in unity with each other. Judging from the many letters sent by the churches, I conclude that they take a lively interest in what is going on at their own Synod. This is an example for our churches.

I would like to introduce our federation of churches to you, especially for those who don't already know us from your previous Synod and from the articles that have been written about us in *Clarion*.

The FRCSA

You probably know that our churches started at about the same time as the Canadian Reformed Churches. Dutch immigrants also landed on the shores of South Africa and founded the *Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke*. There were only three churches in the beginning. To this date, their number is still small: 5 churches in white areas. Contacts with the other, bigger federation of Reformed Churches is still strained. Recognizing them as true churches has been a long process, which is, sadly, not concluded yet because questions remain about the direction of this federation.

Fortunately, it did not stop there. Members started bringing the gospel to the black township in the 1960s. Shortly afterward, the first missionary was called (a relative of Rev. Agema here present). God blessed the mission work. Since 2002, three mission churches have been instituted. Eight more mission points have been started, and we currently have seven missionaries in the field.

The Religious Tapestry of South Africa

It may raise your eyebrows that I am serving as a Dutch missionary in South Africa. Statistics show that South Africa is a deeply religious country; 80% of the people claim they are Christians. When I think about this, I always feel I need to return to my home country, where church membership is in the single digits and most of the growth in Christianity is from immigrants from Africa and Asia.

However, the situation is more complicated than this. If one would measure church attendance, the figures would probably be much lower. Especially when one takes into consideration that the largest Christian church is the *Zion Christian Church*, a Pentecostal church that does not preach Christ. Their 'mediator' is bishop Lekganyane. His followers expect healing from holy water that has been blessed by the bishop, and their place of worship

is Mount Moriah. Now you probably understand why missionaries in South Africa are not booking their return flights yet.

It is hard to know how many Christians our country really has. Christianity is popular among the black majority of the population, but I have often found that *having a church* is more important for many people than having a *personal relationship with Jesus Christ*. In addition, many do not see a problem combining the Christian faith with trusting in the ancestor spirits to help them in daily life and protect them against bad luck.

I would dare to conclude that many people may believe in God but hardly know Christ. This might explain why South Africa is suffering under so much lawlessness, crime, and corruption. Empty religious practice caves in under pressure. The country is rapidly becoming more secular; this is showing in politics and tertiary education and also visible in consumerism.

Instead of just lamenting the situation, the Free Reformed Churches want to follow the calling Jesus gave us to preach the good news. There are many opportunities for missionaries to preach the gospel and for members to share their faith personally. Our churches desire to make use of these opportunities the Lord is giving us.

Mission Work

Therefore I would like to tell you about the mission work God has given us to do. We are deeply grateful to the Lord that He has blessed us with a huge increase in the number of missionaries during the past 4 years. In 2006, the mission field near Pretoria had only two 2 missionaries left. Four years later, this number has tripled. We now have two missionaries from the Netherlands, while the other four missionaries were born in South Africa. Three of them are black. In the future, all of the missionaries will probably be South Africans.

There is also an experienced missionary in Cape Town, Dr. Breytenbach. He is an Afrikaner and works in the coloured areas outside of Cape Town. There is a vacancy there, as well.

You can imagine that a federation of only 8 churches, 3 of which are needy, cannot possibly support eight missionaries financially. The number of financially strong church members is shrinking. We suffer from South Africa's brain drain in our churches. Many young parents choose to raise the children in seemingly safe countries like Australia and New Zealand. Others have left for Holland, England or Canada. Our mission churches are growing but are hardly capable of supporting their own pastors.

We are grateful for the long-time support of two Dutch provincial synods,

who are partners in missions. Further, the Australian churches are supporting one of our needy churches. We are very grateful for that!

Rev. Kleijn addressed your Synod at Smithers and said: “We probably need your help more.” This has sadly come true. We are grateful for the hand you stretched out to us at your previous Synod. We pray that this support may be such that it will keep the missionaries in the field. The bulk of the missions budget is taken up by personnel cost: stipends and support structures for the missionaries.

We are thankful that the committee at Coaldale has informed the churches of the need we have.

Our churches would be best helped by structural instead of incidental giving. I would like to use this opportunity to bring our need to the attention of your churches. It would be wonderful if a number of churches would be willing to promise support for a certain amount per year. This would relieve much of the pressure on our missions budget.

Brothers, I can see that theological training is very important to the Canadian Reformed Churches. We share this passion. In order to have ministers who preach Jesus Christ, we need to train our students in exegesis, sound dogmatic thinking, and preaching. Our students from the mission churches were trained at Mukhanyo Theological College (a Reformed institution) and still are. During the 1990s, the local pastors were involved in our own theological training institute, but this proved too much for our small federation. We now enjoy the cooperation with your Theological College and this has been very fruitful. Cornelis Kleijn and Phineas Kgatle have profited from the teaching, and I hope that Phineas will soon finish his training and become a minister in our churches, as well. We are very grateful for this and look forward to further cooperation with the College.

Race

Most of you know that South Africa has a tainted history of race relations. From the moment the white settlers set foot on the Southern tip of Africa, there was distrust and fighting. It developed into a system that was aimed at keeping the white people on top and the black majority under their control. We are glad that this *Apartheid*-system has been abolished and that this happened peacefully.

Racial tensions still exist and sometimes flare up. Crime has a huge impact on it. Politics too, since the white people now feel marginalized while many black people still feel the whites are in control of the money. Satan uses

the fear on both sides to create tension and hatred instead of healing and harmony.

We notice even in our churches that racial stereotypes are difficult to overcome, especially since we are often not aware of them in our own mind. But black and white members are trying to grow together and understand each other.

We firmly believe that the gospel is needed more than ever in the current political and social climate. It is so meaningful for a country that suffers from crime, HIV/AIDS, corruption, greed and racial tensions. I find the gospel liberating and refreshing in different ways:

- Jesus shows us that our treasure is not on earth. He turns our grabbing-mentality into a giving-mentality because he makes us rich.
- Fear is often at the root of racism. It is taken away when we realize that Jesus is in control and is gracious. The kingdom of God sets us free when we are selfish and only think of our own survival or comfort.
- Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection give us the right perspective on suffering on earth. We do not deceive people with a prosperity gospel, but we comfort people with the promise of the heavenly inheritance for disciples of Jesus. While we are on earth, we show and share his love with those who suffer.
- He unites us in a church bought by his own blood. He took away the barrier between Jews and gentiles and made them one. He calls us away from the idol of the survival or prosperity of our own racial group. He places us in a church that is composed of people of all nations, races, and cultures.
- The gospel is sufficient. However, we need to grow in understanding and applying it to our own thinking, our fears, and our relationships. We have much to learn and discuss as members of a racially-mixed federation. We ask your prayer for this difficult process.
We thank God for his blessings, too: former mission churches that speak Northern Sotho, are fully part of the Classis in the North. During the meetings, English is used as the bridge between us and we work together in unity.

We pray that the cultural uniqueness of the nations may find a place in the church and we will all praise God because of the many varied gifts that he has given us.

Challenges We Share

Brothers, during meetings like this God reminds us of our similarities. The basis is that we share the same faith, as Ephesians 5 says: “*One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, through all and in all.*”

While I was reading the reports for this Synod, the Acts of Synod 2007 and the speeches that were given there, I noticed that we share challenges that are common in the world. To mention a few:

- how to remain faithful to the truth God has given us without becoming frozen in a certain stage of church history
- how to discern when and how to renew Hymns and Psalms, liturgical forms, etc. There seems to be a wave of renewal going on even in Reformed churches!
- how to spread the gospel in a secularist society
- and I would like to add: how to deal with the multicultural societies we both live in because of the immigration that is taking place across the global village; and how to use this as opportunities to proclaim the gospel and save sinners.

We are excited about the unity discussions you are having with the URCNA. It does not happen very often that mergers on such a scale are discussed. I am impressed with the depth in the discussions in the various committees, which are an example to us in our contacts with other churches. We sympathize with the difficulties that have arisen because many local churches in both federations hardly know each other and are trying to recognize fellow pilgrims on the way to the same destination. It is a real challenge for both federations not to get stuck in your own ways but to remain truly ecumenical. But we are encouraged by the commitment that is expressed from both sides, for example regarding the views on theological education. One needs a lot of wisdom to distinguish the principle from the application and to decide which one to keep and which one can be changed. We pray for wisdom for your synod.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude with the wish that all of you have brought your bifocals. I pray that you, the delegates, and the churches you serve may look up and set your heart on things above, where Jesus is seated at God’s right

hand (Col3,1). When you do this, I am confident you will also see the need to look directly ahead of you, to know the times and to discern how to fulfill the mission Jesus gave you.

It is the prayer of your sister in South Africa that by using your bifocals you will not blend in but stand out, “being transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Rom12,2)

Thank you.

APPENDIX 11 – Guidelines for Synod

GUIDELINES FOR SYNOD⁶**I Convening and Constitution of Synod**

- A. The convening Church shall set the date on which Synod shall meet, (cf. Art. 49 CO). The convening church shall publish the date along with the rule:
All material for Synod should be received by the convening Church (in thirty copies) no later than six weeks prior to the convocation date of General Synod. Material received after this date shall ordinarily not be added to the agenda unless Synod is satisfied that the reasons given for later arrival are reasonable.⁷
- B. The convening Church shall send the first Provisional Agenda to all the Churches at least six months prior to convocation.
- C. All material submitted to the convening Church together with a copy of the current Guidelines for General Synod shall be sent to all delegates and the first alternates.⁸ All material submitted to Synod, including Reports, Appeals, Overtures which quote any foreign language source must provide in the text of the submission a full English translation and in a footnote the citation in the original language.⁹
- D. All material for Synod should be received by the convening Church (in thirty copies) no later than six weeks prior to the convocation date of General Synod. Material received after this date shall ordinarily not be added to the agenda unless Synod is satisfied that the reasons given for later arrival are reasonable.¹⁰
- E. For all matters of the churches in common, individual churches may address proposals or other significant submissions directly to general synod with the requirement that all such submissions are sent also to each church in the federation no later than six months prior to general synod.¹¹

6 Synod Cloverdale 1983, Acts, Art. 45

7 Synod Abbotsford 1995, Arts. 111; Synod Chatham 2004, Art. 118

8 Synod Burlington 1986, Art. 76; Synod Abbotsford 1995, Art. 111

9 Synod Winnipeg 1989, Art. 131

10 Synod Burlington 1986, Art. 162; Synod Abbotsford 1995, Art. 110

11 Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010, Art. 174

- F. Since matters on the agenda of general synod involve the churches in common, regional synods shall distribute copies of adopted overtures to all the churches in the federation no later than five months prior to the convening of a general synod.¹²
- G. The minister of the convening Church or its counsellor shall act as chairman until Synod has been constituted.
1. He shall call the meeting to order in an ecclesiastical manner (cf. Art.34 CO);
2. He shall have the credentials examined as to whether General Synod can be constituted.
- H. Officers of Synod shall be chosen by ballot in this order: chairman, vice-chairman, first clerk, and second clerk. Election to office is to be by majority of valid votes cast.
- I. Although advice can be requested in particular matters, advisory members shall not be appointed.¹³
- J. The convening church shall arrange to have people present during Synod to assist the clerks in preparing the Acts and to do other paper work.¹⁴

II Duties of the Officers**A. The Chairman**

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

12 Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010, Art. 174 and 35

13 Synod Smithers 2007, Art. 147

14 Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010, Art. 174

he shall relinquish the chair to the vice-chairman for that period of time. While holding the chair, he may speak to state matters of fact or to inform Synod regarding points of order.

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

B. The Vice-Chairman

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

C. The First Clerk

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

D. The Second Clerk

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

III Synodical Committees

A. Advisory Committees of Synod

1. The officers of Synod shall propose advisory committees, with a convener, to serve for the duration of Synod.
2. The officers of Synod shall propose an arrangement of matters on the agenda to the appropriate committees.
3. All reports shall be distributed in ample time before they are presented for discussion.
4. The committee reporter shall present the reports.
5. If there is a minority report as well as a majority report, both reports shall be given into discussion, but the majority report shall be voted upon first.
6. During the discussion, the task of defending the report shall rest primarily with the reporter of the committee. Other committee members shall receive the privilege of the floor to elaborate on or clarify any point.
7. In order to facilitate the discussion on a pending issue, the chair shall ordinarily call for the discussion in two parts (rounds) - in the first part opportunity is given to members to express remarks related to the issue in question. In the second or following parts, members may react to the discussion or the issue in question.
8. The discussion may be extended by discretion of the chairman or by a decision of Synod.
9. If anyone has been requested to advise Synod on any matter, he shall address synod on this point only when asked to do so by the chair.

B. Synodical Committees

1. All committees appointed by Synod shall see to it that they send as many copies of their report to the local churches as each has office-bearers.¹⁵

IV Rules of Order

A. Closed Sessions of Synod

1. A closed session shall ordinarily mean a session where

members of Synod and office-bearers may be present. This shall be used in delicate or unusual situations.

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

B. Main Motions

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

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

C. A Motion to Amend

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

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

D. Call for a Division of the Question

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

E. Objection to Consideration of a Question

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

F. Right of Protest

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

G. Motion to Bring Matters Once Decided Again Before Synod

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

H. Discussion

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

I. Voting

1. It is in the freedom of the chair to determine how the vote is to be taken: by calling the roll (in any order) or by show of hands.¹⁶

2. Voting about persons shall be by ballot.
3. Voting about delicate matters and other matters of a critical nature shall also be by ballot.

J. Revision

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

APPENDIX 12 – URCNA Statement regarding the Framework Hypothesis

Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity

of the United Reformed Churches in North America

Rev. John A. Bouwers, chairman
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Rev. Harry Zekveld, secretary
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TO: Ecclesiastical Unity Coordinators of the Canadian Reformed Churches
RE: The Framework Hypothesis

Dear Brothers,

Some time ago you asked our committee for the URCNA position on the Framework Hypothesis. We are unable to give you such a position since we do not have one. The closest thing we have to such a position would be the statement on creation adopted by Synod Escondido 2001, which reads as follows:

Synod affirms that Scripture teaches, as summarized by the Creeds and the Three Forms of Unity:

1. The authority and perspicuity of Scripture (Belgic Confession V; Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day VII).
2. Necessity and sufficiency of Scripture (Belgic Confession VII; Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day VII).
3. God the Father almighty created the heavens and the earth and all things visible and invisible (Apostle's and Nicene Creed).
4. The Father created the heavens and the earth out of nothing (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day IX).
5. God gave every creature its shape and being (Belgic Confession XII).
6. The creation and fall of man: "God made man of the dust of the earth; man gave ear to the devil." (Belgic Confession XIV).

7. The historicity of Adam (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day VII.20; Canons of Dort III, IV.1).
 8. Man was created good, in a garden, and tempted by the devil, committed reckless disobedience (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day III and IV).
 9. God's words to the serpent in Paradise are noted as the first revelation of the Gospel (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day VI).
 10. Adam plunged himself and his offspring by his first transgression into perdition (Belgic Confession XVI).
 11. Adam's fall into sin and our connection to it (Canons of Dort I.1).
 12. God came seeking man when he, trembling, fled from Him (Belgic Confession XVII).
 13. God created all things good in six days defined as evenings and mornings (Genesis 1 & 2 and Exodus 20:11). This means that we reject any evolutionary teaching, including theistic evolution, concerning the origin of the earth and of all creatures (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day IX).
- (Acts of Synod 2001, p. 22)

We hope that this letter will answer your request for our position on this subject.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Harry Zekveld,
Secretary for the Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity

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