

# ACTS

## General Synod 2013

OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

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CARMAN, MANITOBA

MAY 7-21, 2013

**ACTS**  
of  
**General Synod 2013**  
of the  
Canadian Reformed Churches



**ACTS**  
of  
**General Synod 2013**  
of the  
Canadian Reformed Churches  
  
held at  
**Carman, Manitoba**  
from  
**May 7-21, 2013**



*The first synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches at Homewood-Carman 1954*  
*Standing (l to r): br. K. Flokstra, br. J. Koster, Rev. L. Selles, Br. H. De Bolster,*  
*Rev. H. Scholten, br. D.M. Barendregt, Rev. H. Stel, br. C. DeJong, br. H. Lubbers*  
*Seated (l to r): br. L. Lodder; br. H Oosterhoff, Rev. W. Loopstra, Rev. W.W.J. VanOene,*  
*Rev. J. VanPopta, Rev. G. VanDooren, br. D. Buit, Rev. Ph. Pieffers*



*The second synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches at Homewood-Carman 1958*  
*Standing (l to r): br. G. Antonides, br. C. Walinga, br. G. Boot, br. A.W. DeLeeuw,*  
*Rev. H. Scholten, br. J. Buist, br. K. Flokstra, br. E. Wierenga, br. J. DeHaas*  
*Seated (l to r): Rev. G. VanDooren, Rev. W.W.J. VanOene, Rev. J.T. VanPopta,*  
*Rev. L. Selles, Rev. A.B. Roukema, Rev. H.A. Stel, Rev. D. VanderBoom*



*Standing (l to r): L. Jagt, Dr. A.J. Pol, Rev. W.M. Wielenga, Rev. J. Moesker, S.H. DeBoer, Rev. A. Souman, C.H. Medemblik, Rev. C.J. Vander'velden, B. VanRaalte, Rev. W.B. Slomp, P.A.M. Broekema, R.J. Buist, H.F. Stoffels, Rev. R.J. Eikelboom, C. Leyenhorst, L. Kampen, Rev. R. Bredenhof, Rev. J. Ludwig, F.C. Ludwig, L.K. Wierenga, R. de Haan  
Seated (l to r): Rev. P.H. Holvliwer, Rev. J.D. Louwse, Rev. C. Bouwman, Rev. R.A. Schouten*

General Synod 2013

of the Canadian Reformed Churches

Acts

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<sup>1</sup> What follows are mostly late or supplementary reports from synod-appointed committees. The main reports were bound and published in two separate booklets, too large to reproduce here. The reader may access these reports in electronic form at the official website of the Canadian Reformed Churches ([www.canrc.org](http://www.canrc.org)) or in printed form through your local consistory.

## List of Abbreviations Frequently Used in the Acts of Synod Carman 2013

Please be aware that some names (and therefore abbreviations) have changed in the course of time. As much as possible, the following list will be used in order to avoid the confusion that could be caused by different references to the same thing.

APV	Authorized Provisional Version (of the <i>Book of Praise</i> ) ARTS
	Association of Reformed Theological Schools
ATS	Association of Theological Schools
BBK	<i>Betrekkingen met Buitenlandse Kerken</i> (the Dutch Committee [i.e., of the RCN] on Relations with Churches Abroad)
BC	Belgic Confession
CanRC	Canadian Reformed Churches
CBT	Committee for Bible Translation (for the CanRC)
CBTNIV	Committee on Bible Translation for the New International Version (of the Bible)
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)
CICR	Committee on Inter-Church Relations (of the ERQ)
CO	Church Order
CNSF	Committee for Needy Students Fund
CRCA	Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad
CRCAustralia	Christian Reformed Churches of Australia
CRCNA	Christian Reformed Church in North America
CRTS	Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary
CWEB	Committee for the Official Website (of the CanRC)
EF	Ecclesiastical Fellowship
ERQ	Église Réformée du Québec
ESV	English Standard Version (of the Bible)
FCS	Free Church of Scotland
FCC	Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)
FRCA	Free Reformed Churches of Australia
FRCSA	Free Reformed Churches of South Africa
GGRI	<i>Gereja-Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia</i> (Reformed Churches of Indonesia – a new federation resulting

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	from the 2012 merger of the GGRI-KalBar, GGRI-NTT, and GGRI-Papua)
GGRI-KalBar	<i>Gereja-Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia – Kalimantan Barat</i> (Reformed Churches of Indonesia in the Province of Kalimantan Barat)
GGRI-NTT	<i>Gereja-Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia – Nusa Tenggara Timur</i> (Reformed Churches of Indonesia in the Province of Nusa Tenggara) <b>Note:</b> In <i>Acts of Synod Burlington 2010</i> , cited as RCI
GGRI-Papua	<i>Gereja-Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia – Papua</i> (Reformed Churches of Indonesia in the Province of Papua)
GGRC	<i>Gereja-Gereja Calvinis Reformasi di Indonesia</i> (Calvinist Reformed Churches of Indonesia) <b>Note:</b> In <i>Acts of Synod Burlington 2010</i> , cited as CRCI
GKN (Rev. Hoogendoorn)/RCN (Rev Hoogendoorn)	<i>Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland</i> (Reformed Churches in the Netherlands excluded from the RCN - Liberated in 2009 and led by Rev. Hoogendoorn)
GKN <sub>vv</sub> /RCN(vv)	<i>Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (verloopig verband)</i> – Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (temporary federation)
HC	Heidelberg Catechism
ICET	International Consultation on English Texts
ICRC	International Conference of Reformed Churches
IPB	<i>Igreja Presbiteriana do Brasil</i> (Presbyterian Church of Brazil)
IRC	Inter-church Relations Committee (of the RPCNA or RCUS)
IRCK	Independent Reformed Church in Korea
KJV	King James Version (of the Bible)
KPCA (Kosin)	Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin)
KPCK	Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea (Previously cited as PCK [Kosin])
LRCA	Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NAPARC	North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council
NIV/NIV84	New International Version – 1984 Edition (of the Bible)
NIV2011	New International Version – 2011 Edition (of the Bible)
NKJV	New King James Version (of the Bible)
NRC	Netherlands Reformed Churches ( <i>Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken</i> )

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NRSV	New Revised Standard Version (of the Bible)
OPC	Orthodox Presbyterian Church
PCA	Presbyterian Church in America
PCUSA	Presbyterian Church in the United States
PHC	Psalter-Hymnal Committee (of the URCNA)
PJCO	Proposed Joint Church Order (between CanRC & URCNA)
PTP	Pastoral Training Program (of CRTS)
RCB	Reformed Churches in Brazil ( <i>Igrejas Reformadas do Brazil</i> )
RCK	Reformed Churches in Korea
RCN	Reformed Churches in the Netherlands – Liberated ( <i>Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland - Vrijgemaakt</i> )
RCR/GKH	Reformed Churches – Restored ( <i>Gereformeerde Kerken – Hersteld / GKH</i> ; 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
SCBP	Standing Committee for the Publication of the <i>Book of Praise</i>
TUK	Theological University in Kampen (of the RCN) ( <i>Theologische Universiteit Kampen</i> )
URCNA	United Reformed Churches in North America

### **Note to the Reader**

In the *Acts* you will find references to various reports. While some of the supplementary reports can be found in the appendices to these *Acts*, most other reports are available online at the official website for the Canadian Reformed Churches ([www.canrc.org](http://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 Carman**  
of the Canadian Reformed Churches  
**May 7 - 21, 2013**

**Day 1 – Morning Session**  
**Tuesday, May 7, 2013**

**Article 1 – Opening of Synod**

On behalf of the convening church, Dr. Andrew J. Pol called the meeting to order. He requested all who were present to sing Psalm 133 and then read from Romans 12:1-13. After giving a meditation on this passage he had the assembly sing Hymn 49:1-4 and then 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. Dr. Pol's opening address can be found in *Appendix 1* 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 West:*

*Ministers:* R.J. Eikelboom, J.D. Louwarse, R.A. Schouten, W.B. Slomp, A. Souman, W.M. (Bill) Wielenga

*Elders:* R.J. Buist, S.H. DeBoer, R. de Haan, C. Leyenhorst, B. VanRaalte, L.K. Wierenga

*From Regional Synod East:*

*Ministers:* C. Bouwman, R. Bredenhof, P.H. Holtvlüwer, J. Ludwig, J. Moesker, C.J. VanderVelde

*Elders:* P.A.M. Broekema, L. Jagt, L. Kampen, F.C. Ludwig, C.H. Medemblik, H.F. Stoffels

**Article 3 – Election of Officers and Constitution of Synod**

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

Chairman: C. Bouwman

Vice-chairman: J.D. Louwarse

First Clerk: P.H. Holtvlüwer

Second Clerk: R.A. Schouten



## Article 6 – Advisory Committees of Synod

The following advisory committees were appointed:

**Committee 1.** A.Souman (convener), J. Moesker, F.C. Ludwig, L. Jagt, P.A.M. Broekema

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**Committee 3.** C.J. VanderVelde (convenor), R.J. Eikelboom, B. VanRaalte, C. Leyenhorst, L. Kampen

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**Committee 4.** W.B. Slomp (convenor), R. Bredenhof, S.H. DeBoer, H.F.

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**Article 7 – Late Submissions**

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**Article 8 – Welcoming of Fraternal/Observer Delegates and Address of the RCK**

The chairman welcomed the following fraternal delegates: brs. Wayne Pleiter and Rev. Dr. Roger Dean Anderson of the Free Reformed Churches

in Australia (FRCA); Rev. Daniel Kok of the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA); Rev. Bernard Westerveld of the Église Réformée du Québec. Rev. DongSup Song of the Reformed Church of Korea (RCK) was welcomed as observer. Rev. Bouwman introduced Rev. DongSup Song who then briefly addressed the assembly. Rev. Bouwman responded with appropriate words.

## **Article 9 – Agenda**

The following agenda was **adopted**.<sup>1</sup>

### **Agenda of General Synod Carman 2013**

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:**

- 8.1.1. Letter from Regional Synod West dated November 28, 2012. Appointments and credentials of delegates to General Synod Carman 2013
- 8.1.2. Letter from Regional Synod East dated November 17, 2012. Appointments and credentials of delegates to General Synod Carman 2013
- 8.1.3. Letter from Winnipeg-Redeemer dated May 16, 2012 Re: *Acts of Synod Burlington 2010*, Article 22
- 8.1.4. Letter from Orangeville dated January 21, 2013 Re: VanWoudenberg Overture
- 8.1.5. Letter from deputies BBK of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated)
- 8.1.6. Letter from Dunnville dated February 19, 2013 Re: VanWoudenberg Overture
- 8.1.7. Letter from Dunnville dated February 19, 2013 Re: Regional Synod West 2012 Overture

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<sup>1</sup> 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

- 8.1.8. Letter from Smithers dated February 6, 2013 Re: VanWoudenberg Overture
- 8.1.9. Letter from Burlington-Ebenezer dated January 28, 2013 Re: VanWoudenberg Overture
- 8.1.10. Letter from Spring Creek dated December 19, 2012 Re: Regional Synod Appointments to Board of Governors of CRTS
- 8.1.11. Letter from Burlington-Ebenezer dated March 11, 2013 Re: Regional Synod West Overture
- 8.1.12. Letter from Carman West dated March 21, 2013 Re: VanWoudenberg Overture
- 8.1.13. Letter from Fergus-North dated March 8, 2013 Re: VanWoudenberg Overture
- 8.1.14. Letter from Grassie dated March 5, 2013 Re: VanWoudenberg Overture
- 8.1.15. Letter from Grassie dated March 5, 2013 Re: Regional Synod West Overture
- 8.1.16. Letter from Kerwood dated January 25, 2013 Re: Ecclesiastical Fellowship and Sister church Definitions
- 8.1.17. Letter from Kerwood dated January 25, 2013 Re: NAPARC
- 8.1.18. Letter from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Restored) dated March 13, 2013
- 8.1.19. Letter from Lincoln dated March 1, 2013 Re: VanWoudenberg Overture
- 8.1.20. Letter from Lincoln dated March 1, 2013 Re: Regional Synod West Overture
- 8.1.21. Letter from London dated March 4, 2013 Re: VanWoudenberg Overture
- 8.1.22. Letter from London dated March 4, 2013 Re: Regional Synod West Overture
- 8.1.23. Letter from the Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford dated February 28, 2013 Re: CRCA Report
- 8.1.24. Letter from the Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford dated March 14, 2013 Re: Deformation
- 8.1.25. Letter from Burlington-Rehoboth dated March 21, 2013 Re: Regional Synod West Overture
- 8.1.26. Letter from Spring Creek dated January 30, 2013 Re: VanWoudenberg Overture
- 8.1.27. Letter from Willoughby Heights dated March 4, 2013 Re: Appointments to Committees

- 8.1.28. Letter from Winnipeg-Redeemer dated February 22, 2013 Re: VanWoudenberg Overture
- 8.1.29. Letter from Owen Sound dated March 20, 2013 Re: VanWoudenberg Overture
- 8.1.30. Letter from Owen Sound dated March 20, 2013 Re: Regional Synod West Overture
- 8.1.31. Letter from Yarrow re: Women's issues at synod (8.2.1 & 8.2.3)
- 8.1.32. Letter from Gereformeerde Kerk in Dalfsen
- 8.1.33. Letter from the Committee for the Official Website re: appointments
- 8.1.34. Letter of greeting from the Free Church of Scotland
- 8.1.35. Letter of greeting from the Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea
- 8.1.36. Letter of greeting from the Gereja-Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia
- 8.1.37. Letter of greeting from the Reformed Churches in New Zealand
- 8.1.38. Letter of greeting from the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Rev. Hoogendoorn)
- 8.1.39. Credentials for deputies BBK of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated)
- 8.1.40. Credentials for delegate from the URCNA
- 8.1.41. Credentials for the delegates from the OPC
- 8.1.42. Letter of thankfulness from the church at Surrey-Maranatha
- 8.1.43. Letter from the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad re: Appointments

## **8.2. Committee Reports:**

- 8.2.1. CRCA Report [Reports Booklet 1]
  - 8.2.1.1. Subcommittee for Reformed Churches in the Netherlands Liberated [Reports Booklet 1]
  - 8.2.1.2. Subcommittee for Reformed Churches Restored [Reports Booklet 1]
  - 8.2.1.3. CRCA Supplementary Report [*Appendix 13*]
- 8.2.2.a. CCU Coordinators [Reports Booklet 1]
- 8.2.2.b. CCU Supplementary report [*Appendix 14*]
  - 8.2.2.1. CCU Liturgical Forms and Confessions Subcommittee [Reports Booklet 1]
- 8.2.3. CCCNA [Reports Booklet 1]
  - 8.2.3.1. CCCNA Supplementary Report on KPCA (Kosin) with cover letter [*Appendix 15*]
  - 8.2.3.2. CCCNA Letter to Synod re: Appointments

- 8.2.4.a. SCBP Report [Reports Booklet 2]
- 8.2.4.b. SCBP supplementary re: appointments of new committee members
- 8.2.5. CCU Church Order Subcommittee [Reports Booklet 2]
- 8.2.6. CCU Theological Education Subcommittee [Reports Booklet 2]
- 8.2.7. CBT Report [Reports Booklet 2]
- 8.2.8. CWEB Report [Reports Booklet 2]
- 8.2.9. Committee for Pastoral Training Program [Reports Booklet 2]
- 8.2.10.a. CRTS - Board of Governors Report
- 8.2.10.b. CRTS - Board of Governors Supplementary re: appointment for 5<sup>th</sup> Professor
- 8.2.10.c. CRTS - Board of Governors Supplementary report re: Board nominations (non-ministers) and accreditation update
- 8.2.11.a. CNSF Report [*Appendix 16*]
- 8.2.11.b. CNSF Supplementary re: audit of its financial statements [*Appendix 17*]
- 8.2.12.a. Financial Report of Synod 2010 Burlington-Ebenezer [*Appendix 18*]
- 8.2.12.b. Financial Audit of Synod Burlington 2010 (by Burlington-Fellowship) [*Appendix 19*]
- 8.2.13. General Fund Report [*Appendix 20*]
- 8.2.14. Report of the Address Church
- 8.2.15. Report of the Archive Church
- 8.2.16. New (Replacement) Report on the Inspection of the Archives – from Burlington-Rehoboth
- 8.2.17. Report from the Churches (Edmonton-Providence & Burlington-Rehoboth) re: Days of Prayer

### **8.3. Letters From the Churches Regarding the Reports:**

#### *8.3.1. Regarding CRCA Reports*

- 8.3.1.1. Letter from Orangeville dated Jan 23, 2013 Re: RCN
- 8.3.1.2. Letter from Langley dated Feb 26, 2013 Re: RCN
- 8.3.1.3. Letter from Coaldale dated Feb 4, 2013 Re: RCN
- 8.3.1.4. Letter from Abbotsford dated March 11, 2013
- 8.3.1.5. Letter from Abbotsford dated March 11, 2013 Re: RCN
- 8.3.1.6. Letter from Attercliffe undated Re: RCN
- 8.3.1.7. Letter from Attercliffe undated Re: RCR
- 8.3.1.8. Letter from Carman West dated March 18, 2013 Re: GGRI-NTT

- 8.3.1.9. Letter from Carman West dated March 4, 2013 Re: RCN
- 8.3.1.10. Letter from Burlington-Ebenezer dated March 3, 2013  
Re: RCN
- 8.3.1.11. Letter from Elora dated March 2, 2013 Re: Missing  
Appendices
- 8.3.1.12. Letter from Elora dated March 2, 2013 Re: RCN
- 8.3.1.13. Letter from Elora dated March 2, 2013 Re: RCR
- 8.3.1.14. Letter from Fergus-North dated March 15, 2013 Re:  
Ecclesiastical Fellowship
- 8.3.1.15. Letter from Fergus-North dated March 8, 2013 Re: RCN
- 8.3.1.16. Letter from Fergus-North dated March 8, 2013 Re: RCR
- 8.3.1.17. Letter from Fergus-Maranatha dated Feb 25, 2013
- 8.3.1.18. Letter from Grand Rapids dated March 14, 2013
- 8.3.1.19. Letter from Guelph-Emmanuel dated March 4, 2013
- 8.3.1.20. Letter from Hamilton-Providence dated Feb 25, 2013
- 8.3.1.21. Letter from Kerwood dated Jan 25, 2013 Re: RCN
- 8.3.1.22. Letter from Kerwood dated Jan 25, 2013
- 8.3.1.23. Letter from Lincoln dated March 1, 2013
- 8.3.1.24. Letter from Lynden dated March 23, 2013
- 8.3.1.25. Letter from Orangeville dated Feb 26, 2013
- 8.3.1.26. Letter from Burlington-Rehoboth dated March 21, 2013
- 8.3.1.27. Letter from Spring Creek dated Feb 27, 2013
- 8.3.1.28. Letter from Toronto dated Feb 24, 2013
- 8.3.1.29. Letter from Willoughby Heights dated March 4, 2013
- 8.3.1.30. Letter from Calgary dated March 12, 2013
- 8.3.1.31. Letter from Edmonton-Immanuel dated March 15, 2013
- 8.3.1.32. Letter from St. Albert dated March 19, 2013

### *8.3.2. Regarding CCU Reports*

- 8.3.2.1. Letter from Aldergrove dated Feb 13, 2013
- 8.3.2.2. Letter from Abbotsford dated March 11, 2013
- 8.3.2.3. Letter from Attercliffe dated January 2013
- 8.3.2.4. Letter from Cloverdale dated March 1, 2013
- 8.3.2.5. Letter from Burlington-Ebenezer dated March 11, 2013
- 8.3.2.6. Letter from Grand Rapids dated March 14, 2013
- 8.3.2.7. Letter from Hamilton-Providence dated Feb 25, 2013
- 8.3.2.8. Letter from Lincoln dated March 1, 2013
- 8.3.2.9. Letter from London dated March 4, 2013
- 8.3.2.10. Letter from Langley dated Feb 23, 2013

- 8.3.2.11. Letter from Abbotsford dated March 11, 2013 Re: Liturgical Forms Subcommittee
- 8.3.2.12. Letter from Hamilton-Providence date Feb 25, 2013 Re: Liturgical Forms Subcommittee

### *8.3.3. Regarding CCCNA Reports*

- 8.3.3.1. Letter from Grand Valley dated Jan 28, 2013
- 8.3.3.2. Letter from Coaldale dated Feb 4, 2013
- 8.3.3.3. Letter from Guelph-Living Word dated Jan 7, 2013
- 8.3.3.4. Letter from Abbotsford dated March 11, 2013
- 8.3.3.5. Letter from Ancaster dated Feb 26, 2013 Re: ERQ
- 8.3.3.6. Letter from Ancaster dated Feb 26, 2013 Re: RPCNA
- 8.3.3.7. Letter from Attercliffe dated Feb 18, 2013 Re: ERQ
- 8.3.3.8. Letter from Attercliffe dated Feb 18, 2013 Re: RPCNA
- 8.3.3.9. Letter from Carman West dated Feb 1, 2013 Re: ERQ
- 8.3.3.10. Letter from Carman West dated Feb 1, 2013 Re: RPCNA
- 8.3.3.11. Letter from Burlington-Ebenezer dated March 11, 2013
- 8.3.3.12. Letter from Elora dated March 2, 2013
- 8.3.3.13. Letter from Fergus-Maranatha, undated
- 8.3.3.14. Letter from Glanbrook, undated
- 8.3.3.15. Letter from Grand Rapids dated March 14, 2013
- 8.3.3.16. Letter from Hamilton-Cornerstone dated Jan 19, 2013
- 8.3.3.17. Letter from Hamilton-Cornerstone dated Feb 23, 2013 Re: Supplementary Report
- 8.3.3.18. Letter from Hamilton-Providence dated March 25, 2013
- 8.3.3.19. Letter from Lincoln dated March 1, 2013
- 8.3.3.20. Letter from London dated March 4 Re: ERQ
- 8.3.3.21. Letter from London dated March 4 Re: NAPARC
- 8.3.3.22. Letter from London dated March 4 Re: OPC
- 8.3.3.23. Letter from London dated March 4 Re: RCUS
- 8.3.3.24. Letter from London dated March 4 Re: RPCNA
- 8.3.3.25. Letter from Smithville dated Feb 23, 2013
- 8.3.3.26. Letter from Spring Creek dated Feb 27, 2013
- 8.3.3.27. Letter from Calgary dated March 16, 2013
- 8.3.3.28. Letter from Edmonton-Immanuel dated March 15, 2013
- 8.3.3.29. Letter from Owen Sound dated March 20, 2013

### *8.3.4. Regarding SCBP Report*

- 8.3.4.1. Letter from Grand Valley dated Jan 28, 2013
- 8.3.4.2. Letter from Coaldale dated Feb 4, 2013

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- 8.3.4.3. Letter from Smithers dated Feb 6, 2013
  - 8.3.4.4. Letter from Grand Valley dated Feb 25, 2013 re: Psalms
  - 8.3.4.5. Letter from Grand Valley dated Feb 25, 2013 re: Hymns
  - 8.3.4.6. Letter from Abbotsford dated March 11, 2013
  - 8.3.4.7. Letter from Ancaster dated Feb 26, 2013
  - 8.3.4.8. Letter from Attercliffe dated March 23, 2013
  - 8.3.4.9. Letter from Barrhead dated Jan 15, 2013
  - 8.3.4.10. Letter from Brampton dated March 21, 2013
  - 8.3.4.11. Letter from Burlington-Fellowship dated March 15, 2013
  - 8.3.4.12.a. Letter from Carman West dated Feb 28, 2013 re:  
Catechism/ Creed
  - 8.3.4.12.b. Letter from Carman West dated Feb 1, 2013 re: Hymns
  - 8.3.4.13. Letter from Chilliwack dated March 6, 2013
  - 8.3.4.14. Letter from Cloverdale dated March 1, 2013
  - 8.3.4.15. Letter from Burlington-Ebenezer dated March 11, 2013  
Re: Lord's Supper Form
  - 8.3.4.16. Letter from Burlington-Ebenezer dated March 11, 2013  
Re: Psalms
  - 8.3.4.17. Letter from Fergus-Maranatha dated Feb 25, 2013
  - 8.3.4.18. Letter from Flamborough, undated
  - 8.3.4.19. Letter from Glanbrook, undated
  - 8.3.4.20. Letter from Grand Rapids dated March 14, 2013
  - 8.3.4.21. Letter from Grassie dated March 6, 2013
  - 8.3.4.22. Letter from Guelph-Emmanuel dated March 4, 2013
  - 8.3.4.23. Letter from Hamilton-Cornerstone dated Feb 21, 2013  
Re: Committee Appointments
  - 8.3.4.24. Letter from Hamilton-Cornerstone dated Feb 16, 2013
  - 8.3.4.25. Letter from Hamilton-Providence dated March 25, 2013
  - 8.3.4.26. Letter from Lincoln dated March 1, 2013
  - 8.3.4.27. Letter from London dated March 4, 2013
  - 8.3.4.28. Letter from Lynden dated March 20, 2013 Re: Melodies
  - 8.3.4.29. Letter from Lynden dated March 20, 2013 Re: Hymns
  - 8.3.4.30. Letter from Burlington-Rehoboth dated March 21, 2013
  - 8.3.4.31. Letter from Smithville dated Feb 4, 2013
  - 8.3.4.32. Letter from Spring Creek dated Feb 27, 2013  
Re: Revised Psalms
  - 8.3.4.33. Letter from Spring Creek dated Feb 27, 2013  
Re: Revised Hymns
  - 8.3.4.34. Letter from Spring Creek dated Feb 27, 2013  
Re: Future Hymns

- 8.3.4.35. Letter from Spring Creek dated Feb 27, 2013  
Re: Difficult Tunes
- 8.3.4.36. Letter from Spring Creek dated Feb 27, 2013  
Re: Catechism QA 115
- 8.3.4.37. Letter from Spring Creek dated Feb 27, 2013  
Re: Catechism Font Size
- 8.3.4.38. Letter from Toronto dated March 4, 2013
- 8.3.4.39. Letter from Willoughby Heights dated March 4, 2013  
Re: Psalms
- 8.3.4.40. Letter from Willoughby Heights dated March 4, 2013  
Re: Hymn Melodies
- 8.3.4.41. Letter from Willoughby Heights dated March 4, 2013  
Re: Future Hymns
- 8.3.4.42. Letter from Winnipeg-Grace dated March 14, 2013
- 8.3.4.43. Letter from Calgary dated March 16, 2013
- 8.3.4.44. Letter from Edmonton-Immanuel dated March 15, 2013
- 8.3.4.45. Letter from Langley dated Feb 23, 2013  
Re: Common Songbook
- 8.3.4.46. Letter from Langley dated March 11, 2013  
Re: Difficult Tunes
- 8.3.4.47. Letter from St. Albert dated March 19, 2013

*8.3.5. Regarding CCU Church Order Subcommittee Report*

- 8.3.5.1. Letter from Grand Valley dated Jan 28, 2013
- 8.3.5.2. Letter from Elora dated Jan 22, 2013
- 8.3.5.3. Letter from Aldergrove dated Feb 13, 2013
- 8.3.5.4. Letter from Aldergrove, undated
- 8.3.5.5. Letter from Langley dated Feb 26
- 8.3.5.6. Letter from Abbotsford dated March 11, 2013
- 8.3.5.7. Letter from Carman West dated Feb 1, 2013  
Re: Synod Guidelines
- 8.3.5.8. Letter from Carman West dated Feb 1, 2013  
Re: Discipline Forms
- 8.3.5.9. Letter from Carman West dated March 4, 2013
- 8.3.5.10. Letter from Fergus-North dated March 8, 2013
- 8.3.5.11. Letter from Fergus-Maranatha dated Feb 25, 2013
- 8.3.5.12. Letter from Grand Rapids dated March 14, 2013
- 8.3.5.13. Letter from Grassie dated March 6, 2013
- 8.3.5.14. Letter from London dated March 4, 2013
- 8.3.5.15. Letter from Lynden dated March 23, 2013

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- 8.3.5.16. Letter from Spring Creek dated March 20, 2013
  - 8.3.5.17. Letter from Surrey dated March 14, 2013
  - 8.3.5.18. Letter from Flamborough dated March 25, 2013
    - Re: Articles 4-5
  - 8.3.5.19. Letter from Flamborough dated March 25, 2013 Re: Article 7
  - 8.3.5.20. Letter from Flamborough dated March 25, 2013 Re: Article 26
  - 8.3.5.21. Letter from Flamborough dated March 25, 2013
    - Re: Article 43
  - 8.3.6. *Regarding CCU Theological Education Subcommittee Report*
  - 8.3.7. *Regarding Committee for Bible Translation Report*
    - 8.3.7.1. Letter from Langley dated Feb 26
    - 8.3.7.2. Letter from Aldergrove dated Feb 26, 2013
    - 8.3.7.3. Letter from Abbotsford dated March 11, 2013
    - 8.3.7.4. Letter from Attercliffe dated March 23, 2013
    - 8.3.7.5. Letter from Brampton dated March 11, 2013
    - 8.3.7.6. Letter from Burlington-Fellowship dated March 15, 2013
    - 8.3.7.7. Letter from Carman West dated March 21, 2013
    - 8.3.7.8. Letter from Cloverdale dated March 1, 2013
    - 8.3.7.9. Letter from Fergus-North dated March 8, 2013
    - 8.3.7.10. Letter from Hamilton-Cornerstone dated Feb 16, 2013
  - 8.3.8. *Regarding Committee for the Official Website (CWEB)*
    - 8.3.8.1. Letter from St. Albert dated March 19, 2013
  - 8.3.9. *Regarding Committee for Pastoral Training Program Report*
  - 8.3.10. *Regarding CRTS Board of Governors' Report*
    - 8.3.10.1. Letter from Grand Valley dated Feb 25, 2013
    - 8.3.10.2. Letter from Attercliffe dated March 16, 2013
    - 8.3.10.3. Letter from Burlington-Fellowship dated March 15, 2013
    - 8.3.10.4. Letter from Fergus-North dated March 8, 2013
    - 8.3.10.5. Letter from Calgary dated March 16, 2013
    - 8.3.10.6. Letter from St. Albert dated March 19, 2013
  - 8.3.11. *Regarding Committee for Needy Student Fund Report (CNSF)*
    - 8.3.11.1. Letter from Coaldale dated Feb. 4, 2013
    - 8.3.11.2. Letter from Winnipeg-Grace dated Feb. 26, 2013
    - 8.3.11.3. Letter from Aldergrove dated March 1, 2013
    - 8.3.11.4. Letter from Abbotsford dated March 11, 2013
    - 8.3.11.5. Letter from Burlington-Fellowship dated March 15, 2013
    - 8.3.11.6. Letter from Carman West dated March 21, 2013
    - 8.3.11.7. Letter from Cloverdale dated March 15, 2013

- 8.3.11.8. Letter from Burlington-Ebenezer dated March 11, 2013
- 8.3.11.9. Letter from Edmonton-Providence dated Feb 11, 2013
- 8.3.11.10. Letter from Fergus-North dated March 8, 2013
- 8.3.11.11. Letter from Glanbrook, undated
- 8.3.11.12. Letter from Hamilton-Cornerstone dated Jan 24, 2013
- 8.3.11.13. Letter from Hamilton-Providence dated March 25, 2013
- 8.3.11.14. Letter from Lincoln dated March 1, 2013
- 8.3.11.15. Letter from London dated March 4, 2013
- 8.3.11.16. Letter from Smithers dated March 6, 2013
- 8.3.11.17. Letter from Smithville dated March 4, 2013
- 8.3.11.18. Letter from Spring Creek dated Feb 27, 2013
- 8.3.11.19. Letter from Willoughby Heights dated March 4, 2013
- 8.3.11.20. Letter from Winnipeg-Redeemer dated March 5, 2013
- 8.3.11.21. Letter from Calgary dated March 12, 2013
- 8.3.11.22. Letter from Edmonton-Immanuel dated March 15, 2013
- 8.3.11.23. Letter from Owen Sound dated March 20, 2013
- 8.3.11.24. Letter from Langley dated March 4, 2013

#### **8.4. Overtures:**

- 8.4.1. Overture from Regional Synod West dated Dec 12, 2012, re: The format of the *Acts* of General Synod
- 8.4.2. Overture from a member of the church at Chilliwack dated Nov 19, 2012, re: Church Order Article 3: Methods of voting for office bearers

#### **8.5. Appeals:**

- 8.5.1. Church at Smithville dated March 14, 2012 - Article 176 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, Women's voting
- 8.5.2. Church at Calgary dated Sept 24, 2012 - Article 176 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, Women's voting
- 8.5.3. Church at Carman West dated Aug 15, 2012 - Article 176 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, Women's voting
- 8.5.4. Church at Dunnville, undated - Article 176 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, Women's voting
- 8.5.5. Church at Carman East dated Jan 1, 2013 - Article 176 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, Women's voting
- 8.5.6. Church at Grand Valley dated Jan 28, 2013 - Article 176 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, Women's voting
- 8.5.7. Church at Dunnville, undated - Article 62 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, new guidelines for submissions to a general synod.

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- 8.5.8. Church at Dunnville, undated - Article 170, 171 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, new hymns and psalms
- 8.5.9. Church at Dunnville, undated - Article 123 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, approval of new melodies
- 8.5.10. Church at Winnipeg-Redeemer dated Sept 13, 2012 – Article 91 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, Church appointed for financial support of theological students
- 8.5.11. Church at Barrhead, undated - Article 45 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, validity of claim, “It is living in the churches”
- 8.5.12. Church at Chilliwack dated Feb 11, 2013 - Article 175,176,177 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, Women’s voting
- 8.5.13. Church at Coaldale, dated Dec 3, 2012 - Article 175, Women’s voting
- 8.5.14. Church at Coaldale, dated Dec 3, 2012 - Article 176, Women’s voting
- 8.5.15. Appeal from R. Janssen, dated Nov 29, 2011/Jan 11, 2013 - Synodical decisions relating to psalms and hymns in the worship service
- 8.5.16. Coaldale, dated Dec 3, 2012 - Article 142 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, additional hymns
- 8.5.17. Appeal from A. Vantil, dated Feb 23, 2013
- 8.5.18. Church at Spring Creek, dated Jan 2013 - Article 109 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, capitalization of pronouns
- 8.5.19. Church at Grand Valley dated Feb 25, 2013 - Article 121 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, proceeding with the revised psalms
- 8.5.20. Church at Grand Valley dated Feb 25, 2013 - Article 62 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, new guidelines for submissions to general synod
- 8.5.21. Church at Attercliffe, undated - Article 176 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, Women’s voting
- 8.5.22. Church at Attercliffe dated Feb 18, 2013 - Article 27 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, Attercliffe appeal on the OPC
- 8.5.23. Church at Attercliffe dated Feb 18, 2013 - Appeal against decisions relating to the joining of NAPARC
- 8.5.24. Church at Burlington-Fellowship dated March 15, 2013 - Article 177 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, re-appeal of Regional Synod East 2008 Article 10
- 8.5.25. Church at Chilliwack dated March 5, 2013 - Article 176 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, Women’s voting

- 8.5.26. Church at Burlington-Ebenezer dated March 11, 2013 - Appeal against Article 8 of Regional Synod East 2012
  - 8.5.27. Church at Fergus-Maranatha dated Nov 10, 2012 - Appeal of Synod Burlington 2010 decision to adopt Augmented Hymns
  - 8.5.28. Church at Fergus-Maranatha dated April 30, 2012 - Article 176 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, Women's voting
  - 8.5.29. Church at Grand Rapids dated March 14, 2013 - Article 176 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, Women's voting
  - 8.5.30. Church at Grassie, dated March 6, 2013 - Article 176 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, Women's voting
  - 8.5.31. Church at Kerwood, undated - Appeal of Synod Burlington 2010 decision to adopt several Hymns
  - 8.5.32. Appeal from M. Vantil, dated March 5, 2013 - Re-appeal of Articles 5.c, 5.d and 5.e of Regional Synod West 2008
  - 8.5.33. Church at Orangeville dated Feb 26, 2013 - Article 176 Synod Burlington, Synod Guidelines
  - 8.5.34. Church at Taber dated Feb 28, 2013 - Article 176 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, Women's voting
  - 8.5.35. Appeal from T. Kingma
  - 8.5.36. Church at Willoughby Heights dated March 4, 2013 - Article 176 *Acts of Synod Burlington*, Women's voting
  - 8.5.37. Appeal from G.J. Nordeman dated March 1, 2013 - Re: A decision of Regional Synod East 2012
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

Synod adjourned for the afternoon.

**Day 1 — Evening Session**  
**Tuesday, May 7, 2013**

**Article 10 – Address of a Fraternal Delegate (ERQ)**

The chairman reconvened synod by having the assembly sing Psalm 5:8, 9 and leading in prayer. Rev. Moesker then introduced Rev. Bernard Westerveld of the ERQ who addressed the assembly as a fraternal delegate. The full text of his address can be found in *Appendix 2*. Rev. Moesker responded with appropriate words.

**Article 11 – CRTS: Board of Governors re: Appointing a Fifth Professor**

**1. Material:**

- 1.1. Report from the Board of Governors (8.2.10.a)
- 1.2. Supplementary Report from the Board re: Fifth Professor (8.2.10b)
- 1.3. Supplementary Report from the Board re: Board appointments and accreditation update (8.2.10.c)
- 1.4. Letters from the churches at Grand Valley (8.3.10.1), Attercliffe (8.3.10.2), Burlington-Fellowship (8.2.10.3), Fergus-North (8.3.10.4), Calgary (8.3.10.5) and St. Albert (8.3.10.6)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. The Board of Governors is recommending that Synod approve the appointment of a fifth full-time professor who would have the responsibility of the Department of Ecclesiology and would be designated as the Professor of Ecclesiology. His main tasks would be to teach Church History and Church Polity, with additional courses in Philosophy and Apologetics. Further time would be used to relieve the other professors of specific courses and provide administrative and faculty support. Such approval of Synod would come at the cost of approximately \$12.30 per communicant member per year.
- 2.2. To support its proposal, the Board provides the following rationale:
  - 2.2.1. One of the primary matters brought forward by the Board of Governors to both Synod 2007 and 2010 concerned the perceived need for fifth full-time professor. Synod 2007 decided not to agree to the recommendation of the Board for the appointment of a fifth full-time professor to teach in the areas of Biblical and Theological Studies (see *Acts of Synod 2007*, Article 130). Synod 2007 provided a number of directives to the Board of Governors including the need for an external review of the program of the Seminary as

well as an evaluation of the workload of the faculty. Synod 2010 noted that the Board was in the process of preparing a new proposal and gave some further directives in that regard (See *Acts of Synod Burlington 2010*, Article 95, Consideration 3.3 and Recommendation 4.1). Synod 2010 also recommended that the churches consider the reasons for “the eventual appointment of a fifth professor” (*Acts*, Article 103, Recommendation 4.13). These reasons are summarized in Observations 2.5.1 – 2.5.11 of Article 103 of the same *Acts*.

- 2.2.2. In its Report to Synod 2013, the Board informs Synod that following Synod 2010 the churches were polled in regard to their opinion concerning the appointment of a fifth full-time professor. The responses of the churches were overwhelmingly in favour of such appointment (25 out of 28 churches; see page 3 and pages 32-35 of Appendix 1 of the Report of the Board to Synod 2013).
- 2.2.3. Following Synod 2007, the Board requested an external review by three men affiliated with the Association of Reformed Theological Schools (ARTS). The first recommendation of these men was to “[a]ppoint a fifth full time Professor for the academic year of 2010-2011.” Additionally, they wrote: “We feel that your areas of greatest need lie in Church History, Philosophy, Apologetics and Spirituality. Your present church historian is far too overworked to maintain his current pace. Barring substantial growth, the school should be well situated with five professors for many years to come” (see lines 826ff of the Report of the Board to Synod 2010).
- 2.2.4. The Board reported to Synod 2010 that while the Seminary has not completed the whole review process via the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), the Self-Study has been completed and submitted and the process of review, analysis and self-reflection has affirmed the rationale and basis for the needed appointment. Appointing a professor of Ecclesiology allows for a more natural division of subject areas. Traditionally theological education has been divided into five departments: Old Testament, New Testament, Dogmatics, Diaconology and Ecclesiology. Each department includes a group of subjects that naturally fit together and complement each other. So far, the fourth and fifth departments have been taught by one professor at

our seminary. “This is possible but not ideal” (See the last page of Appendix 2, 847, Rationale 1). If a professor has one department of subjects that naturally fit together, then as he does more specialized research in one subject, it frequently happens that his research also has spin-off effects for his other subjects because they are so interconnected. Thus, the time spent in research receives “compound interest.” However, this compound interest effect is not easily experienced in the present double-department of Diaconiology/Ecclesiology. That professor is kept busy simply trying to keep up with the rather diverse collection of subjects that are included in that double department (See the last page of Appendix 2, Rationale 1). The most straightforward solution is to have one professor assigned to each department.

- 2.2.5. In its report to Synod 2013, the Board references the external review of the ARTS (see 2.2.3 above) which indicated a need in “Church History, Philosophy, Apologetics and Spirituality”. The Board therefore proposes that in addition to Church History and Church Polity, the fifth Professor of Ecclesiology should also teach the present course in philosophy and develop a new course in Apologetics. This would fit well with his main task of teaching Church History because teaching philosophy involves a good grasp of the history of ideas. Moreover, developing a course in apologetics would help students in defending the faith clearly, as well as teaching others how to do the same. This would benefit not only those students who may be called to serve in mission or church planting situations but also those in established congregations. Adding a fifth professor would provide the needed capacity for making this addition to our curriculum. Appointing a professor of Ecclesiology would also allow the Professor of Diaconiology more time to focus on the following aspects of his department:
- [a.] Enhancing the instruction in Homiletics. The number one purpose of the seminary is to train preachers of the gospel (See the last page of Appendix 2, Rationale 11). Therefore, Homiletics (i.e., the study of making sermons) and the weekly sermon sessions are critical components of the Seminary’s program. We can train men to exegete the Scriptures carefully, to espouse sound doctrine and to refute all heresies. However, if these men cannot bring it all together on the pulpit, in a clear, understandable and

applicatory sermon, then we are not accomplishing our main purpose. At present, this critical aspect of Homiletics falls within that double department which is spread over so many different subject areas. However, if the double department is divided, the professor who teaches Homiletics will be able to invest more time and energy into this very important subject area of homiletics.

- [b.] Maintaining and improving the Pastoral Training Program (PTP). The development of the PTP over the past number of years has been an improvement that has been deeply appreciated by both the students and the churches. At the same time, this new aspect of the training – which takes considerable time to organize and manage – also falls into the double department.
- [c.] Enhancing missiological research and teaching at our Seminary. The Canadian Reformed Churches are becoming increasingly involved in mission work, both at home and abroad. In part this is what motivated the Church at Langley to make a proposal to Synod 2010 suggesting that Dr. de Visser be appointed as Professor of Mission and Evangelism. As such this proposal was not feasible since it would create a vacancy in the department of Diaconiology and it is not the task of the Seminary to serve as a Mission Resource center. At the same time, relieving Dr. de Visser from responsibility for the Department of Ecclesiology would provide him with more opportunity to enhance current courses in Missiology and Evangelism as well as provide extra courses for those called to mission fields. In the end, although the complete proposal of the church at Langley would not be met, in the main the essence of having a professor able to give more attention to mission and evangelism would be achieved.

- 2.2.6. The Board draws attention to the fact that with the development of the Seminary over the years, the various administrative duties distributed among the faculty members have increased considerably. This is so especially in the office of the principal. Having a fifth professor would provide more flexibility in how these extra duties are distributed, as well as possibly generating some opportunity for cross discipline instruction, allowing all professors sufficient time for

preparation and teaching as well as attending to administrative responsibilities. It would also allow all professors to dedicate more time to research and publishing.

- 2.3. Correspondence from the churches re: the Report of the Board of Governors to Synod 20103 indicates the following:
  - 2.3.1. The churches at Grand Valley, Fellowship-Burlington, Calgary and St. Albert express support for the recommendation of the Board for the appointment of a fifth professor.
  - 2.3.2. The church at Attercliffe does not support the recommendation of the Board for a fifth professor but asks Synod to instead instruct the Board to rearrange the work load among current faculty members. Attercliffe reasons that the teaching load at the College has not increased and that the proposal for a fifth professor is based not on current teaching loads but on possible future course offerings. Further, Attercliffe considers that increasing the number of courses would excessively increase the workload of students. Additionally, Attercliffe calculates that the proposal of the Board would increase the cost per communicant member for the Seminary by 16.6%.
  - 2.3.3. The church at Fergus-North indicates its support of the Board's proposal. They state, however, that the addition of a fifth professor should be geared to improving the education of the students particularly in their pastoral task.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. The Board demonstrates that it has done due diligence in seeking external evaluation of the curriculum of the Seminary and the workload of the current faculty. Thus, it has fulfilled the directives provided by Synod 2007 and 2010.
- 3.2. The Board satisfactorily demonstrates that the department of Ecclesiology ideally requires its own professor. The current Professor of Ecclesiology is over-burdened in having to teach two departments.
- 3.3. The Board satisfactorily demonstrates that the overall program of the Seminary can be significantly enhanced by the addition of a fifth full-time professor.
- 3.4. Attercliffe does not work with the direction set by Synods 2007 and 2010. These Synods did not close the door for a fifth professor but sought a clearer foundation for such recommendation.
- 3.5. The proposal of the Board of Governors reflects the emphasis of the church at Fergus-North (see Observations 2.2.5).

#### **4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide to approve the Board appointing a full-time professor for the Department of Ecclesiology, with such professor to be designated as the Professor of Ecclesiology.

**ADOPTED** with members of the Board of Governors abstaining

#### **Article 12 – CRTS: Appointment of a Professor of Ecclesiology**

The assembly went into closed-restricted session and held a few rounds of discussion on the proposal put forward by the Board of Governors re: filling the vacancy of Professor of Ecclesiology. Committee 5 took the comments under advisement in order to prepare a proposal accordingly. Synod adjourned for committee work.

#### **Article 13 – CRTS: Appointment of a Professor of Ecclesiology**

Committee 5 presented the following proposal:

##### **1. Material:**

- 1.1. Letter from the Board of Governors dated April 26, 2013 (8.2.10.b)
- 1.2. Report of the Board of Governors to Synod 2013 (8.2.10.a)

##### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. In Recommendation 7 of its Report to Synod 2013, the Board requests the following: “That if Synod approves such new position and department, to approve the appointment of a new full-time professor in Ecclesiology in accordance with the recommendation of the Board in a submission separate from this Report.”
- 2.2. The Board appointed a Search Committee for a new professor and received input from many churches as well as from the current Faculty of the Seminary.
- 2.3. Having carefully investigated a number of possible candidates, the Board has requested General Synod 2013 to give leave to the Board to appoint Rev. Theodore G. Van Raalte of Surrey, B.C. as Professor of Ecclesiology.
- 2.4. The Board has supplied Synod with comprehensive information about Rev. Van Raalte including letters of reference, a *curriculum vitae* and responses to interview questions.

##### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. Synod 2013 has approved the appointment of a new full-time position in the Department of Ecclesiology, thus creating a vacancy in this Department.

- 3.2. Based on the information supplied by the Board of Governors, Synod considers Rev. Van Raalte to be well-qualified to serve as Professor of Ecclesiology.

**4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide to direct the Board of Governors to appoint Rev. Theodore G. Van Raalte as Professor of Ecclesiology.

**ADOPTED** by secret ballot (as per synod guidelines) and with members of the Board of Governors abstaining

A letter was read from the church at Surrey expressing its support for this appointment, despite it meaning the imminent departure of their minister. Surrey also indicated its deep appreciation for the work of Rev. Van Raalte in the congregation. The chairman noted with gratitude to the Lord how our Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary continues to be blessed with faithful, capable brothers to teach a new generation of men to serve the churches as ministers of the gospel and how the teaching staff could be expanded in this way to the benefit of that training. Synod adjourned so that the chairman of the Board of Governors could be contacted and notified of the decision.

Synod then went into open session.

**Article 14 – Closing Devotions and Adjournment**

Rev. Souman led in closing devotions. He read Revelation 3:7-13, spoke a few words about it, had the assembly sing from Hymn 52:1, 2 and 4 and led in prayer. Synod was adjourned.

**Day 2 — Morning Session  
Wednesday, May 8, 2013**

**Article 15 – Opening Devotions**

The chairman called the meeting to order and the assembly sang Psalm 71:9 followed by the reading of 2 Chronicles 10 and prayer. All members of synod were in attendance.

**Article 16 – Adoption of the Acts**

Articles 1-14 of the *Acts* of Synod were corrected and adopted.

**Article 17 – Letters of Greeting from Various Churches**

The following letters were received and read aloud to the assembly:

From the Gereja-Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia (GGRI-NTT), the Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea (KPCK), Free Church of Scotland (FCS) and the Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland (GKN – Rev. Hoogendoorn). Synod adjourned for committee work.

### **Article 18 – Letter of Greeting from the Reformed Churches of New Zealand (RCNZ)**

Synod was reconvened and the chairman read a letter of greeting from the RCNZ. This was received with thankfulness.

### **Article 19 – Église Réformée du Québec (ERQ)**

Committee 4 presented a report on the ERQ. A discussion followed and Committee 4 took the report back for further refinement.

## **Day 2 – Afternoon Session Wednesday, May 8, 2013**

### **Article 20 – Reopening**

The chairman reopened synod and the delegates sang Psalm 24:5. It was noted that all members of synod were present. Some house-keeping matters were explained.

### **Article 21 – Église Réformée du Québec (ERQ)**

Committee 4 presented a second draft report on the ERQ. A discussion followed and some small changes were made with this result:

#### **1. Material:**

- 1.1. Report from the CCCNA re: the ERQ (8.2.3)
- 1.2. Letters from the churches at Ancaster (8.3.3.5), Attercliffe (8.3.3.7), Carman West (8.3.3.9), Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.3.13), London (8.3.3.20) and Calgary (8.3.3.27)

#### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 gave the CCCNA the following mandate in regard to the ERQ (*Acts*, Article 29, Recommendation 4.2):
  - [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.
- 2.2. On a number of occasions, the CCCNA reports that it provided advice and input when requested to do so by the Committee on Inter-Church Relations (CICR) of the ERQ.

- 2.3. When asked for input, the CCCNA reports that it recommended that the ERQ establish EF with the OPC; this was subsequently done.
- 2.4. When asked for input, the CCCNA recommended that the ERQ establish EF with the URCNA; this was subsequently done.
- 2.5. The CCCNA notes the ERQ has established EF with the PCA.
- 2.6. Delegates of the CCCNA met with the CICR at a meeting of NAPARC in 2010 and also attended the ERQ Synods in 2010, 2011 and 2012.
- 2.7. The CCCNA inquired about the supervision of the pulpit in the ERQ and learned that the practice is that the local consistory exercises such supervision. The CCCNA observes that the ERQ Synod of 2012 adopted a proposal from the ministry committee that a local council has the liberty to invite a preacher of its choice, with the council assuming the responsibility to ensure such a preacher's doctrinal and pastoral integrity.
- 2.8. The CCCNA notes that at the ERQ Synod of 2012, proposals that would confirm that a guest preacher in the ERQ has been ordained, has subscribed to the confessions and/or is a minister from a church with whom the ERQ has EF, were not adopted.
- 2.9. The CCCNA notes with gratitude that the ERQ has adopted another liturgical form, namely, the Form for Profession of Faith and Adult Baptism.
- 2.10. Attercliffe wants to caution the ERQ against "reaching out to so many other churches," because of the time and energy involved in such relations.
- 2.11. Attercliffe wants to point out to the ERQ the dangers in having relations with churches such as the CRCNA and the PCA federations "that have deviated from the Reformed faith."
- 2.12. The church at Ancaster observes that from the CCCNA report, it seems that the matters of admission to the Lord's Supper and supervision of the pulpit have not been discussed with the ERQ "in a purposeful and vigorous way," as Synod Burlington encouraged. Ancaster recommends that these two matters continue to be discussed.
- 2.13. Attercliffe, Fergus-Maranatha and Carman West voice a concern about the local supervision of the pulpit in the ERQ, as this practice was expressed in the decision of the 2012 ERQ Synod.
- 2.14. Attercliffe requests the CCCNA to "encourage the ERQ to make clear that their position on women in office is in line with the

Reformed conviction,” while Fergus-Maranatha suggests that an admonition of the ERQ is in place because of “women in office” (specifically women deacons) in the ERQ.

- 2.15. London questions if the CCCNA deputies were consulted when the ERQ entered into EF with the PCA, with whom the CanRC does not have EF.
- 2.16. Fergus-Maranatha expresses a concern with Sunday observance in the ERQ, in that worship services are held only once per Sunday.
- 2.17. The churches who addressed letters to Synod regarding the ERQ are grateful for the relationship that we enjoy with them. Calgary and Attercliffe are grateful for the evident desire in the ERQ to be truly Reformed churches and encourages Synod to direct the CCCNA to continue to work with the ERQ to support their good development as a faithful church of Jesus Christ.
- 2.18. The CCCNA recommends that Synod decide:
  - [1.] To thank the Lord for the faithful Reformed witness provided in and by the ERQ;
  - [2.] To mandate the CCCNA to continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the ERQ under the adopted rules.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. It is evident that the CCCNA has been active in maintaining the relationship with the ERQ. The committee has had dialogue with the CICR on a number of issues pertaining to church life and ecclesiastical relationships.
- 3.2. The ERQ is to be commended for seeking unity with other faithful churches, such as the CanRC, the OPC and the URCNA. The ERQ does not have EF with the CRCNA. The CCCNA should have provided more information about its interaction with the CICR with respect to the ERQ establishing EF with the PCA.
- 3.3. Some of the matters for discussion with the ERQ raised by the churches are valid and need to continue to be addressed in the context of Rule 1 of EF. With respect to the supervision of the pulpit, the decision of the ERQ Synod 2012 is indicative that there is room for further discussion between our respective committees on the importance of the ERQ ensuring the Reformed character of all preaching from its pulpits. Likewise, the matter of admission to the Lord’s table ought to be the subject of continued dialogue between the CCCNA and the CICR.

- 3.4. With respect to women deacons, it should be pointed out that in the ERQ, while such women are ordained, they do not hold a position of ruling authority in the church. This is also a matter for ongoing discussion within the ERQ.
- 3.5. With respect to Sunday observance in the ERQ, Fergus-Maranatha should realize that while there is a variety of practice in the ERQ, some of the congregations have a catechetical session in addition to the worship service.
- 3.6. The ERQ did consult with the CCCNA prior to entering into EF with the PCA.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To thank the CCCNA for its efforts in maintaining our relationship with the ERQ;
- 4.2. To thank the Lord for the faithful Reformed witness provided in and by the ERQ;
- 4.3. To mandate the CCCNA to continue the relationship of EF with the ERQ under the adopted rules, giving particular attention to the matters of supervision of the pulpit, admission to the Lord's table and women deacons (in particular, the ordination of) and to provide an account of its dialogue with the ERQ.

### **ADOPTED**

Synod adjourned for committee work.

### **Day 2 – Evening Session Wednesday, May 8, 2013**

#### **Article 22 – Reopening**

The chairman reopened synod and the members sang Psalm 22:9. It was noted that all members were present.

#### **Article 23 – Late Receipt of Audit for Needy Students Fund**

The chairman explained that a document referenced in the main report of the Committee for Needy Students Fund (CNSF) but not actually submitted with the report had arrived earlier in the day. This document is the audit of the financial statements of the Needy Students Fund. Upon the recommendation of the executive and with the rationale that this document is needed for the completeness of the whole report, synod decided to receive this document and add it to the agenda as 8.2.11.c. as the second supplementary report of the CNSF.

## **Article 24 – Address of Fraternal Delegates (URCNA, FRCA)**

Rev. C.J. VanderVelde introduced the delegate from the URCNA, Rev. D. Kok, who then addressed synod. (His speech can be found in *Appendix 3.*) Rev. VanderVelde responded with fitting words. Rev. R.A. Schouten introduced one of the delegates from the FRCA, br. W. Pleiter, who then addressed synod. (His speech can be found in *Appendix 4.*) Rev. Schouten responded with fitting words.

## **Article 25 – Formatting of the Acts**

### **1. Material:**

- 1.1. Overture from Regional Synod West 2012 (8.4.1)
- 1.2. Letters from the churches at Dunnville (8.1.7), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.1.11), Grassie (8.1.15), Lincoln (8.1.20), London (8.1.22), Burlington-Rehoboth (8.1.25) and Owen Sound (8.1.30)

### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. The overture from Regional Synod West asks General Synod to choose the format of “material(s) – decision – ground(s) for its decisions and acts.”
- 2.2. Regional Synod West mentions that the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands made the switch in 1981 to the format now proposed by Regional Synod. Additionally, the RCN also structure their decisions topically rather than chronologically while also presenting a chronological overview of the actions of Synod in an appendix to the *Acts*. In 1994 the Free Reformed Churches of Australia adopted the format of “material(s)-grounds-decisions.”
- 2.3. Regional Synod West finds the following deficiencies with the prevailing practice of structuring synodical decisions in terms of “observations-considerations-acts:”
  - 2.3.1. A survey of the *Acts* of various Synods reveals a degree of subjectivity in materials included in “observations.” In reality, the “observations” are a kind of “filtered summary” of material. Furthermore, items listed as “observations” sometimes amount to judgments. For these reasons, it would be better, in the judgment of Regional Synod West, to simply list the “materials” without attempting to summarize them. Anything in the material(s) that is relevant to the decision will also be reported in the decision and its grounds.
  - 2.3.2. “Considerations” can be quite rambling; often, it is not clear how “considerations” support a “recommendation.”

- 2.3.3. With the current format of “observations-considerations-recommendations,” it is never clear why a recommendation is defeated. Regional Synod West suggests not including defeated proposals.
- 2.3.4. “Grounds” succinctly move through the text of a decision, supporting each element as required.
- 2.4. Regardless of whether or not General Synod adopts the specific proposal of Regional Synod West, the overture suggests that some stipulations regarding formatting be included in “Guidelines for Synod.”
- 2.5. A number of churches have provided responses to the overture of Regional Synod West:
  - 2.5.1. Dunnville (8.1.7) prefers the present format of “observations- considerations-recommendations.” Dunnville argues that notwithstanding faulty applications, the current structure is sound and has the advantage of allowing the readers of the *Acts* to have a better grasp of the reasoning behind decisions of Synod. Lincoln (8.1.20) sees no reason to make the proposed change since “we find that the current format is helpful for understanding the background and rationale for synodical decisions.”
  - 2.5.2. The following churches support the overture of Regional Synod West: Burlington-Ebenezer (8.1.11), Grassie (8.1.15), Burlington- Rehoboth (8.1.25), Owen Sound (8.1.30); London (8.1.22) supports the overture with the qualification that it would remain important to show in the *Acts* how Synod has interacted with submissions from the churches and further that the “grounds” section of each proposal adopted by Synod would be “as comprehensive as possible.”

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. Regional Synod West provides no proof that the prevailing system of providing “observations” is overly subjective. In general, it would appear that a conscientious effort is made by Synods to carefully summarize the material(s) under consideration. Even if it should happen inadvertently that certain points brought out in the material(s) are omitted in the “observations,” this is still better than not providing any summary at all. Likewise, if it should happen from time to time that an “observation” contains a “judgment” this would be a misapplication of a method but not a reason to reject the method.

- 3.2. While it may be true that “considerations” do not always sufficiently support adopted “recommendations,” there is no reason to think that providing “grounds” would be more likely to provide a proper foundation for decisions made by Synod.
- 3.3. It is important for the well-being of the federation of churches that letters sent to General Synod are shown to have received due consideration; this is best accomplished by summarizing such communications in the form of “observations.”
- 3.4. It is important that the reasoning behind decisions of Synod is recorded and this goal is accomplished effectively by utilizing the category of “considerations.”
- 3.5. The current Guidelines for Synod have no stipulations regarding formatting of synodical decisions. It should be left in the freedom of each Synod to determine how its decisions should be recorded.

#### **4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide to not accede to the overture of Regional Synod West.

### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 26 – Overture of Br. E. VanWoudenberg**

##### **1. Material:**

- 1.1. Overture from br. VanWoudenberg forwarded by the consistory of the church at Chilliwack (8.4.2)
- 1.2. Letters from the churches at Orangeville (8.1.4), Dunnville (8.1.6), Smithers (8.1.8), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.1.9), Carman West (8.1.12), Fergus-North (8.1.13), Grassie (8.1.14), Lincoln (8.1.19), London (8.1.21), Spring Creek (8.1.26), Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.1.28) and Owen Sound (8.1.29)

##### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Br. VanWoudenberg sent an overture to General Synod requesting that Article 3 (CO) be amended so that churches may draw lots for the selection of office-bearers. He requested the consistory of Chilliwack to have his overture placed on the agenda of General Synod 2013.
- 2.2. Though the consistory did not support him, it forwarded his overture to General Synod, as well as to all the churches in the federation since, in its opinion, this is a matter that belongs to the churches in common and also is a new matter.

- 2.3. The consistory understands Synod Guideline 1.E to be pertinent to the submission of this brother's overture: *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 the general synod.*
- 2.4. Some churches interacted with the content of the brother's overture; some churches focused on its admissibility.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. The Guidelines for General Synod specify that "*individual churches may address proposals... directly to general synod*" (emphasis added). Since the church at Chilliwack explicitly states that it does not support this overture, this is not an overture from an individual church but from an individual member.
- 3.2. Because the consistory of Chilliwack cited Synod Guideline 1.E (a matter for the churches in common), some churches interacted with the content of the overture as though it were legitimately placed on the agenda of General Synod.

### **4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide that br. E. VanWoudenberg's overture is inadmissible.

## **ADOPTED**

### **Article 27 – Appeal of Br. R. Janssen**

#### **1. Material:**

Letter of appeal from br. Janssen (8.5.15)

#### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Br. Janssen is appealing various decisions of General Synod Smithers 2007 regarding the *Book of Praise* (Articles 124-131, 133-135, 137-142, 148-149, 163 and 166).
- 2.2. He approached his consistory with his concerns but the consistory did not endorse them.
- 2.3. Br. Janssen states that "every member has the right to appeal a wrong decision of General Synod directly to the next General Synod."

**3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. General Synod Chatham 2004 considered that "... an individual member cannot forward his appeals regarding matters that concern the churches in common directly to a general synod... Individual members must follow the way of the Church Order by addressing their concerns to their local consistory who, should they concur with the concerns, direct an appeal to a general synod. Consistory, unlike individual members, has the right to deal directly with the matters that belong to the churches in common... If the local consistory does not take over the individual's appeal, he can appeal the local consistory's decision to classis and thus begin the appeal process in accordance with Article 31 of the Church Order" (*Acts*, Article 20, Consideration 4).
- 3.2. Br. Janssen gives no evidence that he has followed the process outlined above.

**4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide that br. R. Janssen's appeal is inadmissible.

**ADOPTED****Article 28 – Appeal of Mr. M. VanTil****1. Material:**

Letter of appeal from Mr. M. VanTil (8.5.32)

**2. Observation re: Admissibility:**

According to the *Acts of Synod Burlington 2010* Mr. VanTil withdrew himself from the church at Aldergrove and therefore his appeal to that assembly was judged inadmissible (Article 110). In his appeal Mr. VanTil says that he seceded.

**3. Considerations re: Admissibility:**

- 3.1. The right to appeal the decisions of church assemblies is a privilege of membership of the churches.
- 3.2. The decision of Mr. VanTil to withdraw himself or to secede from the church terminated the process meant to lead to reconciliation.

**4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide that Mr. M. VanTil's appeal is inadmissible.

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**ADOPTED****Article 29 – Appeal of Mr. T. Kingma****1. Material:**

Letter of appeal from Mr. T. Kingma (8.5.35)

**2. Observation re: Admissibility:**

- 2.1. Mr. Kingma appealed his deposition which took place in March 2003 and his excommunication from Lynden American Reformed Church to Synod Smithers 2007 (*Acts*, Article 19) and Synod Burlington 2010 (*Acts*, Article 57).
- 2.2. Synod Burlington judged that Mr. Kingma's right of appeal pertains only to his excommunication. Mr. Kingma argues that this is unfair because it disallows an appeal against the reason for his excommunication.
- 2.3. The substance of Mr. Kingma's appeal and what he regards as the reason for his excommunication is the decision of Synod Coaldale 1977 that the OPC is a true and faithful church.

**3. Consideration:**

Mr. Kingma has appealed the matter of his excommunication to two successive general synods: 2007 and 2010. As was the case in 2010, so also now, he does not present new grounds (contra Article 33 Church Order).

**4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide that Mr. Kingma's appeal is inadmissible.

**ADOPTED****Article 30 – General Fund****1. Material:**

Financial report of the General Fund from January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2012 (8.2.13)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. The church at Carman East was appointed by Synod Burlington 2010 to administer the General Fund and to collect funds as required from the churches.

- 2.2. Carman East reports in its letter of February 20, 2013, that two of its office bearers audited these books on February 19, 2013 and they were found to be in good order.
- 2.3. The churches were assessed \$5 per communicant member for 2010, \$4 for 2011 and \$4 for 2012.
- 2.4. Income received from the churches was \$139,401.05 and total disbursements were \$111,359.29. The opening balance was a negative balance of \$5,945.84, leaving a balance at December 31, 2012 as \$22,095.92.

### **3. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 3.1. To receive with thankfulness the report from the church at Carman East;
- 3.2. To express gratitude to the church at Carman East for administering the Fund; 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 until the time of the next synod;
- 3.4. To discharge Carman East for the duties completed during the period of January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2012;
- 3.5. To reappoint Carman East to administer the General Fund.

## **ADOPTED**

### **Article 31 – Closing Devotions and Adjournment**

Br. B. Van Raalte read Proverbs 3:1-6, enjoined the assembly to sing Hymn 35:1 and led in prayer. Synod was adjourned for the evening.

### **Day 3 – Morning Session Thursday, May 9, 2013**

### **Article 32 – Opening Devotions**

The chairman called the meeting to order and the assembly sang Hymn 41:1-3. Rev. Bouwman then read 2 Chronicles 11 and led in prayer. All members of synod were present. Some house-keeping matters were dealt with.

### **Article 33 – Adoption of the Acts**

Articles 15-31 of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

**Article 34 – Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford** Committee 5 presented a report on the Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford. A discussion followed and Committee 5 took the report back for further refinement.

**Article 35 – Address Church for the Canadian Reformed Churches**

**1. Material:**

Report from the Burlington-Ebenezer Church (8.2.14)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Burlington-Ebenezer reports that it had received three requests from the Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches to update statistical information regarding the Canadian Reformed Churches.
- 2.2. Burlington-Ebenezer also reports that it had received and interacted with correspondence received from the URCNA which was subsequently published in Clarion.
- 2.3. Finally, Burlington-Ebenezer reports that it had received correspondence from the Free Protestant Church in Argentina, asking for fraternal relations and cooperation in mission matters and theological education. This letter was forwarded to the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA).

**3. Consideration:**

Given this report and the correspondence noted therein, it is clear that Burlington-Ebenezer has fulfilled its mandate.

**4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To thank Burlington-Ebenezer for its efforts;
- 4.2. To reappoint Burlington-Ebenezer as Address Church for the Canadian Reformed Churches.

**ADOPTED**

**Article 36 – Financial Report of General Synod Burlington 2010**

Committee 4 introduced its report and noted that while the Financial Report had been submitted to the convening church on time, it had inadvertently not been passed on to Synod Carman 2013. Synod agreed to receive the

Financial Report from the Burlington-Ebenezer Church and add it to the agenda (8.2.12.a). The report was presented as follows:

**1. Material:**

- 1.1. Financial Report of Synod Burlington 2010 from Burlington- Ebenezer (8.2.12.a)
- 1.2. Audit Report from the church of Burlington-Fellowship (8.2.12.b)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. The Finance Committee of Synod Burlington 2010 submitted a report outlining the finances of Synod 2010.

**Income:**

Regional Synod East	\$11,785.36
Regional Synod West	11,785.36
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>23,570.72</b>

**Expenses:**

Travel – East	\$ 2,337.23
Travel – West	7,542.22
Office Supplies	2,967.02
Postage	1,387.77
Rentals	613.48
Food	5,035.21
Misc	1,064.27
Network	2,623.52
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>23,570.72</b>

**Net Balance** \$ 0.00

- 2.2. The church at Burlington-Fellowship reports: “After having reviewed the financial records as provided by the Financial Committee for the 2010 Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches, we have found the records to be complete and in good order. The examination revealed no irregularities and all transactions were well documented.”

**3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. The report from the auditors indicates that all financial matters pertaining to Synod Burlington 2010 have been dealt with in a satisfactory manner.

- 3.2. There is a need for a Finance Committee to be appointed for taking care of the financial matters of Synod Carman 2013.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To accept the audit report of Burlington-Fellowship and to thank this church for its work in reviewing the finances of Synod 2010;
- 4.2. To appoint to the Finance Committee for Synod Carman West: John Veldman, William Vanderpol, Dale DeWit and John Bergsma;
- 4.3. To mandate the Finance Committee for Synod Carman West to report to the next synod;
- 4.4. To appoint the church of Carman East to audit the books of the Finance Committee of Synod Carman West and to report on the same to the next synod.

### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 37 – Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)**

Committee 4 presented its report about the OPC. After some discussion, it was taken back for refinement. Synod adjourned for further committee work.

### **Day 3 – Afternoon Session Thursday, May 9, 2013**

#### **Article 38 – Reopening**

The chairman reopened synod and the assembly sang Psalm 47:2, 3. It was noted that all members of synod were present.

#### **Article 39 – Appeals re: Women’s Voting for Office Bearers**

Committee 1 presented its proposal concerning the appeals against Article 176 (and 175) of the *Acts of Synod Burlington 2010*. After some discussion, it was taken back for further work.

#### **Article 40 – Closing Devotions and Adjournment**

Br. L.K. Wierenga read 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 and led in prayer. As it was Ascension Day, and in anticipation of a worship service that evening, Synod was adjourned for the day.

**Day 4 — Morning Session**  
**Friday, May 10, 2013**

**Article 41 – Opening Devotions**

The chairman called the meeting to order and the assembly sang Psalm 78:17, 26. Rev. Bouwman then read 2 Chronicles 12 and led in prayer. All members of synod were present.

**Article 42 – Adoption of the Acts**

Articles 32-40 of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

**Article 43 – Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)**

Committee 4 presented its second draft regarding the OPC. Some minor changes were made with the following result:

**1. Material:**

- 1.1. Report from the CCCNA re: the OPC (8.2.3)
- 1.2. Letters from the churches at London (8.3.3.22), Calgary (8.3.3.27) and Edmonton-Immanuel (8.3.3.28)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 gave the CCCNA the following mandate in regard to the OPC (*Acts*, Article 34, Recommendation 4.3):
  - [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.
- 2.2. Delegates of the CCCNA met with Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations (CEIR) at meetings of NAPARC in 2010 and 2011 and also attended the General Assembly of the OPC in 2011.
- 2.3. At the request of the CEIR, the CCCNA provided input on the invitation from the ERQ to the OPC to enter into EF.
- 2.4. The CCCNA was informed that the OPC is pursuing Corresponding Relations with the Free Reformed Churches of North America, the Heritage Reformed congregations and the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) and that there is a growing relationship with the Independent Reformed Church in Korea.
- 2.5. The CCCNA communicated with the CEIR on the OPC's decision to establish corresponding relations with the IPB. When addressing this

matter, the CCCNA learned that the OPC did not enter into EF with the IPB, but a “corresponding relationship,” which is a preliminary category. Further, it was learned that the relationship was initiated by the IPB to seek their help after breaking off contact with the Presbyterian Church of the United States (PCUSA), in an effort to restore the Reformed character of the IPB. The CCCNA encouraged the OPC to consider taking up more contact with our sister churches in Brazil, the RCB, to gain any relevant information about the IPB.

- 2.6. The CCCNA updated the CEIR about our developments toward unity with the URCNA.
- 2.7. The CCCNA reports that the CEIR expressed concern about the involvement of women in the BBK (of the RCN) and in the work of the Dutch synod.
- 2.8. The church at London observes that from the CCCNA report, it seems that the matters of confessional membership and supervision of the Lord’s Supper have not been discussed with the OPC “in a purposeful and vigorous way,” as Synod Burlington 2010 encouraged. London recommends that these two matters continue to be discussed.
- 2.9. The church of Edmonton-Immanuel notes that over the many years, the OPC has not changed its approach and practice to confessional membership and the supervision of the Lord’s table. It observes that Synod Burlington 2010 made no mention of these outstanding matters in its mandate to the CCCNA and that this may have led to a neglect of them in the CCCNA’s discussions with the CEIR. It is through further dialogue about these outstanding differences that our church federations may move toward closer unity.
- 2.10. The CCCNA recommends that Synod decide:
  - 2.10.1. To thank the Lord for the way in which the OPC actively promotes a faithful Reformed witness to the gospel;
  - 2.10.2 To mandate the CCCNA to continue the relationship of EF with the OPC under the adopted rules.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. It is evident that the CCCNA has been active in maintaining the relationship with the OPC. The committee has had dialogue with the CEIR on a number of issues relating to church life and ecclesiastical relationships, in particular the relationship with the IPB.

- 3.2. A statement of agreement between the CanRC and the OPC that addresses the fencing of the Lord's table and confessional membership was proposed in 1998 (*Acts of Synod 1998*, Article 129) and was accepted in 2001 (*Acts of Synod 2001*, Article 45).
- 3.3. The matters of concern raised by past synods and highlighted by the churches remain valid and need to continue to be addressed in the context of the rules of EF (see *Acts of Synod 2007*, Article 131, Recommendation 4.3; *Acts of Synod 2010*, Article 34, Consideration 3.4).

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To thank the CCCNA for its efforts in maintaining our relationship with the OPC;
- 4.2. To thank the Lord for the way in which the OPC actively promotes a faithful Reformed witness to the gospel;
- 4.3. To mandate the CCCNA to continue the relationship of EF with the OPC under the adopted rules giving particular attention, together with the CEIR, to the functioning of the 2001 agreement.

### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 44 – Appeal of Dunnville re: Literal Understanding of the Church Order**

Committee 2 presented its proposal concerning the appeal of the church at Dunnville. After some discussion, it was taken back for further refinement.

#### **Article 45 – Churches for Days of Prayer**

##### **1. Material:**

Report from Edmonton-Providence and Burlington-Rehoboth (8.2.17)

##### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Synod 2010 appointed the churches at Edmonton-Providence and Burlington-Rehoboth as the churches to implement the provisions of Article 54 CO.
- 2.2. The churches appointed report that they were not called upon by the churches to organize a special day of prayer.

##### **3. Consideration:**

The churches appointed have fulfilled the mandate given them by Synod 2010.

**4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To express gratitude to Edmonton-Providence and Burlington-Rehoboth for their report;
- 4.2. To reappoint these two churches to implement Article 54 CO as needed.

**ADOPTED**

Synod was adjourned for committee work.

**Day 4 – Afternoon Session  
Friday, May 10, 2013**

**Article 46 – Reopening**

The chairman reopened synod and the members sang Psalm 36:2. It was noted that all members of synod were present. Two brothers from the RCN, Rev. J.M. Batteau and br. K. Wezeman, were welcomed as fraternal delegates.

**Article 47 – Appeal of Attercliffe re: OPC****1. Material:**

Letter of appeal from the church at Attercliffe against Article 27 of Synod Burlington 2010 (8.5.22)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Attercliffe appeals the decision of Synod Burlington 2010 to declare Attercliffe's 2010 appeal regarding the OPC inadmissible on the basis of Article 33 CO.
- 2.2. Synod Burlington 2010 provided a history of the relations between the CanRC and the OPC and the way in which the respective committees reached a statement of agreement on the matters of fencing the Lord's table and confessional membership.
- 2.3. In Article 27 Synod Burlington 2010 provided four considerations to Attercliffe:
  - [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 1998* 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 2001 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 2001.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. Attercliffe is correct in pointing out that the matter of confessional membership was not dealt with extensively by Synod Chatham 2004. However, they do not provide interaction with the other considerations of Synod Burlington 2010 (3.2-3.4).
- 3.2. Synod Burlington 2010’s considerations in Article 27, Considerations 3.2-3.4, remain valid grounds and as such Synod was correct in declaring the appeal inadmissible on the basis of Article 33 CO.

### **4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide to deny the appeal.

## **ADOPTED**

### **Article 48 – Appeal of Dunnville re: Literal Understanding of the Church Order**

Committee 2 presents a second draft of its proposal. After a minor change, this was the result:

#### **1. Material:**

Letter of appeal from the church at Dunnville (8.5.8)

#### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. The church at Dunnville appeals Article 170 and 171 of the *Acts of Synod Burlington 2010* which dealt with an appeal from a brother (170) and from a church (171) on the same issue. General Synod denied both appeals which had challenged the decision of Regional Synod West 2009 regarding the application of Article 55 of the CO.

The matter concerned the use in worship services of revised psalms which had not yet been approved by a general synod.

- 2.2. Synod Burlington 2010 agreed with Regional Synod West 2009 when it stated that “This matter is not just about the exact wording of Article 55, but also about how it is applied” (*Acts*, Article 170, Consideration 3.1). Synod Burlington 2010 also stated, “...the diligent observation of the articles of the CO ... 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 Regional Synod West 2009 to speak about ‘the intent’ of Article 55.”
- 2.3. The church at Dunnville disputes this interpretation of Synod Burlington 2010 regarding Article 55 CO. Dunnville states, “This [i.e., Article 55] is the rule which provides consistency throughout the federation. Interpretation of the Article must be literal, for that would also provide the intent of the Article. To argue that Article 55’s literal interpretation and its intent are not the same is contradictory.”
- 2.4. The report of the SCBP to Synod Smithers 2007 stated: “It may be left in the freedom of the churches to make use of the revised Psalms in different ways. For example, either by having the congregation sing them before or during the worship services” (Report, Section 15.2.12, p.199).
- 2.5. The church at Dunnville requests Synod Carman 2013 to:
  - 2.5.1. “Rescind the decision” of Synod Burlington 2010, Article 170;
  - 2.5.2. “Instruct the SCBP to provide a clear mandate for the testing procedure when introducing new or significantly revised Psalms and Hymns to the federation”;
  - 2.5.3. “Provide leadership to the federation of churches by supporting a distinct and clear interpretation of the Church Order.”

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. It is important that the churches maintain what has been agreed upon in the CO and not move away from the literal reading of its articles by distinguishing between the plain or literal reading and the intent or spirit of the CO. The literal reading expresses the intent of the articles.
- 3.2. Synod Smithers 2007 did not provide an explicit directive to the churches to test the psalms in the worship services when it gave the mandate to the SCBP to “solicit input from the churches at all

stages of the process.” However, such testing was suggested by the SCBP in its report received by Synod Smithers 2007 in which it stated, “It may be left in the freedom of the churches to make use of the revised Psalms in different ways. For example, either by having the congregation sing them before or during the worship services.” Synod Smithers 2007 did not reject this suggestion of the SCBP, which led to the assumption of a local church that it was approved by general synod to test these revised psalms in the worship services. Synod Smithers 2007 should have provided an explicit directive to the churches as to how the revised psalms should be tested by the churches.

- 3.3. It is not the SCBP’s responsibility to mandate the churches’ testing procedures when introducing new or significantly revised psalms and hymns.

#### **4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide that Synod Burlington 2010 erred when approving Regional Synod West 2009’s distinction between the literal reading and the intent of the CO in the application of Article 55.

#### **ADOPTED**

**Article 49 – Committee for Needy Students Fund (CNSF)** Committee 3 presented a proposal on the report of the Committee for Needy Students Fund. After some discussion, it was taken back for refinement.

#### **Article 50 – Appeal of Winnipeg-Redeemer re: Centralizing Needy Students Fund**

Committee 3 presented a proposal on Redeemer’s appeal. After some discussion, it was taken back for refinement.

#### **Article 51 – Appeals re: Women’s Voting for Office Bearers**

Committee 1 presented its second draft. After some discussion, synod was adjourned for a supper break.

### **Day 4 – Evening Session**

**Friday, May 10, 2013**

#### **Article 52 – Reopening**

The chairman reopened synod and the members sang Psalm 36:3. It was noted that all members were present.

**Article 53 – Appeals re: Women’s Voting for Office Bearers**

The discussion on Committee 1’s proposal continued. After another round of discussion, it was taken back for further consideration.

**Article 54 – Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford**

Committee 5 presented a second draft. After two rounds of discussion, it was taken back for further consideration.

**Article 55 – Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA) – General**

Committee 4 presented its proposal. With some minor changes, this was the result:

**1. Material:**

- 1.1. General Report from the CCCNA (8.2.3)
- 1.2. Letter from the church at Abbotsford (8.3.3.4)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 gave the CCCNA this general mandate (*Acts*, Article 61, Recommendation 4.1):
  - [4.1.1.] To continue contact with all those churches in the Americas [*sic.*; i.e. North America] 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 [*sic.*; i.e. North America].
  - [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 [*sic.*; i.e. North America].
  - [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.
- 2.2. The CCCNA reports that it continued to function as two geographically-based subcommittees. Subcommittee West was responsible for contacts with the RCUS, RPCNA and NAPARC and has provided reports and recommendations for the same. Subcommittee East was responsible for contacts with the ERQ and OPC and has provided reports and recommendations for the same.

- 2.3. Abbotsford notes that synodical committee reports that concern relations with other churches often assume a knowledge of such churches that many in the CanRC are not likely to have and encourages the committees (such as the CCCNA) to provide more background information.
- 2.4. The CCCNA asks that Dr. R. Faber and br. J. Kuik be discharged from the committee and thanked for their years of service to the churches as members of the CCCNA. The CCCNA will suggest to Synod Carman 2013 suitable replacements for these two brothers.
- 2.5. The CCCNA recommends that the mandate given by Synod 2010 be renewed in 2013, until 2016.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. It is clear that the CCCNA was diligent in carrying out its mandate.
- 3.2. It would be beneficial for the CCCNA to provide more background information on churches with which the CanRC may be unfamiliar.
- 3.3. The CCCNA recommends that the mandate, as stated by Synod 2010, be continued for CCCNA until 2016.

### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To mandate the CCCNA:
  - 4.1.1. To continue contact with all those churches in North America with which we have EF (URCNA excepted since the CCU continues that contact) 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 North America;
  - 4.1.3. To respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests made to attend assemblies, synods, or meetings of other churches in North America;
  - 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 Dr. R. Faber and br. J. Kuik from the CCCNA and to thank them for their years of service to the churches as members of this committee.

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**ADOPTED****Article 56 – Closing Devotions and Adjournment**

Br. R.J. Buist read Psalm 116:1-7, had the assembly sing Psalm 116:1, 3 and led in prayer. Synod was adjourned.

**Day 5 – Morning Session  
Monday, May 13, 2013****Article 57 – Opening Devotions**

The chairman called the meeting to order and the assembly sang Psalm 22:3, 4. Rev. Bouwman then read 2 Chronicles 13 and led in prayer. All members of synod were present. Condolences were expressed to br. Casey Leyenhorst whose brother-in-law, br. John Deleeuw of Yarrow, had passed away late the previous week. It was noted that this would necessitate the departure from synod of Rev. Eikelboom, minister of the church in Yarrow. The first alternate, Dr. A.J. Pol, will be asked to take his place during his temporary absence.

**Article 58 – Adoption of the Acts**

Articles 41-56 of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

**Article 59 – Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN)**

Committee 3 presented its report on the RCN. After some discussion, it was taken back for refinement. Synod was adjourned for committee work.

**Day 5 – Evening Session  
Monday, May 13, 2013****Article 60 – Reopening**

The chairman reopened synod and the members sang Psalm 36:3. It was noted that all members of synod were present. Two recently-arrived fraternal delegates were welcomed: Dr. Peter Wallace and Dr. Tony Curto of the OPC. Rev. Matt Kingswood was welcomed as an observer delegate from the RPCNA.

**Article 61 – Address of Fraternal Delegate (RCN)**

Rev. J. Moesker introduced Rev. J.M. Batteau who addressed the assembly as a fraternal delegate. The full text of his address can be found in *Appendix 5*. Rev. Moesker responded with appropriate words. His response can be found in *Appendix 6*.

**Article 62 – Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford**

Committee 5 presents its proposal. With a minor change, this was the result:

**1. Material:**

Letter from the Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford, dated Feb 28, 2013 (8.1.24)

**2. Admissibility:**

- 2.1. The churches of the Canadian Reformed federation set the agenda for general synod. We also receive correspondence from churches with which we are in Ecclesiastical Fellowship. The letter from the Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford (made up almost entirely of persons who were once Canadian Reformed) fulfills neither criteria and so Synod is under no obligation to admit this letter.
- 2.2. This is, however, the first time the LRCA addresses a Canadian Reformed general synod. Their departure from our midst is recent and the situation is in flux. Moreover, this letter contains “an urgent call to reform the church and to return it to its confessional basis as summarized in the Three Forms of Unity.” The human heart is inclined to pass off calls to repentance and Scripture shows that the Lord repeatedly held it against his people when they did so. A posture of receptivity and humility is therefore fitting in the face of a call to reform. For these reasons, at this time, General Synod deems it fitting to admit this letter and give an appropriate response.

**3. Observations:**

- 3.1. The Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford sees evidence of deformation in the Canadian Reformed Churches, with the root being decisions taken at general synod on the subject of inter-church relations. Their letter lists the decisions taken over the span of the last 40 years in relation to OPC, FCS, PCK, ICRC, RCUS, URCNA, ERQ, NAPARC and the fact that the “lawful secession by De Gereformeerde Kerken (Hersteld)” was termed “schismatic.”
- 3.2. The LRCA claims that appeals against any of these decisions were all denied which in turn has led to corruption in the preaching, in the administration of the sacraments and in the exercise of church discipline.

**4. Considerations:**

- 4.1. In recent years, several current members of the LRCA, while they were still members of a Canadian Reformed Church, have appealed

Canadian Reformed decisions and actions on inter-church relations to multiple major assemblies. These decisions have never been proven to be in conflict with Scripture, the Reformed confessions, or the Church Order.

- 4.2. The LRCA has sent letters to all the Canadian Reformed Churches to explain why they seceded from the Canadian Reformed Churches. From the fact that no Canadian Reformed Church has directed communication to major assemblies on behalf of the LRCA, it is evident that no church was convinced that their arguments for seceding were valid.
- 4.3. In their internal conduct as well as in their inter-church relations, the Canadian Reformed Churches have reflected the thinking of John Calvin penned more than 400 years ago (*Institutes*, IV.1.12): *“The pure ministry of the Word and pure mode of celebrating the sacraments are, as we say, sufficient pledge and guarantee that we may safely embrace as church any society in which both these marks exist. The principle extends to the point that we must not reject it so long as it retains them, even if it otherwise swarms with many faults. What is more, some fault may creep into the administration of either doctrine or sacraments, but this ought not to estrange us from communion with the church. For not all the articles of true doctrine are of the same sort. Some are so necessary to know that they should be certain and unquestioned by all men as the proper principles of religion. Such are: God is one; Christ is God and the Son of God; our salvation rests in God’s mercy; and the like. Among the churches there are other articles of doctrine disputed which still do not break the unity of faith. Suppose that one church believes – short of unbridled contention and opinionated stubbornness – that souls upon leaving bodies fly to heaven; while another, not daring to define the place, is convinced nevertheless that they live to the Lord. What churches would disagree on this one point? Here are the apostle’s words: ‘Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be of the same mind; and if you be differently minded in anything, God shall reveal this also to you’ (Philippians 3:15). Does this not sufficiently indicate that a difference of opinion over these nonessential matters should in no wise be the basis of schism among Christians? First and foremost, we should agree on all points. But since all men are somewhat beclouded with ignorance, either we must leave no church remaining, or we must condone delusion in those matters which can go unknown without harm to the sum of religion and without loss of salvation.*

*But here I would not support even the slightest errors with the thought of fostering them through flattery and connivance. But I say we must not thoughtlessly forsake the church because of any petty dissensions. For in it alone is kept safe and uncorrupted that doctrine in which piety stands sound and the use of the sacraments ordained by the Lord is guarded. In the meantime, if we try to correct what displeases us, we do so out of duty. Paul's statement applies to this: 'If a better revelation is made to another sitting by, let the first be silent' (1 Corinthians 14:30). From this it is clear that every member of the church is charged with the responsibility of public edification according to the measure of his grace, provided he perform it decently and in order. That is, we are neither to renounce the communion of the church nor, remaining in it, to disturb its peace and duly ordered discipline."*

- 4.4. The LRCA and its members should bear these words of Calvin in mind and return to their brothers and sisters in the Canadian Reformed Churches.

**5. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide to send this article as reply to the Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford.

**DEFEATED**

A new proposal from the floor was put forward with this result:

**1. Material:**

Letter from the Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford (LRCA), dated Feb 28, 2013 (8.1.24)

**2. Observations re: Admissibility:**

- 2.1. The LRCA addresses Synod Carman 2013 out of a deep concern over "the deformation and apostasy that is growing in the Canadian Reformed Churches" which is rooted in the decisions of general synod dealing with inter-church relations. The LRCA conveys its "urgent call to reform the church and to return to its confessional basis as summarized in The Three Forms of Unity."
- 2.2. The churches of the Canadian Reformed federation set the agenda for general synod. No church has asked us to address this issue. Synod also accepts correspondence received from churches with which we are in Ecclesiastical Fellowship. The letter from the LRCA does not fulfil either criterion.

### 3. Recommendation:

That Synod decide to declare the letter from the LRCA inadmissible.

## ADOPTED

### Article 63 – CRTS: Board of Governors’ Report – General

Committee 5 presented a proposal on the Board of Governors’ report. After some discussion, it was taken back for polishing.

### Article 64 – Appeals re: General Synod Guidelines

Committee 2 presented a proposal on the four appeals. After some discussion, it was taken back for further work.

### Article 65 – Appeal of Barrhead re: “It is Living in the Churches”

Committee 4 presented a proposal and with a change, this was the result:

#### 1. Material:

Letter of appeal from the church of Barrhead against Article 45 of the *Acts of Synod Burlington 2010* (8.5.11)

#### 2. Observations:

- 2.1. Barrhead appeals the decision of Synod Burlington 2010, Article 45, which dealt with an appeal from the church of Burlington-Ebenezer on the matter of the decision of Synod Smithers 2007 pertaining to the administration of the Lord’s Supper to shut-ins.
- 2.2. Burlington-Ebenezer had challenged the *Acts of Synod Smithers 2007*, Article 96 (Observation 2.2), where it stated, “[The church of] Smithers requests a revision of the Church Order regarding the administration of the Lord’s Supper to shut-ins, because this issue is living in the churches, but is not clearly dealt with in the Church Order.” In its appeal to Synod Burlington 2010, Burlington-Ebenezer contended that “the term ‘it is living in the churches’ is an undefined term ... a non-argument ... Whether something is living in the churches is immaterial and should be flagged as such by synod or, better still, not be mentioned at all.”
- 2.3. In its consideration of Burlington-Ebenezer’s appeal, Synod Burlington 2010 responded that “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 ...

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 ... The weight given to such a ground must be left to the wisdom of synod.”

- 2.4. Barrhead is alarmed that such an ambiguous term could be given credence in decisions at the broader assemblies, questioning how it can even be determined that a matter is “living in the churches.” Barrhead opines that decisions that are based on such an indefinite and questionable foundation are bound to be challenged and disputed. Barrhead says that the Church Order provides us with criteria for what can be dealt with by the broader assemblies and those matters should be dealt with solely on the basis of their own admissibility and merit.
- 2.5. The church of Barrhead asks that that the decision of Synod Burlington 2010, Article 45, be rescinded and that synod not consider whether a matter is living in the churches when dealing with matters that are brought before it.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. While Barrhead is appealing a decision made with respect to a church other than itself, Synod Burlington 2010’s considerations to Burlington-Ebenezer about taking into account whether an issue “lives in the churches” has the potential to relate more widely in the federation and at its broader assemblies.
- 3.2. As Synod Burlington 2010 noted, the term is vague. Barrhead is correct in stating that every matter brought before the broader assemblies first has to meet the admissibility criteria of the Church Order and that such matters should then be dealt with on the basis of their own merit, according to the Word of God and the confessions. In making its decisions, a broader assembly should never simply resort to counting how many members or churches are giving attention to a certain issue and react thereto; however, in matters of preference this remains a distinct factor.
- 3.3. It is true that it can be helpful for a broader assembly to note whether there is concern for or interest in a particular matter among the churches, as the churches do look to the assemblies in some instances to provide them with guidance and direction.

**4. Recommendation:**

That Synod deny the appeal of the church of Barrhead.

**ADOPTED****Article 66 – Letter of Hamilton-Cornerstone re: PCA**

Committee 4 presented a report on Hamilton’s letter. After some discussion, it was taken back for refinement.

**Article 67 – Committee for the Official Website (CWEB)**

Committee 1 presented a report on the Committee for the Official Website. After some discussion, it was taken back for refinement.

**Article 68 – Closing Devotions and Adjournment**

Rev. Eikelboom read Proverbs 16:1-3, had the assembly sing Psalm 131:1-3 and led in prayer. Synod was adjourned.

**Day 6 – Morning Session**

**Tuesday, May 14, 2013**

**Article 69 – Opening Devotions**

The chairman called the meeting to order and the assembly sang Psalm 9:9, 10. Rev. Bouwman then read 2 Chronicles 14 and led in prayer. All members of synod were present.

**Article 70 – Adoption of the Acts**

Articles 57-68 of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

**Article 71 – Appeal of Sr. Annette VanTil re: Regional Synod East 2012**

Committee 5 presented its proposal. After some discussion, the proposal of the committee was withdrawn and a new proposal from the floor was put into discussion. After a minor change, this was the result:

**1. Material:**

Letter of appeal from sr. A. VanTil (8.5.17)

**2. Observations re: Admissibility**

2.1. Sr. VanTil appeals the four decisions of Regional East of November 14, 2012 pertaining to her appeal against the judgment of Classis Ontario West of December 14, 2011.

- 2.2. Her first request to General Synod is to “determine that Regional Synod erred in upholding Hamilton Consistory’s new protocol for Lord’s Supper admittance.” She requests General Synod “to determine that this protocol for admitting members of NAPARC and ICRC churches as guests at the Lord’s Supper table is contrary to Scripture, Church Order and the confessions of the church.”
- 2.3. Her second request is that “General Synod determine that Regional Synod erred in upholding Hamilton Consistory’s procedure for announcing withdrawals.” She requests General Synod to “determine that this protocol Hamilton Consistory has adopted for announcing withdrawals from the Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church to attend churches affiliated with NAPARC is contrary to Scripture, to the confessions of the church and the church order.”
- 2.4. Her third request is for General Synod to “determine that Regional Synod erred in not dealing with the concerns raised about NAPARC membership.” She requests “General Synod to interact with the concerns raised about NAPARC membership and ultimately to rescind our membership in NAPARC.”
- 2.5. Her fourth request is for General Synod to “determine that Regional Synod erred in upholding Hamilton consistory’s decision to request [her] to attend Lord’s Supper prior to interacting with [her] concerns.”

### **3. Considerations re: Admissibility:**

- 3.1. In her first request, sr. VanTil merely reiterates the same grounds that she raised in her appeal to Regional Synod East (contra Article 33 CO).
- 3.2. In her second request, sr. VanTil provides no evidence to show that she has taken up the issue of withdrawal announcements with her consistory. This was pointed out to her by both Classis Ontario West (Article 9, Consideration 2) and Regional Synod East (Article 7, Request 2, Observation 2.1, 2.2). This has still not been finished at the minor assembly (contra Article 30 CO).
- 3.3. In her third request, the appellant is basically expressing her disagreement with the Hamilton consistory’s acceptance of General Synod’s decision regarding membership in NAPARC and the implications of that membership. She requested both Classis and Regional Synod to direct Hamilton consistory to appeal General Synod’s decision to retain membership in NAPARC. Classis already pointed out to her, “It is not within the jurisdiction of a classis to

direct a local consistory to appeal a decision of a general synod (for example, in the matter of inter-church relations), but such an action would have to originate from the consistory” (Article 8, Consideration 3). Regional Synod showed her the proper route to follow, “If the appellant is not able to convince the Hamilton consistory of the need to appeal the decision regarding NAPARC, the way is open for her to take up the matter with the major assemblies (see *Acts of Synod Neerlandia 2001* Article 45; *Acts of Synod Chatham 2004*, Article 20).

- 3.4. In the appellant’s fourth request grounds 1 and 3 are the same as she brought forward in her appeal to Regional Synod. In ground 2 the appellant ignores the fact that even though the Apostle reprimands the Corinthians by saying, “It is not the Lord’s Supper that you eat” (1 Cor. 11:20), he did not forbid them from attending but called every member to examine himself before partaking (1 Cor. 11:28, 29). Sr. VanTil has not indicated how Consideration 4.2 of Regional Synod East and the texts mentioned there do not apply to her situation.
- 3.5. An integral element of an appeal is that it presents *grounds* to show how one has been wronged or grieved by the decision of an ecclesiastical assembly. Sr. VanTil has not submitted an appeal but simply a restatement of what she submitted to the minor assemblies.

#### **4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide to declare the appeal of sr. A. VanTil inadmissible (Articles 30 and 33 CO).

### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 72 – Appeals re: Women’s Voting for Office Bearers**

Committee 1 presented its third draft. During the lengthy discussion, a counter-proposal was tabled from the floor. The chair ruled that the committee should first take back its draft for further work before the counter-proposal is dealt with.

#### **Article 73 – Pastoral Training Program (PTP)**

##### **1. Material:**

Report from Pastoral Training Program (PTP) Funding Committee (8.2.9) (as found in *Appendix 16* of these *Acts*).

## 2. Observations:

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 appointed the church at Guelph-Emmanuel as the PTP funding committee (*Acts*, Article 167) with the following mandate (*Acts*, Article 51, Recommendation 4.2):
  - [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
- 2.2. In keeping with the decisions of Synod Burlington 2010, the Committee for Pastoral Training Program Funding has updated the documents, “The Committee for Pastoral Training Program” and, “Guidelines Developed by the Pastoral Training Program Funding Committee” (Appendix 1 & 2).
- 2.3. The Committee reports which students were funded by the program in the summers 2010, 2011 and 2012.
- 2.4. The Committee reports that in 2010, 2011 and 2012, its books were audited and its records were found to be in good order.

## 3. Consideration:

The Committee appears to have done its work very well and the funding program has been working very well.

## 4. Recommendations:

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To express gratitude to the Emmanuel Canadian Reformed Church 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 its activities to the next general synod, which report shall be sent to all the churches at least six months prior to the next general synod.

## ADOPTED

Synod adjourned for committee work.

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**Day 6 – Evening Session  
Tuesday, May 14, 2013**

**Article 74 – Reopening**

The chairman reopened synod and the members sang Psalm 56:1, 4. It was noted that all members were present with the exception of Rev. Eikelboom who had to leave to conduct a funeral. Welcomed to the assembly was Dr. A.J. Pol, first alternate, who will be serving synod until the return of Rev. Eikelboom (the Lord willing). Rev. K. Swartz of the RPCNA was welcomed as an observer delegate, as he had recently arrived. Some house-keeping matters were mentioned.

**Article 75 – Address of Fraternal/Observer Delegates (FRCSA, OPC, RPCNA)**

Rev. Souman introduced Rev. D. Boersma from the FRCSA who then addressed the assembly as a fraternal delegate. Rev. Souman responded with fitting remarks. Rev. Holtvlüwer introduced Rev. Dr. Peter J. Wallace of the OPC who then addressed synod as a fraternal delegate. Rev. Holtvlüwer responded with fitting remarks. Br. J. Kuik, long-serving member of the CCCNA, introduced Rev. M. Kingswood of the RPCNA who then addressed synod as an observer delegate. Br. Kuik responded with fitting remarks. The full text of each address can be found in *Appendices 7, 8 and 9*.

**Article 76 – Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA)**

Committee 4 presented a proposal on the RPCNA. With a minor change, this was the result:

**1. Material:**

- 1.1. Report from the CCCNA re: the RPCNA (8.2.3)
- 1.2. Letter from the RPCNA (Appendix 1 of CCCNA report)
- 1.3. Adopted report of RPCNA Synod 2001 (Appendix 2 of CCCNA report)
- 1.4. Paper entitled “On Women Deacons” (Appendix 3 of CCCNA report)
- 1.5. Letters from the churches at Yarrow (8.1.31), Grand Valley (8.3.3.1), Coaldale (8.3.3.2), Guelph-Living Word (8.3.3.3), Abbotsford (8.3.3.4), Ancaster (8.3.3.6), Attercliffe (8.3.3.8), Carman West (8.3.3.10), Elora (8.3.3.12), Grand Rapids (8.3.3.15), Hamilton-Providence (8.3.3.18), Lincoln (8.3.3.19), London (8.3.3.24), Smithville (8.3.3.25) and Owen Sound (8.3.3.29)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 gave the CCCNA the following mandate in regard to the RPCNA (*Acts*, Article 77, Recommendation 4.2):
  - [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.
- 2.2. Delegates of the CCCNA met with the Inter-Church Relations Committee (IRC) of the RPCNA at meetings of NAPARC in 2010 and 2011.
- 2.3. The IRC raised the question with the CCCNA “as to why the Can. Ref. Churches would object to having fellowship with the RPCNA on the ground of ordaining women deacons when the Can. Ref. Churches already has [*sic*] ecclesiastical fellowship with the ERQ which [according to the RPCNA] holds to the position of women deacons.” In response, the CCCNA noted “that while the ERQ church order does not rule out women functioning in a diaconal capacity, women have never been ordained as deacons in this church.”
- 2.4. The IRC committed itself to providing a written interaction with the decision of Synod Burlington 2010 and sent a letter to Synod Carman 2013 (with two appendices), elaborating on the RPCNA position regarding women deacons, clarifying their stance on exclusive Psalmody and requesting a reopening of discussions with the CanRC with a view to having fraternal relations.
- 2.5. The CCCNA notes that it did not have further dialogue with the RPCNA concerning women deacons, as this was not its mandate.
- 2.6. The IRC provided a position paper, adopted by the RPCNA Synod of 2001, outlining their view of women deacons and their view of ordination. For example, with respect to the former, it states, “The Diaconate... is neither a ruling nor a teaching office. Its exercise... and its function is administrative.”
- 2.7. The IRC provided an unofficial paper on women deacons, reflecting the scriptural arguments offered in support of the RPCNA position.
- 2.8. Grand Valley, Attercliffe, Lincoln, Elora and Yarrow urge caution with respect to the relationship with the RPCNA, on account of the ordination of women as deacons within this church.
- 2.9. In response to the IRC’s question to the CCCNA about consistency of practice with respect to relations with churches that ordain deacons, Coaldale and Attercliffe point out that the CanRC entered EF with the ERQ in an effort to assist them in their development

- as Reformed churches. Further, Coaldale notes that, “if the ERQ indeed has the practice of allowing women to serve in the capacity of deacons, this is not because the practice has been endorsed or promoted by the CanRC.” Hamilton-Providence suggests that this matter of EF with the ERQ needs to be clarified with the RPCNA.
- 2.10. Guelph-Living Word finds it regrettable that the CCCNA did not offer more concrete recommendations and they propose that the difference between the office of deacon in the CanRC and the RPCNA be investigated further. Ancaster, London, Carman West, Lincoln and Hamilton-Providence also seek an examination of the RPCNA’s position on women deacons. Attercliffe notes that the position paper and other material provided by the RPCNA make clear their view that the office of deacon is open to women, a view quite different than that held in the CanRC. Owen Sound proposes that the material provided by the RPCNA on women deacons be studied further by the CCCNA.
  - 2.11. Abbotsford suggests a comparative study of how the terms “office” and “ordination” are used in the CanRC and the RPCNA respectively, wondering if the same terms are used but with different definitions.
  - 2.12. Grand Rapids opines that the RPCNA’s definition of the nature and function of the diaconal office as being without any ruling function contradicts Article 30 of the Belgic Confession, where it is stated that “elders and deacons...together with pastors, form the council of the church.”
  - 2.13. Hamilton-Providence raises some concerns with the exegesis supporting women deacons as found in the material provided by the IRC.
  - 2.14. Smithville recommends that Synod Carman 2013 not withhold EF from the RPCNA based on their practice of having women in the office of deacon. Smithville points out that, unlike in the CanRC where the deacons form part of the ruling body of council, in the RPCNA the diaconate is neither a ruling nor teaching office. Smithville notes the potential for the impression of inconsistency if we do not extend EF to the RPCNA, while we have EF with churches that do allow women to the office of deacon (KPCK, FCS, ERQ).
  - 2.15. Ancaster, London and Grand Rapids draw attention to the RPCNA Testimony, a part of their constitution and functioning on the same level as the Westminster Standards, asking that it, as yet, be thoroughly studied and evaluated for its Reformed character.

- 2.16. Attercliffe suggests that the RPCNA's position of exclusive Psalmody may create an obstacle for unity.
- 2.17. The CCCNA recommends that Synod decide:
  - 2.17.1. To receive and respond to the RPCNA's letter written to Synod 2013 regarding Synod 2010's decision not to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with the RPCNA;
  - 2.17.2. To provide direction for the CCCNA with respect to the RPCNA.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. It is true that the CCCNA did not receive a clear mandate from Synod Burlington 2010 with respect to the RPCNA and its position on women deacons.
- 3.2. With respect to women deacons, contrary to what the CCCNA reported (see Consideration 2.3), it should be pointed out that in the ERQ, while such women are ordained, they do not hold a position of ruling authority in the church. This is also a matter which has priority in our ongoing discussion with the ERQ.
- 3.3. The way in which the RPCNA understand ordination, the nature and root of the office of deacon and the authority of such an office in light of Scripture and the Reformed confessions are important matters which invite further study by the CCCNA.
- 3.4. The nature and status of the Testimony within the RPCNA still needs to be clarified (see *Acts of Synod Burlington 2010*, Article 77, Consideration 3.6).
- 3.5. With respect to exclusive Psalmody, Synod Burlington 2010 considered that this has never been seen as an obstacle to EF by either the CanRC or the RPCNA (*Acts*, Article 77, Consideration 3.5).

### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide to mandate the CCCNA:

- 4.1. To respond to the letter from the RPCNA;
- 4.2. To investigate and evaluate the way in which the RPCNA understand ordination, the nature and root of the office of deacon and the authority of such an office in light of Scripture and the Reformed confessions;
- 4.3. To investigate further the nature and status of the Testimony;
- 4.4. To continue dialogue with the RPCNA at meetings of NAPARC.

**ADOPTED**

## **Article 77 – North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC)**

Committee 4 presented a proposal on NAPARC. An amendment was proposed and adopted. The whole proposal was then voted on with this result:

### **1. Material:**

- 1.1. Report from the CCCNA (8.2.3)
- 1.2. Supplementary Report from the CCCNA (8.2.3.1)
- 1.3. Letters from the churches at Kerwood (8.1.17), Abbotsford (8.3.3.4), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.3.11), Fergus-Marantha (8.3.3.13), Glanbrook (8.3.3.14), Hamilton-Cornerstone (8.3.3.16), London (8.3.3.21), Spring Creek (8.3.3.26) and Calgary (8.3.3.27)

### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 gave the CCCNA the following mandate in regard to NAPARC (*Acts*, Article 52, Recommendation 4):
  - [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.
- 2.2. The CCCNA attended meetings of NAPARC in 2010, 2011 and 2012. The CCCNA notes that the 2013 meeting of NAPARC will be chaired by the CanRC and the 2014 meeting will be hosted by the CanRC.
- 2.3. The CCCNA continues to see the benefit of being involved in NAPARC, as the annual meetings provide good occasion for interaction with the inter-church relations committees of the ERQ, OPC, RCUS and the RPCNA.
- 2.4. The CCCNA reports that NAPARC has established a review committee to improve the functioning of the Council. Furthermore, the language of the “Golden Rule Comity Agreement” and the “NAPARC Agreement on Transfer of Members and Congregations” is under review by the NAPARC Committee of Review.
- 2.5. The CCCNA investigated the status and the implications of the “Golden Rule Comity Agreement” and the “NAPARC Agreement on Transfer of Members and Congregations.” It stresses that NAPARC has as the primary, foundational principle of its constitution that “all

actions and decisions taken are *advisory* in character and in no way curtail or restrict the autonomy of the member bodies” (emphasis added) and that the two agreements need to be understood in that context.

- 2.6. The CCCNA explains that the “Golden Rule Comity Agreement” was adopted following the recommendation of the representatives of the home missions agencies “that member-churches of NAPARC, when planning mission work, be sensitive to the presence of existing congregations and mission-work of other churches. Out of courtesy and for good working relationships, the home missions committees are encouraged to inform each other of their planned activities.”
- 2.7. The CCCNA explains that “The Agreement on Transfer of Members and Congregations” was adopted to “forestall a consistory or presbytery of a member-church from unintentionally receiving into its membership an ordained officer or member who is under discipline, thus creating tension between the churches. Like the Comity Agreement, it is intended to function as a ‘gentleman’s agreement’ for the sake of maintaining good communications and so, good relations. It has no binding authority upon any member-church of NAPARC.”
- 2.8. The CCCNA says, “these agreements are just asking for some sensible contact with neighbouring churches about the establishment of mission posts or the transfer of members. The point is not that we need to ‘honour’ these agreements (in the sense that they are binding upon us), but rather to take them into consideration in contact with NAPARC churches. NAPARC agreements do not supersede our own rules established in the Church Order.”
- 2.9. The CCCNA points out that it “should be recognized that our participation in NAPARC does not mean that we have recognized all its member churches as being true and faithful; rather, we have agreed to meet with them on the basis of an established constitution and bylaws.”
- 2.10. Burlington-Ebenezer raises questions about the implications of CanRC participation in NAPARC. Referencing the NAPARC Constitution, which states, “Those churches shall be eligible for membership which profess and maintain the basis for fellowship expressed in [Section] II and that *maintain the marks of the true church* (pure preaching of the gospel, the Scriptural administration of the sacraments, the faithful exercise of discipline),” and the fact that

member churches may be suspended because of non-compliance with these constitutional requirements, Burlington-Ebenezer contends that NAPARC membership implies a mutual recognition of faithfulness between existing member churches (emphasis added). Burlington-Ebenezer asks for clarity on this point, whether “we [have] tacitly accepted all of the member churches to be true churches,” and whether we are bound “to make a determination that each of the member churches is a true church and to seek the expulsion of those that we determine are not?” Furthermore, it questions if it is “scripturally tenable to recognize a church as being a true church but to not establish a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with it?” Finally, Burlington-Ebenezer questions if we are meeting with the churches at NAPARC on the basis of its constitution and bylaws, or if we are simply ignoring these documents and defining membership in whatever way suits us.

- 2.11. Also citing the NAPARC constitution, Spring Creek wonders if the CCCNA is correct in its assertion that “our participation in NAPARC does not mean that we have recognized all its member churches as being true and faithful,” and asks synod to confirm or correct this understanding of the CCCNA. Spring Creek notes the relevance of the question in how some church members are making assumptions about a CanRC acknowledgement of all other NAPARC churches as true, based solely on the fact that we belong to the same organization, while the CanRC has not made the determination that all these churches maintain the marks of the true church. In fact, Spring Creek asserts, “membership in NAPARC is based mainly on a church’s self-testimony and presentation of its confessional documents,” and that the Constitution does not call for an investigation into whether a church indeed maintains or continues to maintain the marks of a true church nor does it even demand the sponsorship of existing members to verify the faithful character of the applying church. Spring Creek does not believe it is right for us to be bound to acknowledge all member churches as true and faithful and argues that this runs contrary to the advisory character of NAPARC. Spring Creek observes, “NAPARC is merely a discussion forum for churches who share the same Reformed confession. Sharing the same confession and coming together around the same table may be the starting point for bi-lateral discussions to bring church bodies in closer contact with one another on the road to

mutual recognition and possibly developing unity – but it should not compel member churches to jump to conclusions about the others. Investigative work needs to be done first.”

- 2.12. Fergus-Marantha, Glanbrook and Kerwood seek clarity on the status and consequences of our membership in NAPARC. Kerwood suggests a withdrawal from NAPARC if in fact the two agreements are binding, as we cannot be compelled to recognize other churches as true and faithful.
- 2.13. London notes that the language of the two agreements is under review and recommends that the CCCNA monitor these changes to ensure that these documents retain a non-binding character. Furthermore, London urges that “all the local congregations in our federation ... understand clearly that these agreements do not effectively put us into [EF] with every NAPARC church.”
- 2.14. In its Supplementary Report, the CCCNA quotes the Minutes of NAPARC 1977, “That we mutually recognize that the decision to enter into or withdraw from Ecclesiastical Fellowship with another Reformed church shall be decided by each church on an individual basis.”
- 2.15. Hamilton-Cornerstone suggests that concerns about the two agreements have been allayed and points out the benefits in NAPARC membership. Abbotsford points out that the “Golden Rule Comity Agreement” is non-binding and that its focus is on cooperation in mission fields.
- 2.16. Calgary recognizes the benefit of discussions at NAPARC and suggests that discussions be initiated at NAPARC concerning topics such as Bible translation, federational seminaries and women in office.
- 2.17. Observers from the FRCA, in their address to Synod Carman 2013, raised concern about the role of the CanRC synod in voting to admit new member churches into NAPARC. They questioned how this process works within the parameters of the CanRC Church Order.
- 2.18. The CCCNA recommends that Synod decide to mandate the CCCNA to continue to represent the Canadian Reformed Churches at NAPARC and to continue its active involvement in it.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. It is evident that the CCCNA has been active in fulfilling its mandate with respect to CanRC membership in NAPARC and has provided the churches with an explanation of “Golden Rule Comity

Agreement” and the “NAPARC Agreement on Transfer of Members and Congregations”.

- 3.2. The intent of the two membership agreements needs to be remembered, that the agreements simply promote sensible contact with neighbouring churches about the establishment of mission posts or the transfer of members. The NAPARC constitution and bylaws and the two agreements do not supersede the rules agreed upon in the CanRC Church Order.
- 3.3. The committee’s conclusion with respect to the advisory character of NAPARC should be underlined: “Our participation in NAPARC does not mean that we have recognized all its member churches as being true and faithful; rather, we have agreed to meet with them on the basis of an established constitution and bylaws.” It is important that local congregations understand that these agreements do not put us into EF with every NAPARC church. The self-testimony required by NAPARC member churches is not sufficient basis for us to recognize them as true churches, but is sufficient basis for us to dialogue together with them at NAPARC as a discussion partner.
- 3.4. As members of NAPARC, we have agreed to participate in the functioning of the Council, such as when our synod would be requested to vote to admit new member churches. If the synod were to vote in favour of admitting a new member church to NAPARC, this would not constitute a recognition of such church as true and faithful, but would simply allow it to be admitted to NAPARC.
- 3.5. In connection with the function of NAPARC, the decision of Synod Chatham 2004 with respect to the CanRC participating at the ICRC bears citing (*Acts*, Article 52):
  - [4.4.] ...It must be kept in mind that the ICRC is not an ecclesiastical assembly but a conference. Synod Lincoln 1992 (*Acts*, Article 94, page 64) accepted the proposal to continue participation in the ICRC for the following reasons:
    - [4.4.1.] The integrity of our churches is not jeopardized by our being a member of the ICRC;
    - [4.4.2.] Membership in the ICRC is voluntary and its conclusions are advisory and therefore the Conference does not undermine the Three Forms of Unity;
    - [4.4.3.] Our participation in the ICRC should be one of full cooperation and continued evaluation;
    - [4.4.4.] The ICRC is not a super-synod but a conference.

- 3.6. Spring Creek is correct to observe that “NAPARC is... a discussion forum for churches who share the same Reformed confession. Sharing the same confession and coming together around the same table may be the starting point for bi-lateral discussions to bring church bodies in closer contact with one another on the road to mutual recognition and possibly developing unity.”

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To thank the CCCNA for representing the CanRC at meetings of NAPARC;
- 4.2. To mandate the CCCNA to continue to represent the CanRC at NAPARC and to continue its active involvement in it;
- 4.3. To mandate the CCCNA to raise in discussion at NAPARC what may be perceived as a tension between Article 4 of the NAPARC constitution on “The Nature and Extent of Authority,” and the last sentence of 5.2 on “Membership,” namely, “Those churches shall be eligible for membership ... [which] maintain the marks of the true church (pure preaching of the gospel, the Scriptural administration of the sacraments, the faithful exercise of discipline)”.

### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 78 – Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) – Application to NAPARC**

##### **1. Material:**

- 1.1. Supplementary report from CCCNA on KPCA (Kosin) with cover letter (8.2.3.1)
- 1.2. Letters from the churches at Hamilton-Cornerstone (8.3.3.17), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.3.11) and Spring Creek (8.3.3.26)

##### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. The CCCNA has provided a supplementary report, asking that Synod deal with and approve the application of the Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) to NAPARC. The application of the KPCA was received and approved at the 2012 meeting of NAPARC. In addition to this approval, the NAPARC constitution requires the approbation of such acceptance by two thirds of the member churches, within a period of three years.

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- 2.2. The CCCNA notes that while its supplementary report was submitted late to the convening church of synod, the requirement of gaining the approval of two thirds of NAPARC member churches for this application means that it would be advisable for Synod Carman 2013 to address the matter.
  - 2.3. The CCCNA evaluated the application of the KPCA and voted in favour at the 2012 meeting of NAPARC. It gave as grounds for its decision:
    - 2.3.1. The KPCA (Kosin) have a very close sister church relationship (even: mother-daughter relationship) with an existing sister church of ours, the KPCK.
    - 2.3.2. The KPCA (Kosin) hold to the very same doctrinal basis and have the same church polity as the KPCK which fully agrees with the basis for NAPARC.
    - 2.3.3. Although we have not yet had the opportunity to investigate the KPCA (Kosin) for ourselves as CanRC, their close connection our sister church the KPCK is a testimony to their faithfulness.
    - 2.3.4. Voting to admit a church to NAPARC welcomes them as a partner to discussion around the table on an agreed-upon confessional basis, but individual relationships and formal fellowships must be pursued on an individual basis.
    - 2.3.5. Admitting the KPCA (Kosin) to NAPARC would open the door further to their involvement not only with ourselves as CanRC but also with other English-speaking, faithful churches of our Lord Jesus Christ on this continent – a desirable outcome in our calling to be one in Christ.
  - 2.4. The CCCNA draws attention to the mention of “Kwonsa” in the Constitution of the KPCA. These are “non-ordained women (55 plus) who are appointed to do a diaconal task but who do not hold a special office in the church and who hold no authority over the congregation.”
  - 2.5. Though the supplementary report was received after the deadline for submissions to synod, Hamilton-Cornerstone notes the time-bound nature of the request and suggests that Synod Carman 2013 receive and address it.
  - 2.6. Burlington-Ebenezer raises questions about the implications of a CanRC Synod (potentially) approving the KPCA’s application to NAPARC, whether such approving means we have made a *de facto* acceptance of the KPCA as being a true church.

2.7. Spring Creek uses the occasion of the KPCA's application to ask for synodical clarification on the nature of NAPARC membership. Spring Creek questions how it can be reliably ascertained whether a NAPARC member church maintains the marks of the true church when the NAPARC constitution does not call for an external investigation into whether a church indeed maintains them and continues to maintain them thereafter. Further, Spring Creek points out that it is possible that a church against which the CanRC voted is ultimately admitted to NAPARC.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. As a member church of NAPARC, it is important for the CanRC to honour its constitutional requirements, such as pertaining to the admission of new member churches and to provide a judgment when requested to do so.
- 3.2. Approving the application of the KPCA into NAPARC does not mean that we recognize them as a true and faithful church, but that we agree to meet with them on the basis of an established constitution and bylaws.
- 3.3. As a situation roughly analogous to that of our present membership in NAPARC, it may be pointed out that Synod Chatham 2004, in connection with the question of the CanRC voting to admit a new member church at the ICRC, determined that it is incorrect to equate such voting with a declaration of being a true church (*Acts*, Article 52, Consideration 4.6).
- 3.4. The KPCA has close ties with a church with which we have EF, the KPCK. The KPCA hold to the very same doctrinal basis and have the same church polity as the KPCK which fully agrees with the basis for NAPARC. Admitting this federation to NAPARC would give occasion for their involvement not only with ourselves as CanRC but also with other English-speaking, faithful churches on this continent.

### **4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide to receive the supplementary report of the CCCNA and vote in favour of the KPCA's application to NAPARC.

**ADOPTED**

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**Article 79 – Archives of General Synod****1. Material:**

- 1.1. Report from Burlington-Ebenezer as Archive Church for general synods (8.2.15)
- 1.2. Letter from Burlington-Rehoboth concerning the inspection of the archives (8.2.16)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Burlington-Ebenezer reports as follows:
  - 2.1.1. Synod Burlington 2010 mandated 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 the archival material to the judgement of each committee.”
  - 2.1.2. Synod also mandated Burlington-Ebenezer to “send a requisition notice for archival material to all synodical committees within three months following each general synod.
  - 2.1.3. The requisition notices to the synodical committees were sent belatedly in February 2011 because Burlington-Ebenezer was not immediately aware that this stipulation was added to the mandate. Notices were sent to the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad, to the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America, to the Committee for Church Unity and to the Committee for Bible Translation.
  - 2.1.4. Archival material was received from the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad, the Committee for Church Unity and the Committee for Bible Translation. No response from the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America has been received. The material received has been placed in the Archives of General Synod and has been catalogued.
  - 2.1.5. No inquiries for information or request for materials from the archives have been received since Synod Burlington 2010.
- 2.2. Burlington-Rehoboth reports that the archives of Synod Burlington 2010 kept by the Burlington-Ebenezer church and maintained by archivist br. K. Spithoff were found to be complete and very well organized. They also recommend that the archivist be thanked for his faithful service.

### **3. Consideration:**

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

### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To thank Burlington-Ebenezer for its work as Archive Church;
- 4.2. To thank the archivist br. K. Spithoff for his faithful service;
- 4.3. To thank Burlington-Rehoboth for examining the archives and reporting to synod.
- 4.4. To reappoint Burlington-Ebenezer as Archive Church and to reappoint Burlington-Rehoboth to inspect the archives;
- 4.5. To mandate Burlington-Ebenezer to complete the work of gathering and managing 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 judgement of each committee;
- 4.6. 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 80 – CRTS: Board of Governors’ Report – General**

Committee 5 presented its second draft. The result was as follows:

#### **1. Material:**

- 1.1. Report of the Board of Governors of the Theological College (8.2.10a)
- 1.2. Supplementary Report of the Board of Governors (fifth professor) (8.2.10b)
- 1.3. Supplementary Report of the Board of Governors (Board nominations and accreditation) (8.2.10c)

#### **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 in Hamilton.
- 2.2. Effective August 31, 2011, Dr. C. Van Dam retired from the Faculty and full time academic work, transitioning to an active member of the Senate. The work and ministry of Dr. C. Van Dam was duly recognized in the Seminary community, most notably with the

celebration of Dr. Van Dam's 40 years in the ministry, a milestone reached in October 2011.

- 2.3. In recent years, the dissertations of several faculty members were published. To mark the retirement and to express appreciation for the work of Dr. Van Dam, a volume of collected articles was published to which each faculty member contributed. This collection is entitled *Living Waters from Ancient Springs: Essays in Honour of Cornelis Van Dam* (Pickwick Publications, 2011). All of these and more are reasons for gratitude and a clear indication of how the Lord has blessed us with a fine community of scholars.
- 2.4. The contributions of Rev. J. DeGelder and Dr. N.D. Kloosterman, as instructors in Church Polity, were well received and appreciated. The Board is equally appreciative of the assistance and support provided by Rev. Ludwig as instructor in Church Polity. The Board is also appreciative of the churches of Flamborough and Ancaster for permitting their ministers to serve at the Seminary in this capacity.
- 2.5. With the approval of Synod 2010, Dr. J. Van Vliet was duly appointed and installed as professor of Dogmatology and Dr. J. Smith was duly appointed and installed as professor of Old Testament.
- 2.6. At present the department of Diaconiology and Ecclesiology is led solely by Dr. A.J. de Visser. The board is proposing that Synod approve the appointment of a full time fifth professor who would lead the department of Ecclesiology. Dr. A.J. de Visser would lead the department of Diaconiology.
- 2.7. The bond between the Seminary and the Free Reformed Churches of Australia is reflected not only in the student body, but also in the prayers offered by and the significant financial support received from these churches.
- 2.8. The Pastoral Training Program and the method of funding internships continue to work well. The PTP Coordinator, Dr. A.J. de Visser, has good communication with the Funding Committee appointed by Guelph-Emmanuel. There is good cooperation from the churches in finding placements for the students and the students continue to testify that the benefits for them are considerable.
- 2.9. Synod Burlington 2010 decided in Recommendation 4.10 of Article 103, "to renew the mandate given to Board in sections 5.3-5.5 of Article 130 of the *Acts of Synod Smithers 2007*."
  - 2.9.1. Section 5.3 of Article 130 reads as follows: "To mandate the Board of Governors to initiate a full and independent review

that considers all aspects related to the work of the College and that this review and its recommendations be presented to General Synod 2010.”

- 2.9.2. Section 5.4 of Article 130 reads as follows: “To mandate the Board of Governors to consider alternate options for the delivery of programs (for example appointment of part time lecturers) if the need arises.” The Board of Governors notes that CRTS had already or some time been making use of part-time lecturers. If Synod 2007 meant that part-time lecturers should be considered as an alternative to appointing a fifth professor, the Board of Governors would like to reiterate what the Board has said in its report to Synod 2010: “the use of part time lecturers is not desirable as a long term solution.”
- 2.9.3. Section 5.5 of Article 130 reads as follows: “To mandate the Board to initiate a full review of the expectations of faculty. This includes teaching assignments, service to the churches and programs of research.” By means of the meetings with the men from ARTS, by means of the work of the Review and Accreditation Committee and by means of the ATS Self Study Process, consideration has been given to the above points.
- 2.9.4. Section 5.6 of Article 130 reads as follows: “To mandate the Board of Governors to review the appointment procedure for faculty members to ensure transparency within the generally accepted academic appointment process. This review should include the possibility of appointing an academic search committee and a short list of candidates to the churches.” Further, Section 4.11 of Article 103 (*Acts of Synod Burlington 2010*) instructed “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.” Both Recommendation 5.6 of Synod 2007 (*Acts*, Article 130) and Recommendation 4.11 of Synod 2010 (*Acts*, Article 103) reference the new appointment process and Synod 2010 asked the Board to submit this policy to Synod 2013 (see Appendix 5). This policy was implemented with respect to the recommendation made to Synod 2010 regarding an appointment in Old

Testament and was also used with respect to the proposal to Synod 2013 regarding a possible appointment in the Department of Ecclesiology.

- 2.10. Without making references to all of the changes in detail made to Operating Bylaw 12, the Board of Governors can advise that the amendments were required by the following considerations and rationale:
  - 2.10.1. Re: The addition of the defined terms/concepts of adjunct lecturers and adjunct professor. “As the bylaw and Act is now worded, all professors, lecturers, instructors and the like, whether permanent, temporary, or teaching from time to time fell under the strict definition of “Faculty” and this was not intended. Furthermore, there are part- time instructors or lecturers who teach a limited number of specialized lectures (as part of a course that is led by a professor) that one would not wish or intend to be part of the Faculty, nor would they strictly qualify to be part of the Faculty. Specifically, a significant undesired implication of this is that according to our documents all such “faculty members” are actually to be seen as members of the Senate who should have voting rights re: Senate decisions. When we refer to them instead as adjunct lecturers and professors, this problem is eliminated. The prefix “adjunct” is an academically known term for those lecturers or professors who are not part of the Faculty but are there on a clearly defined temporary basis. All such adjuncts are carefully screened, chosen and monitored by the Professors who incorporate them into the curriculum program.”
  - 2.10.2. It was decided that the Vice-Chairman of the Board should be a part of the Executive.
  - 2.10.3. It was decided to include a reference to the Bachelor of Theology program on the recommendation of the Senate.
  - 2.10.4. It was decided to make technical amendments that were necessary to fix errors or which resulted from changes referenced in the three preceding paragraphs.
- 2.11. The Board of Governors recommends and proposes:
  - [1.] To receive this report and all its appendices.
  - [2.] To acknowledge the expiration of the terms of office of Mr. L. Jagt, Rev. W.B. Slomp, Rev. J. VanWoudenberg and Mr. K.J. Veldkamp and to express gratitude for their work.

- [3.] Pursuant to Section 5(2) of the Act and Section 3.04 of Bylaw 12:
  - [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 Bylaws prohibit anyone serving more than three consecutive terms and also keeping in mind the following:
    - [3.1.1.] The following brothers were appointed by Synod 2007 and are eligible for reappointment for one more term: from Regional Synod West, Dr. A.J. Pol; from Regional Synod East, Rev. E. Kampen (appointed by Synod as a substitute but now serving on the Board).
    - [3.1.2.] The following brothers were appointed by Synod 2010 and are eligible for reappointment (for two more terms): from Regional Synod West, Rev. R. Aasman; from Regional Synod East, Rev. J. Ludwig.
  - [3.2.] To reappoint br. B. Hordyk as Governor for a term lasting until the second subsequent general synod;
  - [3.3.] To reappoint brs. A. Bax and H. Kampen as Governors for a term lasting from the date of reappointment until the next subsequent general synod; and
  - [3.4.] To appoint two new non-ministerial Governors for terms lasting from the date of appointment until the third subsequent general synod, with two standby replacement candidates as well. The Board's recommendations for these appointments can be found in a separate letter that also contains the necessary *curriculum vitae*.
- [4.] To express gratitude for the assistance of Rev. DeGelder, Dr. N.H. Kloosterman and Rev. J. Ludwig.
- [5.] To request the churches to continue to remember in their prayers the needs of Mrs. K. Deddens, Dr. And Mrs. J. DeJong, Mrs. J. Faber, Dr. And Mrs. N.H. Gootjes and Prof. J. Geertsema.

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- [6.] To approve the Board appointing a full-time fifth professor for the Department of Ecclesiology, with such professor to be designated as the Professor of Ecclesiology.
  - [7.] If Synod approves such new position and department, to approve the appointment of a new full time professor in Ecclesiology in accordance with the recommendation of the Board contained in a submission separate from this Report.
  - [8.] To approve the reappointment of Dr. G.H. Visscher as Principal for the years 2014-2017.
  - [9.] To confirm that the Board has fully met its mandates as given it by Synod Smithers 2007 and Synod Burlington 2010.
  - [10.] To approve the amendments to Bylaw 12 as described in this report.
  - [11.] To approve all other decisions and actions of the Board and of its committees for the years 2010, 2011 and 2012 until the date of this Report.
  - [12.] To express gratitude for the support from the Free Reformed Churches in Australia.
  - [13.] To consider the audited financial statements and the report of the Auditor for the fiscal periods ending December 31 for each of 2009, 2010 and 2011; to relieve the Treasurer of the Board of all responsibilities for these fiscal periods; to approve the reappointment by the Board of Governors of H. Salomons as Auditor for the fiscal period ending December 31, 2012 and such other and further Auditor(s) as the Board of Governors may appoint for fiscal years following December 31, 2012, in the discretion of the Board of Governors on a year by year basis until the next general synod.
  - [14.] To acknowledge with gratitude the enormous contributions of the Women's Saving Action to the well-being of the College.
- 2.12. The Board of Governors in a supplementary report dated April 26, 2013 provides recommendations for the following non-ministerial brothers to serve on the Board of Governors and specifically on the Finance and Property Committee: Primary: Cornelius H. Medemblik and Frank Oostdyk; Secundus: Alan Schutten and Mark DeBoer. They also provide an update on the Self-Accreditation/Independent Review – Association of Theological Schools. In March of 2013 a five-person visitation team appointed by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) visited the Seminary for three days as part of the review and accreditation process. This visitation team

decided to recommend to the ATS Commission on Accrediting that the Seminary be granted a seven year accreditation, the maximum accreditation period possible before the next review. It is expected that the ATS Commission on Accrediting will review the report of the visiting team and relevant documents in August of 2013 after which we will be informed of the decision of the ATS Commission on Accrediting. The Board of Governors considers the task given to them by Synod Smithers 2007 (as extended and affirmed by Synod Burlington 2010) regarding a full external review, to have been completed to the full extent and in the best manner possible.

- 2.13. Fergus-North feels that the Seminary should continue to ensure that all teaching staff, those full time and those that teach a course or a semester, are not only qualified, but are members of one of the federations with which the CanRC have EF.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. Synod notes with thankfulness that the work at the Theological College could continue without interruption between Synod Burlington 2010 and Synod Carman 2013.
- 3.2. Synod notes with thankfulness that Dr. C. Van Dam has completed many years of faithful service at the Theological College in Hamilton and on August 31, 2011 could enter into retirement and that the faculty of the College has been able to publish various works which indicate a high level of scholarship.
- 3.3. Synod notes with thankfulness the contributions of Rev. J. DeGelder, Dr. N. Kloosterman and Rev. J. Ludwig as instructors of Church Polity, the support of their respective churches for their service at the Seminary and the faithful service of Dr. J. Van Vliet and Dr. J. Smith since their appointments and installation in 2010.
- 3.4. In Article 11 of the *Acts*, Synod has approved the appointment of a full time professor for the Department of Ecclesiology with such professor to be designated as the Professor of Ecclesiology. In giving this approval, Synod also notes with thankfulness the faithful service of Dr. A.J. de Visser as Professor of Ecclesiology from 2004 to 2013.
- 3.5. Synod is grateful to the Free Reformed Churches of Australia for their continued involvement in the College, as well as their financial and prayerful support.
- 3.6. Synod notes with gratitude that the Pastoral Training Program continues to be beneficial for the students and the churches.
- 3.7. The mandate given by Synod Smithers 2007 (*Acts*, Article 130,

Sections 5.3-5.5) and renewed by Synod Burlington 2010, regarding a full external review, is now complete. Synod notes with deep gratitude the considerable work done by the Board of Governors, the Faculty and the Staff of the Theological Seminary with respect to this review.

- 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 Board in its recommendation concerning amendments to Operating Bylaw 12, notes that all adjunct professors are to be carefully screened, chosen and monitored by the professors who incorporated them into the curriculum.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To receive with gratitude the report of the Board of Governors and its appendices (Appendix 1 and 2 – Reports 1 and 2 of Review and Accreditation Committee to Board dated Dec 6, 2010 and March 3, 2011 respectively, Appendix 3 - ATS Standards, Appendix 4 – Self Study Report as submitted November 1, 2012 (without attachments), Appendix 5 – Appointment Policy for New Professors, Appendix 6 – 2010, 2011 & 2012 Annual reports of the Finance and Property Committee, Appendix 7 – Audited Financial Statements for CRTS for the fiscal years ended December 31 for each of 2009, 2010 & 2011, Appendix 8 - Operating Bylaw with amendments);
- 4.2. To acknowledge the many years of faithful service of Dr. C. Van Dam and to express gratitude for his service;
- 4.3. To acknowledge the expiration of the terms of office of Mr. L. Jagt, Rev. W.B. Slomp, Rev. J. VanWoudenberg and Mr. K. J. Veldkamp and to express gratitude for their work;
- 4.4. Pursuant to Section 5(2) of the Act and Section 3.04 of Bylaw 12: 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 bylaws prohibit anyone serving more than three consecutive terms, with the actual appointments to be made under point 9 of the present synod's agenda, to be prepared by the officers of synod;
- 4.5. To express gratitude for the assistance of Rev. DeGelder, Dr. N.H. Kloosterman and Rev. J. Ludwig and the churches at Flamborough and Ancaster for their good cooperation in allowing their ministers to give this assistance;

- 4.6. To request the churches to continue to remember in their prayers the needs of Mrs. K. Deddens, Dr. and Mrs. J. DeJong, Mrs. J. Faber, Dr. and Mrs. N.H. Gootjes and Prof. J. Geertsema;
- 4.7. To reappoint Dr. G.H. Visscher as Principal for the years 2014-17;
- 4.8. To confirm that the Board has fully met its mandates as given it by Synod Smithers 2007 and Synod Burlington 2010;
- 4.9. To approve the amendments to Bylaw 12 as described in the Board's Report.
- 4.10. To approve all other decisions and actions of the Board (and of its committees) for the years 2010, 2011, 2012 until the date of its report;
- 4.11. To express gratitude for the support from the Free Reformed Churches in Australia;
- 4.12. To accept the audited financial statements and the report of the Auditor for the fiscal periods ending December 31 for each of 2009, 2010, 2011, to relieve the Treasurer of the Board of all the responsibilities for these fiscal periods, to approve the reappointment by the Board of Governors of H. Salomons as Auditor for the fiscal period ending December 31, 2012 and such other and further auditor(s) as the Board of Governors may appoint for the fiscal years following December 31, 2012, in the discretion of the Board of Governors on a year by year basis until the next general synod;
- 4.13. To acknowledge with gratitude the enormous contributions of the Women's Saving Action to the well-being of the Seminary;
- 4.14. To express gratitude to Dr. A. J. de Visser for his faithful service as Professor of Ecclesiology from 2004-2013
- 4.15. To answer Fergus-North's concern with Consideration 3.9.

**ADOPTED** with members of the Board of Governors abstaining

**Article 81 – Letter of Hamilton-Cornerstone re: PCA**

Committee 4 presented its second draft with this result:

**1. Material:**

Letter from the church at Hamilton-Cornerstone, with appendix (8.3.3.16)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Hamilton-Cornerstone recommends that Synod Carman 2013 mandate the CCCNA to take up official contact with and conduct an investigation of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA).
- 2.2. Hamilton-Cornerstone notes that the PCA separated from the

Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in 1973. This was “done in opposition to the long developing theological liberalism which denied the deity of Jesus Christ and the inerrancy and authority of Scripture. Additionally, the PCA held to the traditional position on the role of women in church offices.” The PCA has “...determined its purpose to be faithful to the Scriptures, true to the Reformed faith and obedient to the Great Commission ... The PCA has made a firm commitment on the doctrinal standards which had been significant in Presbyterianism since 1645, namely the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms.” Hamilton-Cornerstone appends to its letter a short synopsis of the history of the PCA.

- 2.3. Hamilton-Cornerstone notes that it has come into regular contact with a congregation of the PCA in Hamilton and that our federation has increased contact with the PCA on account of our membership in NAPARC. Hamilton-Cornerstone suggests that the next meeting of NAPARC may be a good occasion to establish contact with the PCA.

### 3. **Consideration:**

While Hamilton-Cornerstone’s suggestion may have merit, it would be appropriate and also helpful for Hamilton (or some other congregation so inclined) to first investigate the PCA further. If after investigation and evaluation of the PCA there is an apparent potential for fruitful ecclesiastical contact, the issue should be brought from the minor assemblies to the broader, where it may be placed on the agenda of the CCCNA for its attention. This course of action would be similar to that taken, e.g., by the church of Aldergrove with respect to the Free Reformed Churches of North America (see *Acts of Synod Fergus* 1998, Article 98, Consideration III.A).

### 4. **Recommendation:**

That Synod decide that the above consideration serves as answer to the letter of Hamilton-Cornerstone.

## **ADOPTED**

### **Article 82 – Closing Devotions and Adjournment**

Br. C. Leyenhorst read Ephesians 2:11-22, had the assembly sing Psalm 133:1-2 and led in prayer. Synod was adjourned.

**Day 7 – Morning Session**  
**Wednesday, May 15, 2013**

**Article 83 – Opening Devotions**

The chairman called the meeting to order and the assembly sang Psalm 116:4, 5. Rev. Bouwman then read 2 Chronicles 15 and led in prayer. All members of synod were present. A special word of welcome was extended to the Grade 12 class of Dufferin Christian School.

**Article 84 – Adoption of the Acts**

Articles 69-82 of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

**Article 85 – Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN) Committee** 3 presented a second draft. After extensive discussion, it was taken back for more refinement.

**Article 86 – Committee for Bible Translation (CBT)**

Committee 5 presented a proposal on the CBT report. After some discussion, it was taken back for refinement. Synod adjourned for lunch and committee work.

**Day 7 – Evening Session**  
**Wednesday, May 15, 2013**

**Article 87 – Reopening**

The chairman reopened synod and the members sang Psalm 62:1, 4. It was noted that all members were present. A welcome was extended to Rev. Maynard Koerner who was present as a fraternal delegate from the RCUS.

**Article 88 – Acceptance Speech of Rev. Dr. Theodore G. Van Raalte**

The chairman welcomed and introduced Rev. Dr. Theodore G. Van Raalte who was able to be present via the Internet (Skype). He noted that only the previous day Rev. Van Raalte had successfully defended his PhD thesis and has thus attained the official title of “Doctor of Philosophy.” On behalf of synod, the chairman extended hearty congratulations to him and thanks to our heavenly Father. Dr. Van Raalte then addressed synod, expressing his deep thankfulness for his appointment and notifying synod of his acceptance thereof. (His address can be found in *Appendix 10*.) The synod chairman responded with fitting remarks. Synod then sang praise to God with the words of Psalm 115:1 after which the chairman led in thanksgiving prayer.

**Article 89 – Gereja-Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia (GGRI)**

Committee 3 presented a proposal. After some discussion it was taken back for further work.

**Article 90 – Committee for Needy Students Fund (CNSF)**

Committee 3 presented its second draft. After a minor change, this was the result:

**1. Material:**

- 1.1. Report from the Committee for Needy Students Fund (8.2.11.a)
- 1.2. CNSF Supplementary Report re: audit of its financial statements (8.2.11.b)
- 1.3. Letters from the churches at Abbotsford (8.3.5.6), London (8.3.5.14), Coaldale (8.3.11.1), Winnipeg-Grace (8.3.11.2), Aldergrove (8.3.11.3), Abbotsford (8.3.11.4), Burlington-Fellowship (8.3.11.5), Carman West (8.3.11.6), Cloverdale (8.3.11.7), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.11.8), Edmonton-Providence (8.3.11.9), Fergus-North (8.3.11.10), Glanbrook (8.3.11.11), Hamilton-Cornerstone (8.3.11.12), Hamilton-Providence (8.3.11.13), Lincoln (8.3.11.14), London (8.3.11.15), Smithers (8.3.11.16), Smithville (8.3.11.17), Spring Creek (8.3.11.18), Willoughby Heights (8.3.11.19), Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.3.11.20), Calgary (8.3.11.21), Edmonton-Immanuel (8.3.11.22), Owen Sound (8.3.11.23), Langley (8.3.11.24) and Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.5.10)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. The Committee reports:
  - 2.1.1. The Council at Grassie appointed a committee consisting of four members of the congregation and one council member as liaison to administer the fund.
  - 2.1.2. The Committee opened an account and by the end of the 2010-2011 academic year, all the classes had transferred their funds to Grassie for the central fund.
  - 2.1.3. The Committee reports that some of the classes had made commitments to some students and wanted to ensure that those commitments would be honored. The Committee agreed to do that.
  - 2.1.4. Support Guidelines and a Financial Assistance Application Spreadsheet were developed by the Committee.

- 2.1.5. Some of the classical committees shared their concern with the central Committee that it “would be too lenient in giving out the money since it was funded through a central assessment.” The Committee has put measures in place to ensure that this does not happen.
- 2.1.6. The Committee has submitted audited financial statements for the period from October 2010-December 2011.
- 2.2. Abbotsford, Hamilton-Providence and Langley suggest that government guidelines for student grants and loans can be used for supporting needy students because they are standardized and consider students in varying circumstances.
- 2.3. Abbotsford and Langley suggest that a minister should be appointed to the committee.
- 2.4. Burlington-Fellowship, Carman West, Cloverdale, Edmonton-Providence, Glanbrook, Hamilton-Cornerstone, Hamilton-Providence, Lincoln, London, Smithers, Smithville, Spring Creek, Winnipeg-Grace, Edmonton-Immanuel, Coaldale, Winnipeg-Redeemer and Aldergrove all insist that the fund should not be a “loan” program and so there should be no repayments. Many of them argue that such a repayment program places an undue burden on churches that call candidates especially because they are often smaller churches. Willoughby Heights requests that the requirement to repay loans be justified.
- 2.5. Burlington-Fellowship, Smithville and Winnipeg-Redeemer all request that support for needy students become the responsibility of classes again.
- 2.6. Cloverdale urges synod to consider the circumstances of those who are assisted by the fund during the course of their study but do not enter the ministry. Fergus-North and Abbotsford suggest that students who do not enter the ministry in the Canadian Reformed Churches or a sister church should be required to repay all moneys.
- 2.7. Cloverdale also challenges the proposed recalculation schedule. It asks why someone who receives \$1,700 per month would pay back the same amount as someone who receives \$3,900 per month. Glanbrook and London both argue that setting a common threshold for repayments is unfair as students may have different needs depending on their family situation.
- 2.8. Burlington-Ebenezer asks that the guidelines for repayment be clarified.

- 2.9. Edmonton-Providence, Glanbrook, London, Smithers, Smithville, Spring Creek, Calgary, Edmonton-Immanuel and Owen Sound suggest that the requirement to repay student loans may become an obstacle to men desiring to go to seminary.
- 2.10. Edmonton-Immanuel requests that churches be assessed every year and that – instead of skipping years – the committee should build a good reserve so that no repayment is necessary.
- 2.11. Several churches argue that the existing procedures of holding students accountable are already sufficient and that there is no evidence that this new repayment requirement is necessary for enhancing this sense of accountability.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. Synod agrees with the Committee that good stewardship is important.
- 3.2. There is an overwhelming consensus in the churches that a loan program is not the best way to achieve our goal of promoting stewardship. Lincoln captures this concern well when it writes, “[The ministry] is an office, not a job. It is a service, not a career or a profession. We are concerned, most of all, that the rationale put forward by the committee for this requirement reflects a misunderstanding of the uniqueness of the work of the ministry. Theological students are not studying with an eye to financial return on their investment, but are investing their lives in the life and well-being of the churches. Their tuition and other costs should be seen in that light.” The guidelines should be re-written in this spirit.
- 3.3. There may be circumstances when a student should be required to make repayment (e.g. withdrawal, dismissal). Since circumstances could vary in such situations, a nuanced approach is necessary which allows the Committee discretion in those cases. Normally, no repayment will be required of anyone who enters the ministry in the Canadian Reformed Churches or a sister church.
- 3.4. Three churches have expressed the desire to revert the funding of needy theological students back to classis, while a significant number of other churches have indicated a desire that the system be fine-tuned. Since the centralized fund was only introduced three years ago, it would be premature to discontinue it already.
- 3.5. Normally it would be good for the churches to be assessed a moderate amount for budgeting purposes every year rather than

widely varying amounts.

- 3.6. It could be helpful if the Committee would consider the government guidelines for student grants and loans as some of the churches suggest.
- 3.7. It is not necessary for a minister to be appointed to the Committee, but a minister could serve the Committee in an advisory capacity. When the appointed church is vacant, the counsellor could serve in the same way.
- 3.8. Synod does not consider it necessary to provide the Committee with an outline of what the Committee is expected to pay for on an item by item basis. The Committee works under the auspices of council and if council is unable to give the necessary assistance, classis can be consulted.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To thank the church at Grassie and the Committee for its work;
- 4.2. To discharge the church at Grassie for the duties completed during the period October 2010 to December 2011;
- 4.3. To re-appoint the church at Grassie as the Committee for Needy Students of Theology to look after extending financial aid to those students of theology who are in need of it;
- 4.4. To mandate this church:
  - 4.4.1. To review and modify the current guidelines and procedures in light of the considerations mentioned above, with a special focus on Considerations 3.2 and 3.3 mentioned above;
  - 4.4.2. To assess the churches annually as per the number of communicant members in the current Yearbook based on the anticipated funding required for the year ahead;
  - 4.4.3. To report annually to each church of the federation on its activities and to report triennially to each general synod on the same.

#### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 91 – Appeal of Winnipeg-Redeemer re: Centralizing Needy Students Fund**

Committee 3 presented its second draft. This was the result:

## 1. Material:

Letter of appeal from Winnipeg-Redeemer re: decision of Synod Burlington 2010 “to establish a Synod-appointed church for funding of theological students, ad CO Article 20” (8.5.10)

## 2. Observations:

- 2.1. Winnipeg-Redeemer claims that the decision of Synod Burlington 2010 to establish a central fund for needy theological students (*Acts*, Article 91) contradicts Article 151 in which the Proposed Joint Church Order (PJCO) was provisionally adopted. Article 4A of the PJCO states: “*The consistory with the deacons shall help [every student] to ensure that his financial needs are met, if necessary with the assistance of the churches of classis*” (emphasis added).
- 2.2. Winnipeg-Redeemer requests synod to rescind Article 91 of the *Acts of Synod Burlington 2010* and endorse Article 151.
- 2.3. Winnipeg-Redeemer suggests that it would be best if responsibility for supporting needy students financially be given back to the home church. It argues that:
  - 2.3.1. This would be more in line with church polity;
  - 2.3.2. The local church is more cognizant of the financial situation of the student and his family than a synod-appointed church;
  - 2.3.3. Appointing one church to oversee all requests could open the door to universal support for all students rather than an individual appraisal of the needs of each student;
  - 2.3.4. It need not be the classis in which the student resides that gives support, but the classis from which the student comes;
  - 2.3.5. Centralization involves a hierarchical tendency.
- 2.4. Winnipeg-Redeemer suggests that a student requesting financial assistance shall present his budget to his home consistory for its review and provide regular updates to his home consistory in regard to his studies and his financial situation. The home church shall be responsible to ensure that the student’s financial needs are met, if necessary with the assistance of the church’s home classis.

## 3. Considerations:

- 3.1. Synod Burlington 2010 adopted the following Consideration 3.4 in Article 57: “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.”

- 3.2. Although Winnipeg-Redeemer makes well-considered arguments for reverting support back to the local church, since the centralized fund was only introduced three years ago it would be premature to contemplate discontinuing it. Furthermore, a proposal to revert the support for needy students back to classis would require some broad-based support which could be obtained by following the route of Article 30 of the Church Order.

#### **4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide to deny the appeal.

### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 92 – Committee for the Official Website (CWEB)**

Committee 1 presented its second draft. With a minor change, this was the result:

##### **1. Material:**

- 1.1. Report of the Committee for the Official Website (8.2.8)
- 1.2. Letter from the church at St. Albert (8.3.8.1)
- 1.3. Confidential letter dated March 7, 2013 from the Committee for the Official Website regarding recommendation for two new appointees (8.1.33)

##### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 gave CWEB the following mandate (*Acts*, Article 73, Recommendation 4.3):
  - [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 and 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 possibilities of setting up their own websites;

- [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.
- 2.2. The Committee's activities included fulfilling the mandate of the last Synod to add a list of the mission churches/preaching posts. It also continued to provide e-mail services to the churches. It investigated the possibility of having all the *Acts* of all the general synods available on the website in searchable format. Moreover, the CWEB wishes to draw Synod's attention to the fact that some of the *Acts* are already available in such a format. Others are available digitally, but need to be reformatted to be searchable. This is feasible but requires approximately \$1250 to do professionally.
  - 2.3. Occasionally the CWEB received inquiries from serious parties and these were responded to, usually by the convener. Sometimes inquiries were directed to other synodically-appointed committees. It also occasionally received feedback from the churches to improve the website. However, little new content has been added to the website.
  - 2.4. From the "Visitors Overview" report provided, the number of total visitors to the website has steadily declined over the past three years.
  - 2.5. Brother H. Sikkema and sister C. Lane have completed their terms on the CWEB. The Committee reminds synod that the terms for new committee members after Synod Smithers 2007 have been established at six years instead of nine years. The brothers W. Bredenhof and J. Koopmans were appointed for a term of nine years by Synod Burlington 2010. The committee requests to reduce the terms of these brothers to six years.
  - 2.6. St. Albert supports the proposed mandate of the CWEB to make the *Acts* of all previous general synods available in searchable format.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. The committee has fulfilled its mandate.
- 3.2. The CWEB has investigated the possibility of having all the *Acts* of general synods available on the website in searchable format. This requires extra funds as proposed in the budget which is appended to their report. It would be good for the churches (and membership) to

have these *Acts* available, but for complete understanding of the *Acts* it is necessary to append the reports of committees to those synods as well (which can be found in the synod archives). Additional funding will be necessary to provide these extra documents.

- 3.3. The CWEB requests synod to appoint two new members for the committee per its confidential letter to Synod regarding appointments.
- 3.4. The brothers W. Bredenhof and J. Koopmans were inadvertently appointed to nine year terms instead of six year terms by Synod Burlington 2010. This should be corrected.
- 3.5. Upgrading of the website would most likely result in increased usage.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To thank the committee for its work;
- 4.2. To approve the budget to a maximum of \$5,000 for the period 2013-2015;
- 4.3. To mandate the committee:
  - 4.3.1. To maintain the existing website and associated technical functions;
  - 4.3.2. 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;
  - 4.3.3. To make synod reports available on the web before the next synod;
  - 4.3.4. To provide web services and email services to the churches and to serve the churches with advice with regard to possibilities of setting up their own websites;
  - 4.3.5. To make all the *Acts* of all past general synods, as well as all committee reports to those synods, available on the website in searchable format;
  - 4.3.6. To investigate the effectiveness of the website and to come with a proposal for improvement and include that in the report to the next general synod;
  - 4.3.7. To serve Synod 2016 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;

- 4.4. To appoint two new members to the committee for six year terms and to thank br. Sikkema and sr. Lane for their work;
- 4.5. To amend the terms of Rev. W. Bredenhof and br. J. Koopmans to six years, ending in 2016.

## ADOPTED

### Article 93 – Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS)

Committee 4 presented its draft. With some changes, this was the result:

#### 1. Material:

- 1.1. Report from the CCCNA re: the RCUS (8.2.3)
- 1.2. Letters from the church of London (8.3.3.23) and Calgary (8.3.3.27)

#### 2. Observations:

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 gave the CCCNA the following mandate in regard to the RCUS (*Acts*, Article 28, Recommendation 4.2):
  - [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.
- 2.2. The CCCNA attended RCUS Synods in 2011 and 2012 and with the RCUS Inter-Church Committee (IRC) at meetings of NAPARC in 2010 and 2011.
- 2.3. The CCCNA discussed with the IRC a variety of matters relating to church life, such as the practice of church visitation, the promotion of biblical sexual morality and theological education. With respect to the latter, Calgary expresses disappointment that CRTS is not among the approved seminaries. The IRC also updated the CCCNA concerning its various ecclesiastical relationships and noted with concern the trends in hermeneutics in the RCN.
- 2.4. The CCCNA reports that it provided an explanation and clarification on the CanRC practice of admitting guests to the Lord's Supper.
- 2.5. The CCCNA reports that it has discussed with the IRC ways in which to enhance our relationship and make it more concrete for the membership. At the RCUS 2012 Synod, three recommendations were

- adopted with a view to fostering closer relations: to have a periodic exchange of articles between the *Reformed Herald* and *Clarion*, to invite CanRC youth to the RCUS summer camps and to consider pulpit exchanges between the RCUS and the CanRC. The CCCNA is in favour of these recommendations and encourages the local churches to do what they can to enhance our contact with the RCUS.
- 2.6. London observes that the CCCNA did not comment further on “matters of concern raised by the churches,” namely Lord’s Supper celebration to shut-ins, fencing of the Lord’s table, confessional membership and Lord’s Day observance (*Acts of Synod Smithers 2007*, Article 107). London grants that although Synod Burlington 2010 was vague in its mandate to the committee, in its considerations synod supported the idea that “working toward a more unified position on these significant matters ought to be one of the goals of being churches in EF” (*Acts of Synod Burlington 2010*, Article 28, Consideration 3.6). In addition, Synod Burlington 2010 noted that “As the CCCNA carries out the CanRC’s responsibility towards the RCUS ... attention can continue to be given to the topics mentioned by the churches when necessary and appropriate” (*Acts*, Article 28, Consideration 3.7). London recommends that Synod 2013 reemphasize the importance of such discussion again in the CCCNA’s mandate.
- 2.7. The CCCNA recommends that Synod decide:
- [1.] To thank the LORD for the way in which the RCUS actively provides a faithful Reformed witness to the gospel;
  - [2.] To mandate the CCCNA to continue the relationship of EF with the RCUS under the adopted rules and to endeavour to meet at least once a year to discuss matters of mutual concern and edification.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. It is evident that the CCCNA has been active in maintaining the relationship with the RCUS. The Committee has had dialogue with the IRC on a number of issues pertaining to church life and ecclesiastical relationships, including the matter of supervision of the Lord’s table.
- 3.2. It would be beneficial for the local CanRC churches to continue to do what they can to enhance contact with the RCUS.
- 3.3. Some matters for discussion with the RCUS (e.g., Lord’s Day observance, fencing of the Lord’s table) are still valid and need to continue to be addressed in the context of Rule 1 of EF.

- 3.4. It should be pointed out that the RCUS does require confessional membership through the making of public vows (profession of faith). Further, Synod Smithers 2007 ruled that there was no need to make special provisions in the Church Order for the administration of the Lord's Supper to shut-ins (*Acts*, Article 96) and as such, the same practice in the RCUS should not be of concern to the CanRC.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To thank the CCCNA for its labours in maintaining our relationship with the RCUS;
- 4.2. To mandate the CCCNA:
- 4.2.1. To thank the Lord for the way in which the RCUS actively provides a faithful Reformed witness to the gospel;
- 4.2.2. To mandate the CCCNA to continue the relationship of EF with the RCUS under the adopted rules and to endeavour to meet regularly to discuss matters of mutual concern and edification, giving attention to the matters of Lord's Day observance and admission to the Lord's table.

### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 94 - Closing Devotions and Adjournment**

Br. C.H. Medemblik read 2 Timothy 4:1-8, had the assembly sing Psalm 68:1, 12 and led in prayer. Synod was adjourned.

### **Day 8 — Morning Session Thursday, May 16, 2013**

#### **Article 95 – Opening Devotions**

The chairman called the meeting to order and the assembly sang Psalm 71:3, 5. Rev. Bouwman then read 2 Chronicles 16 and led in prayer. All members of synod were present. A word of welcome was extended to Rev. Rich Anjema of the URCNA who was present as a fraternal delegate.

#### **Article 96 – Adoption of the Acts**

Articles 83-94 of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

## Article 97 – Committee for Bible Translation (CBT)

Committee 5 presented its second draft. With some minor changes, this was the result:

### 1. Material:

- 1.1. Report from the Committee for Bible Translation (8.2.7)
- 1.2. Letters regarding the report from the churches at Langley (8.3.7.1), Aldergrove, (8.3.7.2) Abbotsford (8.3.7.3), Attercliffe (8.3.7.4), Brampton (8.3.7.5), Burlington-Fellowship (8.3.7.6), Carman West (8.3.7.7), Cloverdale (8.3.7.8), Fergus-North (8.3.7.9) and Hamilton-Cornerstone (8.3.7.10)

### 2. Observations:

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 (*Acts*, Article 72) instructed the Committee for Bible Translation as follows (*Acts*, Article 72, Recommendation 4.2):
  - [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.] To investigate the possibility and feasibility of publishing an ecclesiastically-produced and owned Bible translation with the cooperation of the English-speaking churches which are members of NAPARC and/or ICRC.
- 2.2. In April 2011, the CBT issued a press release to the churches, highlighting that the NIV publisher was replacing all 1984-based products with 2011-based products, while calling both simply the “NIV.” Herewith the CBT sought to caution the churches that the new Bibles they were buying might not be the edition approved for use in the churches.
- 2.3. The CBT finds that in some texts of the NIV2011, the translation has been improved so as to render the original more accurately; while in other passages the translation now renders the original less accurately.
- 2.4. The CBT shows that in the 2011 edition of the NIV, words and phrases that used to be translated in masculine language (e.g. “brothers,” “man,” the singular pronoun “he” to refer to mankind – all as literal

translation of the original) now regularly appear in gender-inclusive forms as “brothers and sisters,” “people,” and “they”.

- 2.5. In its conclusion to the interim report, the CBT advises the churches that though much was found in the 2011 edition that was “acceptable,” they yet could not recommend this edition to the churches because of how it translated passages relating to the special offices in the church. “Numerically speaking these passages are few, yet we recognize that they have a weighty effect on the life of the church in practical terms.” The CBT is concerned that if this new translation was approved for use in the churches, “in time there could result among the membership a detrimental confusion in the view of the offices.”
- 2.6. The CBT reminds the churches that “the reality of the 1984 text’s commercial unavailability has forced us into our present situation of either having to recommend this new translation, or to reiterate a previous CBT recommendation. Unable to do the former, we are grateful that there are three alternatives,” and the CBT proceeds to list the NASB, NKJV and the ESV, “all previously approved by general synods.”
- 2.7. In its final report issued in August 2012, the CBT comments on the remaining parts of its mandate, as follows:
  - 2.7.1. The publisher holding the rights to the 1984 NIV will not grant printing rights for this edition, thus closing the option of the Canadian Reformed Churches reprinting the 1984 NIV.
  - 2.7.2. After summarizing the strengths and weaknesses of the NASB, NKJV and the ESV, the CBT concludes that “no Bible translation is without some shortcomings and areas of concern.” “Nevertheless, we are persuaded that on balance, the ESV is the translation that is to be recommended to the churches.” This translation is “the most up- to-date translation of the three,” “is not ‘closed’ but can be revised.” The CBT also states that, “though the ESV is not as readable as the 1984 NIV, it is certainly the most readable of the three” other currently approved translations (i.e., ESV, NKJV, NASB) and has “found a wide degree of acceptance in our sister churches and churches of NAPARC.”
  - 2.7.3. The CBT advises against pursuing our own ecclesiastically-produced and owned Bible translation on grounds that it

would “isolate us from the rest of the Christian community” and would require “a vast amount of work and effort” that can better be employed in other projects. Further, the committee “does not consider an ecclesiastical translation to be necessary because there are available translations which are faithful and can serve the churches well.” The idea of an ecclesiastically-produced translation was put to NAPARC, but “there was no interest expressed in this idea by any of the member churches.”

2.8. In conclusion, the CBT recommends:

- [1.] That the churches use the ESV in place of the 1984 NIV,
- [2.] That Synod Carman 2013 mandate the CBT to
  - [2.1.] Solicit, receive and evaluate comments from the churches on the ESV;
  - [2.2.] Submit worthy translation changes to the ESV editorial committee;
  - [2.3.] Prepare and distribute a report to the churches in advance of the next synod.

2.9. A number of churches have responded to the CBT report:

- 2.9.1. The churches at Abbotsford, Attercliffe, Carman West, Fergus-North and Langley endorse the committee’s recommendation for the ESV. Attercliffe adds that they wish synod to recommend that the churches “all use the same translation.” Abbotsford and Carman West also request that the ESV be the recommended translation for the Scripture references in the *Book of Praise*.
- 2.9.2. The church at Abbotsford raises the possibility of developing our own translation for “specific Scripture passages for liturgical and confessional use,” e.g., the Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, the salutation, votum and blessing.
- 2.9.3. The church at Burlington-Fellowship requests that synod not “require” the use of the ESV in the churches, but “to leave this as an option for the churches and to allow the 2011 NIV to be an option as well.”
- 2.9.4. The churches at Aldergrove, Brampton, Cloverdale and Hamilton- Cornerstone present arguments against the recommendations of the CBT. Their arguments are compiled below. These churches request that the CBT be mandated to study more close the primary texts impacting on the issue of office, the readability of the ESV in comparison to the NIV

2011, the long term availability of the ESV and meanwhile give freedom to let the churches “test” (Aldergrove) or even “use” (Cloverdale) the NIV 2011. At the same time the CBT could be mandated to take up contact with the CBTNIV about the translation of the passages dealing with the offices.

- 2.10. As weaknesses perceived in the CBT report, the churches (2.9.4 above) mention the following:
- 2.10.1. The ESV is basically a revision of the RSV (perhaps 6%), the very translation Synod Abbotsford 1995 judged to be inferior to the NIV.
  - 2.10.2. The prose section of the *Book of Praise* has recently been revised in order to be in line with the 1984 NIV. Going forward with the NIV (2011) would require minimal changes to the prose text, while moving to the ESV would require much greater changes – and that would be a shame for the work recently done.
  - 2.10.3. All translations previously recommended for use in the churches also had weaknesses, but these weaknesses were not seen as insurmountable because corrections could be made from the pulpit, in the Catechism room and the like.
  - 2.10.4. The churches mentioned that the five passages judged to be problematic (namely Romans 16:1, 2; Philippians 1:14; 1 Timothy 2:12; 2 Timothy 2:2 and James 3:1) are, in proportion to the good, much too few to disqualify this edition.
  - 2.10.5. The CBT report lacks a comprehensive examination of the overall suitability and readability of the ESV. This is seen as important because the churches need (especially for youth and outreach) a Bible translation that truly sounds like 21st century English.
  - 2.10.6. The churches refer with appreciation to an article by Dr. Mark Strauss wherein he argues that the ESV is full of archaisms, awkward language, obscure idioms, etc.
  - 2.10.7. It is not helpful to change the recommended Bible translation too often.
  - 2.10.8. The track record of the CBTNIV suggests that this committee is open to receiving suggestions for improving the NIV2011.
  - 2.10.9. The CBTNIV has pointed out that 95% of the NIV2011 is identical with the NIV1984.

**3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. The CBT served Synod Smithers 2007 with a “preliminary investigation” of the ESV and reported that the ESV is “a considerable improvement” over the RSV. At the same time, the CBT admitted that, “A full investigation may reveal further strengths and also weaknesses of this translation” (*Acts of Synod Smithers 2007*, Article 134, Observation 2.9). Because there was no pressing need to move away from the NIV1984, Synod Smithers 2007 continued to recommend the NIV1984 while leaving the use of the ESV in the freedom of the churches (as had previously been done with the NKJV and the NASB). The ESV has thus already been formally recognized as a faithful translation. In many of our English-speaking sister churches, the ESV has been well-received.
- 3.2. The NIV1984 has served the churches well since first recommended by Synod Abbotsford 1995. Regrettably, however, the publishers will no longer make this edition available and so the churches are compelled to make a choice for a new recommended translation. (Historically, synod has only made a single translation the recommended one while a few others have been approved for the churches to use should they so desire.) The churches (as well as households and schools within our community) are looking for guidance and leadership on this pressing issue. While there is no need to remove the NIV1984 from the list of approved translations for use within the churches (so that churches remain free to continue to use it according to local availability and desire), synod needs to come with a new recommended translation.
- 3.3. Regarding the NIV2011, the CBT draws attention to five texts that they feel could eventually impact the churches’ view of women in office. The committee does not see a problem with other changes reflecting gender-neutral language (e.g., “brothers” has in some instances become, “brothers and sisters”; “man” has in some instances become, “people”; the masculine singular pronoun, “he” has in some instances become, “they”). It would be helpful to investigate whether anything is lost from God’s revelation in the gender-neutral translation philosophy of the NIV2011.
- 3.4. The CBT notes that the ESV also uses some gender-neutral language in its translation, but mentions that the translation policy of the ESV strives to do justice to the gender implied in the original.
- 3.5. Synod Lincoln 1992 observed that the then-current report of the CBT

flagged concerns about gender issues concerning the NRSV. The CBT stated, "...it is unacceptable for use in the Canadian Reformed Churches because its preoccupation with the gender issue has resulted in a translation that changes the intent of the text, hinders an understanding of prophecy and introduces new teachings" (*Acts of Synod Lincoln 1992*, Article 35, II.). It would be worthwhile for the present CBT to compare the CBT findings of 1992 on this issue with the translation philosophy and practice of both the NIV2011 and ESV to see whether any of those earlier concerns may hold for either or both of them.

- 3.6. In its report to synod, the CBT only made comments on the readability of the ESV in passing and a number of churches have expressed concern about this matter and how it may affect reception among church members. This is worthy of further attention by the CBT.
- 3.7. Given that a Canadian Reformed translation of the Bible appears out of the question, the church at Abbotsford suggests making our own translation of specific parts of Scripture that have a direct bearing on our *Book of Praise* or our liturgy, e.g., the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the votum, etc. None of those passages, however, have been questionably translated in the NIV or the ESV and so a unique Canadian Reformed translation of these passages has no real grounds.
- 3.8. The argument that all the labour recently done to change the *Book of Praise* would be lost if we would now recommend the ESV to the churches, is exaggerated. The number of literal Bible quotations in the prose section of the *Book of Praise* is actually quite limited.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To thank the CBT for its work;
- 4.2. To refrain at this time from recommending the NIV2011 for use or testing in the churches;
- 4.3. To recommend to the churches the use of the ESV and leave it in the freedom of the churches to use the NKJV, NASB or the NIV1984;
- 4.4. To mandate the CBT as follows:
  - 4.4.1. To provide a thorough study of the effects of gender-inclusive translation philosophy in the NIV2011 and the ESV, comparing also the earlier findings on this subject

- by the CBT on the NRSV in 1992, to ascertain whether anything is lost from God's revelation in the use of this philosophy and how it has affected each translation;
- 4.4.2. To provide a thorough study of the ESV with special attention to its readability and to what degree the concerns expressed by previous iterations of the CBT about the RSV remain a concern in relation to the ESV;
  - 4.4.3. To solicit, receive and evaluate comments from the churches on the ESV, to submit worthy translation changes to the ESV editorial committee and monitor the response;
  - 4.4.4. To send the committee's critical remarks and suggestions for improvement on the five texts pertaining to women in office (see Observation 2.10.4) to the CBTNIV and monitor the response;
  - 4.4.5. To serve the next general synod with a report sent to the churches at least six months prior to the next general synod.

## ADOPTED

### Article 98 – Letter from Kerwood re: Ecclesiastical Fellowship Categories

Committee 4 presented a proposal. After some discussion, it was taken back for further work.

### Article 99 – Appeals re: General Synod Guidelines

Committee 2 presented its second draft with this result:

#### 1. Material:

Letters of appeal from the churches at Burlington-Ebenezer (8.1.9), Dunnville (8.5.7), Grand Valley (8.5.20) and Orangeville (8.5.33)

#### 2. Observations:

- 2.1. Article 30 of the Church Order stipulates that “a new matter which has not previously been presented to that major assembly may be put on the agenda only when the minor assembly has dealt with it.”
- 2.2. Synod Burlington 2010 decided to add the following new guideline to the Guidelines for 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” (*Acts*, Article 62, Recommendation 4.2, now General Synod Guideline 1.E)

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- 2.3. The four churches assert that this new guideline contravenes Article 30 CO, since the guideline allows churches to place matters for the churches in common on the agenda of general synod without having the minor assemblies (classis and regional synod) filtering these matters first.
- 2.4. The church at Grand Valley also states that Synod Burlington 2010 erred and was “not fair to the churches” when synod wrote “its own rules... in order to deal with a matter on its agenda.”
- 2.5. The church at Orangeville proposes an amended guideline to try to bring synod Guideline 1.E more into harmony with Article 30 CO. It proposes that only *returning* matters go directly to synod, while *new* matters go via the minor assemblies. Its proposal is as follows:  
[1.E.] For *any* matters of the churches in common, *dealt with at a previous general synod*, individual churches may address proposals or other significant submissions directly to general synod... *All other matters of the churches in common, not dealt with at a previous synod, may be put on the general synod’s agenda only when the minor assembly has dealt with it.*
- 2.6. Since Article 30 CO was changed in 1983, there has been a great degree of inconsistency in terms of understanding and application among the churches and subsequently, at various synods.
- 2.7. Article 30 CO has been applied in essentially two ways at the various general synods (1974, 1977, 1992, 1995, 1998, 2007, etc.). *Position A*: Consistory may make a submission directly to synod if the matter is one of significance for the churches in common. *Position B*: Consistory must make all its submissions on matters for the churches in common via all the ecclesiastical assemblies (classis, etc.). Exceptions have been submissions that respond to various synodical committee reports.
- 2.8. Synod Burlington 2010 outlined the benefits of both positions as follows:
- 2.8.1 “The benefit of the older system [Position A] 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 healthy in our system of check and balances...”;
- 2.8.2 “The benefit of the newer system [Position B] is that it does not give undue influence to any one church who [*sic*] could

potentially place a proposal on the agenda of a general synod without the other churches having... interacted with it.”

- 2.9 Synod Burlington 2010 adopted the new Guideline (1.E) to, in its words, “blend the two approaches in a clear direction from synod [to] serve to benefit the churches....”

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. Burlington-Ebenezer is correct when it maintains that “Article 30 CO stipulates that any new matter, even if it is a matter ‘which belongs to its churches in common’ needs to follow the route of consistory-classis-regional synod-general synod.” Burlington-Ebenezer correctly points to and highlights the word “new” in Article 30 CO, whereas Synod Guideline 1.E essentially undermines this stipulation by making provision for “all” matters. As a result, Burlington-Ebenezer (“not in step”) and Dunnville (“too broad”) are both correct in claiming that Guideline 1.E is not consistent with Article 30 CO.
- 3.2. Grand Valley is correct in its claim that having matters go through minor assemblies has worked well and will eliminate unnecessary matters before synod. Grand Valley, however, is not justified in its claim that Synod Burlington 2010 erred in implementing a new guideline. Synod was merely responding to the church at Kerwood, clarifying Article 30 CO for the benefit of the churches. It is worth noting that synod has the right to suspend, amend, revise, or abrogate its own guidelines by majority vote (Guideline 4 J.).
- 3.3. Orangeville’s proposed modification to Guideline 1.E would make this guideline redundant, as it essentially re-states what is already implied in Article 30 CO.
- 3.4. Synod 2010 attempted to clarify Article 30 CO by enacting Guideline 1.E for the benefit of the churches, but in fact it rendered the last paragraph of this article ineffective.

### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. That Synod Burlington 2010 erred in its decision to implement Guideline 1.E;
- 4.2. To remove Guideline 1.E from the Guidelines for Synod.

**ADOPTED**

**Article 100 – Appeal of Attercliffe re: NAPARC**

Committee 4 presented a proposal. After some discussion, it was taken back for further work.

**Article 101 – *Book of Praise* – Forms**

Committee 2 presented a proposal. After some discussion and a few minor changes, this was the result:

**1. Material:**

- 1.1. Report from the SCBP, Section 9.0 (8.2.4)
- 1.2. Letters from the churches: Abbotsford (8.3.4.6), Cloverdale (8.3.4.14), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.4.15) and Grassie (8.3.4.21)

**2. Observations:****2.1. *Forms of Subscription:***

- 2.1.1. The SCBP submits (9.1) two corrections for the forms in the present APV:
  - [1.] In the *Form for use in the local congregation*: the words “and the classis” need to be removed from the third paragraph of the form.
  - [2.] In the *Form for use at classis meetings*: the words “consistory and the” need to be removed from the third paragraph of the form.

The SCBP considers that, due to an editing oversight, the forms presently do not reflect the approved versions adopted by Synod Burlington 2010.

- 2.1.2. The church at Abbotsford states that the SCBP “suggests changes to the Forms for Subscription” and Abbotsford “cannot agree.” Abbotsford advises that both forms be amended as follows: “We will first submit this to the church via her assemblies for judgment” (with reference to Article 29 of the Church Order where the assemblies are listed). Abbotsford argues that the SCBP’s proposal “causes confusion, as a minister signs both forms and is then bound to two different procedures” when questions arise concerning his doctrinal convictions.
- 2.1.3. The church at Cloverdale proposes that “a note should be added ... that these are the forms of subscription in common use.” The church at Cloverdale argues that
  - [1.] “the exact wording of the forms of subscription, until recently, has never been prescribed or codified”

[2.] “If the churches have agreed to a prescribed set of forms for subscription, which some would argue is now the case, on the basis of recent synod decisions, we do not view this as progress; especially not since we strive as churches against being anti-hierarchical and anti-synodocratic.”

2.2. *Forms for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper:*

2.2.1. In the section “Assurance:”

2.2.1.1. The SCBP proposes (9.2) and recommends (9.2.1) to delete the word “saying” in “He declared saying...” This avoids doubling the verb and takes care of some “lingering RSV language.” The church at Burlington-Ebenezer supports this proposal.

2.2.1.2. The church at Burlington-Ebenezer goes further to request Synod Carman 2013 to direct the SCBP to change the statement of Assurance from “he declared” to “he taught us to understand that”; and to change the wording of the statement of Assurance to the third person. The church at Burlington-Ebenezer submits a re- wording for Synod’s consideration. The church argues that

2.2.1.2.1. The way it is written presently (in the first person singular, introduced by “he declared”) makes this section read as a direct quote from our Lord recorded in Scripture; Burlington-Ebenezer considers “it wrong to make something appear to have been spoken by the Lord that He did not actually say.”

2.2.1.2.2 Our form is a translation of the form of our Dutch sister churches who have recognized the problem and have made the change in the wording in their form, some time ago.

2.2.1.2.3 Burlington-Ebenezer submits the following rewording for consideration: He taught us to understand that as often as we eat this bread and drink from this cup, we are reminded and assured of His hearty love and faithfulness toward us. It is a sure pledge that He has given His body and shed His blood for us; otherwise we would have *suffered eternal death. He nourishes and refreshes our hungry and thirsty souls with His crucified body and shed blood to everlasting life as certainly as this bread is broken*

*before our eyes and this cup* is given to us and we eat and drink in remembrance of Him.

2.2.2. *Abbreviated Form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper*

2.2.2.1. The SCBP recommends (9.2 and 9.2.1) that the words in the subtitle of this form be deleted, that is, "For the Second Service." The SCBP argues:

2.2.2.1.1. One of the churches contacted the SCBP with this request and the committee concluded that the request deserved merit.

2.2.2.1.2. In today's practice, few, if any, churches celebrate the Lord's Supper in both services.

2.2.2.1.3. The addition of the words "For the second service" never was a SCBP proposal, nor did it come as a proposal from one of the churches. It was added via a motion from the floor at Synod Smithville 1980 (*Acts*, Article 136) as "for the afternoon service"; Synod Cloverdale 1983 changed this to "for the second service" (*Acts*, Article 145).

2.2.2.2. The church at Burlington-Ebenezer does not agree with this proposal of the SCBP and cites the consideration of Synod Smithville 1980 when that synod decided to add the subtitle: "...the Abbreviated Form is not meant as a replacement of the original Form, rather as a help to be used in the p.m. service when also a sermon is delivered" [Consideration 4, Article 136]. Burlington-Ebenezer notes that "If Synod decides to eliminate the subtitle from the Abbreviated Form, it would become a replacement Form and that is not in keeping with the original purpose of this Form." Burlington-Ebenezer asks Synod Carman 2013 to decide either to retain the subtitle "For the Second Service" or delete the Abbreviated Form altogether if it is not needed in the churches for a second service.

2.2.2.3. The SCBP recommends (9.2.1) that the heading "Profession of Faith" be added after the "Prayer" and before the "Exhortation" in the Abbreviated Form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper.

2.3. *Form for the Solemnization of Marriage:*

2.3.1. The SCBP recommends (9.3 and 9.3.1) a change in the prayer of the marriage form in the second paragraph of the prayer,

“We pray you, grant them your Holy Spirit” to be changed to, “We pray that you will grant them your Holy Spirit...” The SCBP argues this is to eliminate some awkwardness left over from the former “We pray thee.”

- 2.3.2. The church at Cloverdale proposes that in the vow of the bridegroom concerning his bride, the word “maintain” be changed to “support”, “provide for”, or “care for” (Ephesians 5:29). Cloverdale argues that although the word “maintain” can mean “to provide with livelihood, to furnish with means of subsistence,” this is the ninth definition of twelve in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Cloverdale observes, “most of us don’t use that word, or understand it, that way”; and— to illustrate the more common usage—Cloverdale suggests “the Christian husband ‘maintains’ his vehicle, not his wife.”

2.4. *Orders of Worship:*

- 2.4.1. The church at Grassie states that in the Orders of Worship (p.584-5 of the APV *Book of Praise*), the “afternoon services still state that the Apostles’ Creed may be sung in Hymn 1A or 1B. This should be changed to Hymn 1 or 2.”

**3. Considerations:**

3.1. *Forms of Subscription:*

- 3.1.1. The correction presented to Synod Carman 2013 by the SCBP reflects what Synod Burlington 2010 decided (*Acts*, Article 65) to be the correct formulation of the Forms of Subscription. The SCBP is merely correcting its own error. Therefore the church at Abbotsford is incorrect when it states that this is a suggested change coming from the SCBP. If the church at Abbotsford “cannot agree” with what the SCBP presents, Abbotsford’s disagreement is actually with Synod Burlington 2010. Nonetheless, Abbotsford’s proposed alternative has merit: “We will first submit this to the church via her assemblies for judgment.” This streamlines the process required of ministers whose doctrinal convictions are under scrutiny. Moreover, it is hardly conceivable that a consistory would not be involved in the process when a minister’s doctrinal convictions are under scrutiny at the classis level. The proposal of Abbotsford allows for immediate involvement of the consistory even if the scrutiny is initiated at the classis level.

3.1.2. The proposal of the church at Cloverdale that a note should be added to the forms to the effect that these are the Forms of Subscription “in common use” in the churches does not take into account the decision of previous synods. When a church asked Synod Chatham 2004 “whether it is the intent of these forms to be compulsory,” Synod considered, “When Synod adopts a Form of Subscription it is to be considered binding upon the churches” (*Acts*, Article 115, Consideration 4.2.2.3). When this consideration of Synod Chatham 2004 was challenged by another church to Synod Smithers 2007, Synod (pointing to *Acts of Synod Neerlandia 2001*, Article 72) stated in its consideration: “Since the churches via regional synods had expressed a desire for such standardization, all the churches should use the standardized form. The word ‘binding’ used by Synod Chatham indeed indicates that a standardized form shall be used by all the churches” (*Acts of Synod Smithers 2007*, Article 67, Consideration 4.2).

3.2. *Forms for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper:*

3.2.1. While the proposal of the SCBP to change “He declared saying ...” to “He declared ...” is an acceptable change, the broader change proposed by the church at Burlington-Ebenezer (“He taught us to understand that ...” and then change the following section of the form from the first person to the third person) is a better direction. Burlington-Ebenezer is correct: when written in the first person, this section of the form gives the impression that this is a word which the Lord spoke directly, which it is not. With this change the content (conveying the assurance we receive from the Lord) would not be lost, while the form gains a more accurate presentation in this section. The SCBP should be instructed to make a change and take into consideration the rewording suggested by Burlington-Ebenezer.

3.2.2. The proposal of the SCBP to remove the parenthetical “For the Second Service” at the head of the Abbreviated Form for the Celebration of the Lord’s Supper does not take into consideration the reasoning of Synod Smithville 1980. Burlington-Ebenezer correctly points out that removing the subtitle “For the Second Service” would present the Abbreviated Form as an alternative or replacement of the

original form; the Abbreviated Form is not meant to be such, according to Synod Smithville 1980. If the SCBP wishes to pursue this further and is not convinced by this line of reasoning, it needs to interact with the decision of Synod Smithville 1980 (or a church should take up the way of appealing the decision of that Synod).

- 3.2.3. The recommendation of the SCBP to add a heading/section “Profession of Faith” in the Abbreviated Form for the Celebration of the Lord’s Supper does not come with any rationale.

3.3. *Form for the Solemnization of Marriage:*

- 3.3.1. The recommendation of the SCBP regarding the awkward wording “We pray you” in the prayer of the Form for the Solemnization of Marriage is valid. The recommendation to change this to “We pray that you will grant them your Holy Spirit...” is the sensible solution.

- 3.3.2. The church at Cloverdale makes a good point regarding the word “maintain” in the vow of the bridegroom regarding his bride. The word “maintain” as it is generally understood today is awkward in this place in the form. The SCBP should be instructed to consider a good alternative as suggested by Cloverdale: “support,” “provide for,” “care for” or something similar in line with a synod-approved translation of Scripture (Ephesians 5:29).

3.4. *Orders of Worship:*

- 3.4.1. It is not evident what discrepancy the church at Grassie is referring to in the Orders of Worship (references to Hymn 1A or 1B instead of Hymn 1 and 2). Perhaps this is something that was an error in earlier printings of the APV *Book of Praise*. If so, then this has since been corrected.

**4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

4.1. *Re: Forms of Subscription:*

- 4.1.1. To approve the recommendation of the church at Abbotsford regarding the wording of both Forms of Subscription and to instruct the SCBP to include the new wording;
- 4.1.2. Not to adopt the proposal of the church at Cloverdale regarding a note with the Forms of Subscription;

4.2. *Re: Forms for the Celebration of the Lord’s Supper:*

- 4.2.1. To approve the proposal of the church at Burlington-Ebenezer regarding the rewording of a part of the Assurance section of the form and to instruct the SCBP to make the necessary changes interacting with the suggestion of Burlington-Ebenezer (2.2.1.2.3);
- 4.2.2. Not to adopt the recommendation of the SCBP to remove the words “For the Second Service” from the Abbreviated Form;
- 4.2.3. Not to adopt the recommendation of the SCBP to add a heading/ section “Profession of Faith” to the Abbreviated Form;
- 4.3. *Re: Form for the Solemnization of Marriage:*
  - 4.3.1. To adopt the recommendation of the SCBP to reword the relevant line in the prayer of the form to “We pray that you will grant them....”;
  - 4.3.2. To approve the proposal of the church at Cloverdale to change the word “maintain” in the vow of the bridegroom regarding his bride and to instruct the SCBP to make the necessary change as per the suggestion of Cloverdale.
- 4.4. *Re: Orders of Worship:*
  - 4.4.1. To send consideration 3.4 to the church at Grassie.

## ADOPTED

### Article 102 – *Book of Praise* – Contract

#### 1. Material:

Report from the SCBP, Section 2.1 (8.2.4)

#### 2. Observation:

The SCBP was given approval by Synod Burlington 2010 (Article 113) to negotiate the continuation of the contract with Premier Printing for an additional five years with an expiry date of Feb 28, 2017.

#### 3. Consideration:

The SCBP informs Synod Carman 2013 that this contract was renewed in 2012 in accordance with Synod’s instructions. The SCBP is not seeking another mandate to renew the contract at this time.

#### 4. Recommendation:

That Synod decide not to provide instructions to renew the contract since the current contract will still be in force at the next General Synod 2016.

## ADOPTED

**Article 103 – *Book of Praise* – Hymn Index with Scripture References****1. Material:**

Report from the SCBP, Section 1.10, 1.10.1 (8.2.4)

**2. Observation:**

The SCBP informs Synod Carman 2013 that it has compiled a Scripture index for the hymns as instructed by Synod Burlington 2010 (Article 164) and requests that it be included in the proposed *Book of Praise* for presentation to this Synod.

**3. Consideration:**

This index is helpful in that it enables one to see at a glance the Scripture passages upon which various hymns are based.

**4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide to approve this index for publication in the definitive edition of the *Book of Praise*.

**ADOPTED****Article 104 – Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (SCBP) – Corporate Status****1. Material:**

Report from the SCBP, Section 5.0, 5.1 (8.2.4)

**2. Observation:**

The SCBP has maintained its status as a corporation. All the necessary documents for this purpose have been kept up to date, including 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 SCBP correctly requests Synod Carman 2013 to continue the mandate to maintain its corporate status for the purpose of protecting the interests of the Canadian Reformed Churches in all matters concerning the *Book of Praise*.

**4. Recommendation:**

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

**ADOPTED**

**Article 105 – Book of Praise – Abbotsford Letter re: Article 55 CO**

Committee 2 presented a proposal. With an addition, this was the result:

**1. Material:**

Letter from the church at Abbotsford (8.3.4.6)

**2. Observations:**

2.1. Abbotsford asks Synod Carman 2013 to rule that:

2.1.1. While the churches are bound to the text of the psalms and hymns of the *Book of Praise* (Article 55 CO), they are free to use melodies other than those in the *Book of Praise*;

2.1.2. Churches have the freedom to make adjustments to exactly how a particular melody should be sung.

**3. Considerations:**

3.1. Article 55 of the Church Order does not distinguish between the text of the Psalms and Hymns and their melodies. When it speaks of the “metrical Psalms” and “the hymns approved by general synod,” it is referring to the songs in their totality: lyrics and melodies.

3.2. Synod Winnipeg 1989 considered that, “It is not within the province of General Synod to decide on technical matters concerning musical notations...” (*Acts*, Article 146, Consideration C.2).

**4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide to send the above considerations to Abbotsford as its reply.

**ADOPTED****Article 106 – Book of Praise – Copyright and Royalty Matters**

Committee 2 presented a proposal. After some discussion, it was taken back for refinement. Synod was adjourned for committee work.

**Day 8 – Evening Session**

**Thursday, May 16, 2013**

**Article 107 – Reopening of Synod and Expression of Thanks to Br. Bill Vandersluis**

The chairman reopened synod and the members sang Psalm 97:1, 5. It was noted that all members were present, including the *primi* delegate Rev. R.J.

Eikelboom who had recently returned following his temporary absence. Dr. A.J. Pol was thanked for his role in “filling in” for Rev. Eikelboom. The chairman noted that br. Bill Vandersluis of the Carman East congregation had distributed to each synod member copies of several photographs pertaining to the first two synods of our ederation: Synod Homewood-Carman 1954 and Synod Homewood-Carman 1958. These were photos of the members of those two assemblies and the exterior of the building in which synod was held (i.e., The Shamrock Tea Gardens). These photos were made the more special when just the previous day the members of Synod Carman 2013 could be photographed in that same location (now operated as The Breakaway) some 55 years since the last synod in this area. Synod expressed its thankfulness to br. Bill Vandersluis for his thoughtful gift.

### **Article 108 – Address of Fraternal Delegate (RCUS)**

Rev. Holtvlüwer introduced Rev. Maynard Koerner of the RCUS who then addressed synod as a fraternal delegate. (His speech can be found in *Appendix II.*) Rev. Holtvlüwer responded with fitting words.

### **Article 109 – Appeal of Attercliffe re: NAPARC**

Committee 4 presented its second draft and this was the result:

#### **1. Material:**

Letter of appeal from the church at Attercliffe against decision to join NAPARC (8.5.23)

#### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Attercliffe appeals the decision of Synod Smithers 2007 (*Acts*, Article 140) and Burlington 2010 (*Acts*, Article 52) to join and maintain membership in NAPARC and appeals the denial of Attercliffe’s appeal to Synod Burlington 2010 (*Acts*, Article 43) against the same decision of Synod Smithers.
- 2.2. Attercliffe claims that Synod Burlington 2010 failed to interact substantively with any of the points in Attercliffe’s appeal and injected “the unwarranted assumption that the ‘Golden Rule Comity Agreement’ and the ‘Agreement on Transfer of Members and Congregations’ were new matters.
- 2.3. Attercliffe suggests that NAPARC membership makes it difficult for the CanRC to refuse members from churches that have not been recognized as true and faithful and that the CCCNA should be given the mandate “to deal with the problem of the differing ecclesiastical positions and the unscriptural doctrine of the ‘pluriformity of the church.’”

- 2.4. While Synod Burlington 2010 stated that the ‘Golden Rule Comity Agreement’ and the ‘Agreement on Transfer of Members and Congregations’ were new matters, Attercliffe contends that they were available to Synod Smithers 2007, but were overlooked by the CCCNA, as they formed part of a publicly accepted membership agreement.
- 2.5. Attercliffe asks that Synod Carman 2013 acknowledge that Synod Smithers 2007 and Synod Burlington 2010 erred in not considering all the facts and implications of having a membership in NAPARC with churches which we have not recognized as true and faithful and request that Synod Carman 2013 rescind the decision of Synod Smithers to join NAPARC and to withdraw from this organization.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. Though appealing the decision of Synod Burlington 2010 to deny Attercliffe’s appeal against Synod Smithers 2007 and referring to this material throughout the present appeal (see Attercliffe’s considerations #1-6 and 9), Attercliffe does not provide any of this supporting documentation for synod’s judgment. Therefore this aspect of the appeal should be declared inadmissible.
- 3.2. Synod Burlington 2010 described as “new matters” the two agreements which came to light after Synod 2007 and it is with this topic that Attercliffe also interacts in its present appeal (see Attercliffe’s considerations #7, 8).
- 3.3. Attercliffe does not reckon adequately with the fact that Synod Burlington 2010 mandated the CCCNA to investigate the status and implications of the “Golden Rule Comity Agreement” and the “Agreement on Transfer of Members and Congregations.” Synod Burlington 2010 fully agreed with the churches that more information was needed on the two agreements (see *Acts* 2010, article 52, Consideration 3.3). But until more information was available, a withdrawal of membership from NAPARC would have been premature.

### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. Insofar as the present appeal touches on the decision of Synod Smithers 2007 to apply for membership in NAPARC, the appeal be declared inadmissible;

- 4.2. Insofar as the present appeal touches on the decision of Synod Burlington 2010 to investigate the two NAPARC membership agreements, the appeal be denied.

## ADOPTED

### Article 110 – Appeals re: Women’s Voting for Office Bearers

Committee 1 presented its fourth draft. After several amendments were moved and adopted, this was the result:

#### 1. Material:

Letters of appeal from the churches at Smithville (8.5.1), Calgary (8.5.2), Carman West (8.5.3), Dunnville (8.5.4), Carman East (8.5.5), Grand Valley (8.5.6), Chilliwack (8.5.12 and 8.5.25), Coaldale (8.5.13 and 8.5.14), Attercliffe (8.5.21), Fergus-Maranatha (8.5.28), Grand Rapids (8.5.29), Grassie (8.5.30), Taber (8.5.34) and Willoughby Heights (8.5.36)

#### 2. Observations:

- 2.1. The appeals of the churches can be divided into three main categories:
1. Church Orderly arguments
  2. Biblical arguments
  3. Other arguments
- 2.2. Nine churches appeal the decision of Burlington 2010 Article 176 on church-orderly grounds, namely the churches at Smithville, Calgary, Dunnville, Grand Valley, Coaldale, Attercliffe, Chilliwack and Willoughby Heights.
- 2.2.1. Several of these churches bring forward the point that women’s voting has always been considered a matter of the churches in common. One church emphasizes that the matter of women voting is a matter for the churches in common and Synod Burlington 2010 did not interact with previous decisions which declared it to be a matter for the churches in common.
- 2.2.2. Some churches also bring to the fore that Article 3 CO does not speak about consistory voluntarily agreeing to the vote, but uses the word “shall” as implicating an obligation or directive. As well, they point to Article 31 of the Belgic Confession which speaks of office bearers being chosen “by lawful election of the church” as implying that the consistory is bound to the results of the election. Hence they

regard voting not merely as advisory but as an exercising of authority. Several churches (Calgary, Grand Valley and Grassie) bring forward that historically it has been generally assumed in Reformed churches that Church Order Article 3 means the male communicant members of the congregation when it speaks of “congregation.”

- 2.3. Nine churches, namely Calgary, Dunnville, Carman East, Chilliwack, Coaldale, Attercliffe, Fergus-Maranatha, Grand Rapids and Grassie, appeal the decision of Burlington 2010 Article 176 on Biblical grounds.
  - 2.3.1. Some churches point out that throughout the Bible (Deut. 17:15, 2 Sam. 2:4, 5:3, Acts 1:14, 6:3) the men are addressed as the representatives of the whole congregation and there is no unambiguous example in the Bible demonstrating that females too represented the congregation.
  - 2.3.2. Other churches bring forward that Synod Burlington 2010 ignored the scriptural principle of headship, namely that wives are to be subject to their husbands (Eph. 5:22) which translates into the prescription that women are to be silent in the church (1 Cor. 14:33b-35, 1 Tim. 2:11,12). They assert that Synod did not take into account the authority aspect of voting as noted above in 2.2.2.
- 2.4. Under other arguments we include the following:
  - 2.4.1. Seven churches, including Calgary, Attercliffe, Coaldale, Chilliwack, Fergus-Maranatha, Grand Rapids and Taber, appeal on the ground that the decision of Synod Burlington 2010 causes even more disunity in the churches about this matter than before. While they appreciate the desire of Synod Burlington 2010 to come to a final resolution on the matter of women voting, the decision to leave the matter to the local churches will only bring further polarization among the churches.
  - 2.4.2. Three churches, Carman West, Willoughby Heights and Coaldale, argue that the decision of Synod Burlington 2010 ignored the large number of churches which addressed letters opposing such a measure. Synod Burlington 2010 should have also let itself be influenced by the fact that the majority of letters from churches opposed women voting.
  - 2.4.3. The churches at Grand Valley and Grassie add the element of culture to their appeals. They assert that Synod Burlington

2010 erred in Article 176 when it concluded that the historical practice of not allowing women to vote was based on cultural rather than Biblical principles. It is stated that cultural or societal influence should have no part in resolving issues in the church, but only scriptural principles (Article 7, Belgic Confession).

- 2.4.4. The churches at Grand Valley and Taber also appeal the decision of Synod Burlington 2010 on the basis that Synod Burlington 2010 implied in its considerations that the committee work in both the majority and minority report was incomplete. They state that Synod Burlington 2010 should have taken up the advice of several churches to establish a new committee to complete the mandate.

### 3. Considerations:

- 3.1. The appeals bring forward church political, scriptural as well as several other arguments. Synod Burlington 2010 also dealt with church political as well as scriptural arguments. In response to the appeals synod will have to weigh these arguments and deal with both Scripture and Church Order.
- 3.2. It is undeniable that this matter has in the past always been regarded as a matter for the churches in common (see the appeals of Smithville, Dunnville, Grand Valley, Attercliffe). Numerous synods in the past have implicitly accepted or explicitly considered this to be a matter for the churches in common, beginning with Synod Coaldale 1977. That Synod stated in Article 27, Consideration 2, “By not *ad* Article 30 Church Order refusing to deal with women’s voting rights, Synod Toronto 1974 has in fact admitted that this is a matter of common concern.” As Calgary states in its appeal, Synod Smithville 1980 discussed and defeated the motion “to leave the matter of Women’s Voting Rights in the freedom of the churches” (*Acts of Synod Smithville 1980*, Article 80). Synod Burlington 1986, in Article 120, Considerations 2 and 3, stated that, “It is therefore also incorrect to state that there is no moral hindrance for any consistory to introduce women’s rights by its own regulations (Observation 5).” Synod Fergus 1998, in Article 112, II. Admissibility, stated concerning women’s voting: “The subject matter does concern the churches in common.” Synod Neerlandia 2001 remarked about an overture of Regional Synod East to appoint a committee on women’s voting

rights (*Acts*, Article 101, Consideration 4.2), “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.” The above statement of Synod Neerlandia 2001 was reiterated in the *Acts of Synod Smithers 2007* (Article 136, Observation 3.8.). None of the synodical pronouncements mentioned above have explained why the churches have considered this matter as belonging to the churches in common. But over the years this was the commonly accepted practice. This practice has the more authority because churches repeatedly stated that the matter was federational. To alter course would require an argument explaining why a new practice is necessary. The Church Order requires this in Article 33.

3.3. In Article 176, Consideration 3.9, Synod Burlington 2010 brought forward the position of the congregation according to Reformed church polity. It states that, “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.” In response to that, four churches (Calgary, Grand Rapids, Grand Valley, Willoughby Heights) brought up Article 3 of the Church Order. According to this article of the Church Order (“Those elected shall be appointed by the consistory with the deacons”), the election has a binding character. The word “shall” used in documents like the Church Order expresses what is mandatory. Calgary and Attercliffe pointed to Article 31 of the Belgic Confession (“We believe that ministers of God’s Word, elders and deacons ought to be chosen to their offices by lawful election of the church...”) to prove that the election at the congregational meeting has a binding character. It is questionable if this can be read into Article 31 of the Belgic Confession. The focus of this article is more to distinguish the Reformed and biblical method of appointing office bearers (by the [local] church) from the way it was done in the Roman Catholic Church (hierarchy). The words “election by the church” do not define how that election should take place. Election can also be done through nomination of a single candidate by the consistory with the deacons (see Article 3 of the Church Order) and subsequent approbation by the congregation. However, it should be granted that this article gives an indication that if the consistory

decides to call the congregation together for an election according to Article 3 of the Church Order, this election has a binding character and cannot be seen as advisory only. By allowing the congregation to vote, the consistory gives the congregation influence in the process of calling brothers to the office and the consistory shall abide by this decision of the congregation.

- 3.4. Synod Burlington 2010 considered in Article 176, Consideration 3.2 that “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.” After concluding that both the majority and the minority reports fail to prove from Scripture that women either must vote or are not allowed to vote, Synod Burlington 2010 stated 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.” However, Synod Burlington 2010 only stated this and did not interact with the Biblical evidence brought forward in the reports and by the churches. It did not prove that its statement is true. Consideration 3.6 is correct when it says, “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.” However, not just key texts are important here, but also principles derived from Scripture, like the headship of men and the position of women in the congregation. There may not be a specific text in the Bible that prescribes or denies sisters’ participation in voting for office bearers, but there is enough in both Majority and Minority Reports (and in the letters from the churches) to show that Scripture speaks to the matter.
- 3.5. Nine churches brought forward Biblical evidence regarding the headship of men and the position of women within the congregation. It can be summarized as follows: The Bible teaches that the man is the head of his wife (Genesis 2, Ephesians 5:22-33). The holy women in the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful by being submissive to their husbands (1 Peter 3:5). The Bible shows that this position of headship extends to the position of man and woman in the assembly of God’s people (1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 14:33b-34; 1 Timothy 2:11-13). Acts 1:23-26 shows that the congregation was involved in the nomination

of two brothers for the office of apostle. Acts 6:1-7 shows that the congregation was involved in the election of the seven. The Canadian Reformed Churches acknowledge in the *Form For the Ordination of Elders and Deacons* as well as in the *Form For the Ordination (or Installation) of Ministers of the Word*, that God calls brothers to the office through His congregation (p. 607 and 613 *Book of Praise*; emphasis added). Although the Bible does not spell out how this calling took place or how it should take place, it does indicate that the choosing happens within the assembly of God's people.

- 3.6. Calgary, Carman West, Coaldale and Willoughby Heights state that Synod Burlington 2010 ignored the concerns of the majority of the churches, as confirmed in the volume of letters received by Synod Burlington 2010. Of the 34 letters received by Synod Burlington 2010 only four spoke in favor of opening the door for women to participate in the elections. Nineteen explicitly indicated that they were against. Synod is an assembly in which the churches come together and where the voice of the churches may be heard. It is therefore unwise for a general synod to make a decision which was clearly not in line with what the churches expressed especially when that desire is not unbiblical or against the Church Order, as Synod Burlington 2010 acknowledged in Consideration 3.4. In a contentious issue like this it is desirable that a decision of a synod has broad support in the churches.
- 3.7. It is clear from the many appeals that the decision of Synod Burlington 2010 did not put the matter to rest in the churches. Calgary, Attercliffe, Grand Valley, Chilliwack, Taber and Fergus-Maranatha are right in pointing this out. This issue has divided the churches. It will continue to divide the churches if we do not attempt to build a broader consensus among the churches. Therefore, if any of the churches, after study and based on Biblical evidence, come to the conclusion that the practice of male-only voting should be changed, this church ought to work on building a consensus among the churches by going the ecclesiastical way, through classis and regional synod, before the matter ends up at the table of general synod.
- 3.8. The churches should not be led by developments in culture and those developments should not determine the way in which we understand Scripture for our time today. The church of Grassie is correct in bringing this forward. We live in a culture in which the biblical

teaching about the headship of the man is greatly ignored, denied or rejected. In today's culture, the election of office bearers gives a good opportunity to the churches to show that they do not merely go along with the secular trend regarding the position of man and woman.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. That Synod Burlington 2010 erred on church political grounds in its decision to leave the matter of women's voting in the freedom of the churches;
- 4.2. That Synod Burlington 2010 erred in stating that the exegetical sections brought forward in both the majority and minority reports are "hardly relevant or decisive for the matter of women's voting";
- 4.3. That the churches should return to the voting practice as it officially was before 2010, namely, male communicant members only voting.

### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 111 – SCBP – Appointments**

##### **1. Material:**

- 1.1. Report from the SCBP, Section 7.0 (8.2.4); nomination letter from the SCBP (8.2.4b)
- 1.2. Letters from the churches at Burlington-Fellowship (8.3.4.11) and Hamilton-Cornerstone (8.3.4.23)

##### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. The SCBP reports that Dr. A. J. de Visser requested to be relieved from serving as a committee member after completion of the term ending in 2013 and that Dr. C. van Halen-Faber and Rev. D. G. A. Agema are due to complete their terms in 2013.
- 2.2. The SCBP feels it would be good to maintain the number of members on the Committee at five.
- 2.3. The SCBP proposes to Synod Carman 2013 to reappoint br. C. J. Nobels to one 3-year term (to 2016) and Rev. G. Ph. Van Popta (convenor) to one 3-year term (to 2016). Alternate: br. Martin Jongsma. [See also Article 143.]
- 2.4. In a separate letter the SCBP recommends that br. Arie DenHollander, Dr. Jannes Smith and Rev. Dick Wynia be appointed to the Committee.

- 2.5. The SCBP proposes that, in view of the completion of the major revision of the Psalms and Hymns sections of the *Book of Praise*, the two advisors, br. F. Ezinga (music) and Dr. K. Dieleman (language) be released from their respective tasks and thanked for their contributions in the revision process.
- 2.6. The church of Hamilton-Cornerstone provides Synod Carman 2013 with a recommendation for appointment to the SCBP.
- 2.7. The church at Burlington-Fellowship suggests various qualifications for appointment to the SCBP.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. The SCBP's suggestion to maintain the number of committee members at five is reasonable given the number of corrections and revisions that still need to be done to the APV.
- 3.2. Since the bulk of the revision of the Psalms and Hymns has been completed, br. F. Ezinga and Dr. K. Dieleman no longer need to be on the Committee as advisors, though the Committee can seek advice whenever there is a need for it.
- 3.3. The letter, containing the recommendation of three men to fill the vacancies on the Committee, provides a list of their respective skills and talents which shows that they are suitable candidates.

### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To thank Dr. A.J. de Visser, Rev. D. G.J. Agema and Dr. C. van Halen-Faber for their work as SCBP members;
- 4.2. To thank br. F. Ezinga and Dr. K. Dieleman for their contributions and to release them from their respective tasks;
- 4.3. To reappoint br. C. J. Nobels and Rev. G. Ph. Van Popta as requested in the Report;
- 4.4. To appoint br. A. DenHollander to three 3-year terms (to 2022), Dr. J. Smith to two 3-year terms (to 2019) and Rev. D. Wynia to three 3-year terms (to 2022).

## **ADOPTED**

### **Article 112 – *Book of Praise* – Copyright & Royalty Matters**

#### **1. Material:**

Report from the SCBP, Section 10.0 (8.2.4)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. The SCBP makes clear that in adherence to copyright law, royalties will need to be paid for the use of four of the hymns proposed in the APV *Book of Praise*: 38, 50, 66 and 79.
- 2.2. These royalties amount to approximately \$12.50 per 1000 printed copies. They will also apply to future reprints of the *Book of Praise*.

**3. Consideration**

Premier Printing presently pays the required royalties for copyrighted hymns used in the *Book of Praise* according to their contract with the SCBP (Report section 2.1).

**4. Recommendation**

That Synod decide to acknowledge this information.

**ADOPTED****Article 113 – *Book of Praise* – Publication and Fostering Awareness**

Committee 2 presented a proposal. After some discussion, it was taken back for refinement.

**Article 114 – *Book of Praise* – Consultation with Australia Regarding**

This article has been deleted and replaced with Article 196. For further explanation, see Articles 144 and 187 in these *Acts*.

**Article 115 – Closing Devotions and Adjournment**

Rev. A. Souman read John 15:1-11, had the assembly sing Psalm 33:1, 6 and led in prayer. Synod was adjourned.

**Day 9 — Morning Session****Friday, May 17, 2013****Article 116 – Opening Devotions**

The chairman called the meeting to order and the assembly sang Psalm 34:3, 5. Rev. Bouwman then read 2 Chronicles 17 and led in prayer. All members of synod were present. A word of farewell was extended to Rev. Boersma (FRCSA) and Dr. Curto (OPC) who were to leave shortly.

## **Article 117 – Adoption of the Acts**

Articles 95-115 of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

## **Article 118 – Gereja-Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia (GGRI)**

Committee 3 presented its second draft. After some discussion, it was taken back for refinement.

## **Article 119 – Letter from Kerwood re: Ecclesiastical Fellowship Categories**

Committee 4 presented its second draft and with a minor change, this was the result:

### **1. Material:**

Letter from the church at Kerwood (8.1.16)

### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Kerwood feels that there is a need for a clearer and more consistent approach in establishing relationships with other churches. Kerwood refers to an apparent confusion of the terms “sister churches” and “ecclesiastical fellowship,” whether there is actually a difference between them.
- 2.2. Kerwood notes that the CRCA previously made a proposal of a “step procedure” for establishing inter-church relationships and opines that there is some merit in this approach, pointing to the “step procedure” in use by the URCNA. Kerwood also observes that the CanRC has different kinds of relationships with various churches, whether that of initial contact (e.g., RPCNA), that of ecclesiastical fellowship but not full unity (e.g., URCNA), or that of full and complete recognition in a close bond of fellowship (e.g., FRCA).
- 2.3. Kerwood requests a more structured and consistent approach to our inter-church relationships, so that the ideal of full federative unity is always kept in view. In particular, Kerwood would like a clear definition of the terms “ecclesiastical fellowship” and “sister church,” and also the implementation of a “step procedure to relationships,” namely, Step 1 (contact), Step 2 (Ecclesiastical Fellowship) and Step 3 (federative unity or sister church relationship).

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. Synod Smithers 2007 was asked to clarify whether “sister church” was synonymous with “ecclesiastical fellowship,” and noted that in fact it was, “the former being the official name and the latter being the popular or common name” (Article 142).

- 3.2. Kerwood is incorrect to distinguish between relationships of “ecclesiastical fellowship but not full unity” and “full and complete recognition in a close bond of fellowship.” As federation, we either have EF with another bond of churches, or we do not.
- 3.3. If Kerwood desires clearer categories for our ecclesiastical relationships, it could bring a proposal from the minor assemblies to the broader, where it may be placed on the agendas of the CRCA and CCCNA for their attention.

#### **4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide that the above considerations serve as an answer to Kerwood’s letter.

### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 120 – Appeal of Burlington-Fellowship re: Women’s Voting as Local Matter**

Committee 1 presented a proposal. After some discussion, it was taken back for refinement.

#### **Article 121 –Committee for Church Unity (CCU) – Coordinators’ Report**

Committee 4 presented a proposal. After some discussion, it was taken back for refinement.

#### **Article 122 – Appeal of Burlington-Ebenezer re: Regional Synod East 2012**

Committee 1 presented a proposal. After some discussion, it was taken back for refinement.

#### **Article 123 – Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA)**

##### **1. Material:**

Report of Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad (8.2.1)

##### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 decided (*Acts*, Article 33, Recommendation 4):
  - [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 of 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.

2.2. The CRCA report the following:

- 2.2.1. Two CRCA members, A. Souman and B. Wielenga, attended Synod Armadale 2012. There they discussed areas of mutual interest including theological training, the *Book of Praise*, the RCN, our relations with the URCNA, New Zealand and Indonesia. The FRCA highlighted that they value the bond with the Canadian Reformed Churches.
- 2.2.2. A letter from the Liberated Reformed Church of Abbotsford was placed on the agenda of Synod Armadale 2012 by three churches. Synod declared it inadmissible because the FRCA continues to recognize the CanRC as faithful churches and considers it inappropriate to delve into local Canadian matters.
- 2.2.3. The FRCA continues to support the CRTS, also financially (the internal Australian assessment rate is \$65 per communicant member). Synod Armadale 2012 decided to send a delegate to a meeting of CRTS's Board of Governors and Convocation between Synod 2012 and Synod 2015. The desire was expressed to have guest lecturers from our Theological Seminary visit the Australian churches every two years.
- 2.2.4. Synod Armadale 2012 provisionally adopted the 150 psalms of the 2010 *Book of Praise* for use in the churches. The 65 hymns we had in the 1984 *Book of Praise* were also adopted, but with the changes made in the 2010 edition. The FRCA (again) decided to consider the feasibility of publishing an Australian edition of the Canadian *Book of Praise*.

- 2.2.5. Synod Armadale 2012 re-affirmed the decision of previous synods to recognize the RCNZ as true churches of the Lord Jesus Christ, but stated that the relationship between the RCNZ and the CRC Australia continues to be an impediment. Synod affirmed that the FRCA “value the continuing support of the CanRC in regards to our discussions with the RCNZ.”
- 2.3. The CRCA recommends that Synod 2013 decide:
- [1.] To continue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the FRCA under the adopted rules;
  - [2.] To express thankfulness and appreciation for the FRCA's ongoing support for and interest in the Theological Seminary, including their generous financial support;
  - [3.] To assure the FRCA of our continued attention to the nature and direction of the relationship of the RCNZ with the CRC Australia;
  - [4.] To maintain close contact with the various deputyships of the FRCA in matters of relations with sister churches abroad and informing the FRCA of changes or developments in third party relationships;
  - [5.] To invite the various deputyships of the FRCA to seek direct contact with the corresponding CanRC committees (e.g., our SCBP, sub-committee RCN, our committee in charge of reviewing the liturgical forms, Committee for Bible Translation and perhaps others) in areas of mutual interest where the CRCA's mandate does not reach;
  - [6.] To send a delegation to the next synod of the FRCA in 2015.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. From the CRCA report it is evident that the FRCA remain true and faithful churches of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3.2. The CanRC also value the bond with the FRCA.
- 3.3. It is appropriate that, in our discussions with the RCNZ, we continue to give attention to the relationship that the RCNZ has with the CRCAustralia and that we support the FRCA in this matter. For the CRCA to foster close contact between the various deputyships of the FRCA and corresponding CanRC committees is consistent with the adopted Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship.
- 3.4. While synod understands that the FRCA is keen to have our professors visit Australia and provide guest lectures more frequently, this is not a matter for our synod to decide.

- 3.5. Rather than mandating specific CanRC committees to make themselves available for interaction with corresponding FRCA deputyships, it would be simpler for Synod to endorse #4.5 of the proposed CRCA mandate.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To continue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the FRCA under the adopted rules;
- 4.2. To express thankfulness and appreciation for the FRCA's ongoing support for and interest in the Theological Seminary, including their generous financial support;
- 4.3. To assure the FRCA of our continued attention to the nature and direction of the relationship of the RCNZ with the CRCAustralia;
- 4.4. To maintain close contact with the various deputyships of the FRCA in matters of relations with sister churches abroad and informing the FRCA of changes or developments in third party relationships;
- 4.5. To invite the various deputyships of the FRCA to seek direct contact with the corresponding CanRC committees (e.g., our SCBP, sub-committee RCN, our committee in charge of reviewing the liturgical forms, Committee for Bible Translation and perhaps others) in areas of mutual interest where the CRCA's mandate does not apply;
- 4.6. To send a delegation to the next synod of the FRCA in 2015.

### **ADOPTED**

Synod adjourned for committee work.

### **Day 9 – Evening Session Friday, May 17, 2013**

#### **Article 124 – Reopening**

The chairman reopened synod and the members sang Psalm 109:13. All members were in attendance.

#### **Article 125 – *Book of Praise* – Confessions and Church Order**

Committee 2 presented a proposal. With a few changes, this was the result:

##### **1. Material:**

- 1.1. Report from the SCBP, Section 9.0 (8.2.4)

- 1.2. Letters from the churches at Grand Valley (8.3.4.1), Ancaster (8.3.4.7), Carman West (8.3.4.12a), Cloverdale (8.3.4.14), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.4.15), Hamilton-Providence (8.3.4.25), Burlington-Rehoboth (8.3.4.30), Spring Creek (8.3.4.36 and 8.3.4.37) and Edmonton-Immanuel (8.3.4.44)

## 2. Observations:

### 2.1. *Heidelberg Catechism Preface/Introduction*

- 2.1.1. Presently the introduction reads that the National Synods of the sixteenth century adopted the Heidelberg Catechism “as one of the *Three Forms of Unity*, ...” The SCBP recommends (9.4 and 9.4.1) to change this to read: “The National Synods of the sixteenth century adopted it as one of the doctrinal standards of the Reformed Churches, ...” The committee argues that this is more accurate historically since “the *Three Forms of Unity* did not exist at that time (the Canons of Dort were added in the 17<sup>th</sup> century).”

### 2.2. *Heidelberg Catechism Answer 115*

- 2.2.1. The SCBP recommends (9.4.2 and 9.4.3) a change in the second part of Answer 115 as follows: “Second, so that we may constantly apply ourselves and pray to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit to be renewed more and more after God’s image, until after this life we reach the goal of perfection.” The SCBP acknowledges that this is “more than a linguistic change” and explains its recommendation in more detail:
  - 2.2.1.1. The SCBP has over the years received requests to change this part of Answer 115 and had also received advice from professors of the Theological Seminary to make the change it proposes.
  - 2.2.1.2. The original German is somewhat ambiguous and this has led to Answer 115 being changed several times over the years.
  - 2.2.1.3. The current formulation is problematic for several reasons: First, the order of the main verbs have been reversed, contrary to the original German; second, praying is now subordinate to striving, whereas in the original they stand side by side; third, the current formulation may give the impression that to be renewed after God’s image is our work because we have to strive to do it.

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- 2.2.1.4. The ambiguity of the original German allows the striving to refer either to doing good works or being constant in prayer. The SCBP prefers to leave the original ambiguity rather than interpreting what we have to strive for.
- 2.2.1.5. The proposal of the SCBP also makes clear that it is the Holy Spirit who renews us. “We are applying ourselves, not renewing ourselves.”
- 2.2.2. The church at Ancaster recommends that Synod 2013 “retain the wording of Answer 115 as we presently have it.” Ancaster argues that:
- 2.2.2.1. “it is not that the order of main verbs is reversed [in the current wording] but that one of the two is identified as the key verb. The current version takes its cue from the German, in which ... the verb ‘pray’ belongs to a parenthetical expression and therefore has a subordinate and supplementary role. ... In short, it is not a matter of incorrectly reversing the order of verbs but of effectively using a participle to prevent any confusion about what the original German seeks to convey.” And: “when it makes the praying subordinate to the striving, the current version seeks to do full justice to the original German text and at the same time renders it unnecessary to perpetuate any unintended ambiguity.”
- 2.2.2.2. “Answer 115 does not say that we must strive to renew ourselves but that we must strive ‘to be renewed.’”
- 2.2.3. The church at Cloverdale proposes that “the present wording of this question and answer should be retained.” Cloverdale argues that the amendment proposed by the SCBP “does not constitute an improvement. Even grammatically, it is problematic.” And: “we find that the proposed revision is ambiguous and confusing; the present wording is good.”
- 2.2.4. The church at Hamilton-Providence is not in agreement with the recommendation of the SCBP regarding Answer 115. Hamilton-Providence argues that “fidelity to Scripture is far more important than fidelity to the German original of the Catechism.” And: “We would rather have a clear expression of what the Bible teaches than an ambiguous rendering of the German original.”
- 2.2.5. The church at Spring Creek asks Synod 2013 “to take this entire matter of revising Answer 115 of the Catechism off the

- table.” Spring Creek argues that the SCBP has “exceeded its mandate,” and “appears to have taken this matter up on its own initiative,” pointing to the words of the SCBP: “we feel the time is right to have a look at Answer 115 again.”
- 2.2.6. The church at Edmonton-Immanuel recommends that Synod 2013 “not accede to the SCBP proposed change to Answer 115 HC.” Edmonton-Immanuel, like Cloverdale, argues that the proposed change is “too ambiguous ... and that the current wording is clearer to understand and teach.” Further, it states that “the current wording also matches better the Canons of Dort, Chapter V, Art. 2, as well as the proof texts for that answer.”
- 2.2.7. The church at Grand Valley requests that Synod 2013 not adopt the proposed revision of Answer 115. Grand Valley argues that “the proposed revision makes it sound like we are to pray that the Holy Spirit is to be renewed when it is us who are to be renewed. Therefore the proposed revision is not an improvement.” Grand Valley goes on to provide a possible alternative revision.
- 2.3. *Heidelberg Catechism Answer 4*
- 2.3.1. The church at Carman West proposes that the full reference to “Matthew 22:37-40” be provided in the text of Answer 4. Carman West had interacted with the SCBP which decided not to take over this proposal. Carman West argues for consistency; in other answers of the Catechism full references are included (e.g., Answers 10, 18, 71).
- 2.3.2. The SCBP had responded to Carman West that “Matthew 22” (without the verse reference) is part of the original text of the Catechism and this was a common way to reference Scripture in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The SCBP replied further that it was willing to put the full chapter-and-verse reference in a footnote after Leviticus 19:18. Carman West is not satisfied and asks, “Wouldn’t it be good for Catechism students to memorize this important Scripture reference?”
- 2.3.3. Carman West recommends to Synod 2013: “Provide the full reference to Matthew 22:37-40 in Answer 4.”
- 2.4. *Heidelberg Catechism Answer 10*
- 2.4.1. The church at Carman West proposes to replace the word “displeased” with “angry” in Answer 10. Carman West had

brought this to the attention of the SCBP, which did not take over this proposal. Carman West had argued that the word “displeased” is too broad and is a “weaker term”; the word “angry” better reflects what is used in the original versions of the Catechism.

- 2.4.2. In response to Carman West, the SCBP decided to retain the word “displeased” for the following reasons: the word “displeased” in Answer 10 is 1) now familiar to a couple of generation of catechism students, 2) not a mistranslation of the original and 3) found in other North American translations. With respect to the first point of the SCBP, Carman West points out to Synod 2013: “Such an approach would essentially outlaw any improvements to the wording of the catechism.” With regards to the second point, Carman West points out to Synod 2013: “while ‘displeased’ may not be a ‘mistranslation’ it is certainly not the best translation of the original.”
- 2.4.3. Carman West recommends to Synod 2013: “Replace the word ‘displeased’ with the word ‘angry’ in Answer 10.”
- 2.5. *Heidelberg Catechism Answer 23 and the Apostles’ Creed*
  - 2.5.1. The church at Carman West had approached the SCBP to include the word “And” at the beginning of the second article of the Apostles’ Creed as found in Answer 23 of the Catechism: “*And* in Jesus Christ ....” Carman West had argued that this is 1) consistent with the original versions of the Catechism and the original wording of the Apostles’ Creed and 2) “properly reflects the teaching of our Lord, who exhorted his disciples, ‘Trust in God; *trust also* in me’” (John 14:1).
  - 2.5.2. The SCBP did not take over this proposal, reasoning: “Carman West is correct that our translation of the Catechism is out of sync with the original at this point. But since our churches have decided to use, as a basis, the ICET texts of the ecumenical creeds, we should have consistency between the Apostles’ Creed, as printed in the ecumenical creeds section and the same Creed, as printed in the Catechism.” Carman West remarks to Synod 2013 that the ICET text “besides overriding more than 1,500 years of ecclesiastical tradition ... arbitrarily departs from the original

formulation that is backed up by Scripture.” Further, Carman West notes, “we do not follow the ICET text consistently anyway.” Carman West is seeking a “correction back to the original wording on this point” in both places where the Apostles’ Creed appears in the *Book of Praise*: in Answer 23 of the Catechism and in the ecumenical creeds section of the *Book of Praise*.

- 2.5.3. Carman West recommends to Synod 2013: “Restore the word ‘And’ at the beginning of the second article of the Apostles’ Creed as it is found in the original versions of the Catechism in Answer 23 and in the Apostles’ Creed.”

2.6. *Heidelberg Catechism Answer 43*

- 2.6.1. The church at Carman West had asked the SCBP to consider replacing the word “death” in Answer 43 with the word “power”: “Through Christ’s power our old nature is crucified.” Carman West had argued to the SCBP that “power” is found in the original German and Dutch versions of the Catechism, whereas the word “death” had come through a preference for the Latin version. Carman West notes that by diverting from the original German and Dutch text of the Catechism, the parallel between Answer 43 and Answer 45 is lost (Answer 45: “Second, by his power we too are raised up to a new life”).

- 2.6.2. The SCBP responded to Carman West that while both “through his death” and “by his power” are represented in the original and in the translations, there is no compelling reason to change this. Carman West points out to Synod 2013 that the SCBP did not interact with its concern that “by diverting from the original German and Dutch text, the connection between Answer 43 and 45 is lost”; and is “puzzled as to why the committee is unwilling to budge on this point.”

- 2.6.3. Carman West recommends to Synod 2013: “Replace the word ‘death’ in Answer 43 with the word ‘power,’ as found in the original German and Dutch versions of the Catechism.”

2.7. *Heidelberg Catechism Answer 75 (A)*

- 2.7.1. The church at Carman West had suggested to the SCBP to insert the words “and broken” in Answer 75: “so surely was

his body offered *and broken* for me.” Carman West had argued that as it stands, Answer 75 is “incomplete, missing a few words that do occur in the original versions.”

2.7.2. The SCBP decided not to take over this suggestion, arguing from the Scriptures that Christ’s legs were not broken (John 19:33): “So to say in the HC that his body was broken for me, seems to contradict Scripture and does not instill confidence in the confession. Answer 75 is stronger without ‘and broken.’” Carman West points out to Synod 2013 that the original text of the Catechism does not refer to Christ’s legs being broken, but his body, bringing to mind “how brutally his body was flogged and then nailed to the cross.” Carman West finds it arbitrary “to depart from the original text without informing the churches about it. Following the committee’s line of reasoning, our Lord’s Supper form should then also be revised!” Further, Carman West points out that the original wording of the Catechism has support in the majority of Greek manuscripts for 1 Corinthians 11:24 (cf. KJV).

2.7.3. Carman West recommends to Synod 2013: “Restore the words ‘and broken’ to where they belong in Answer 75: ‘so surely was his body offered and broken for me.’”

2.8. *Heidelberg Catechism Answer 75 (B)*

2.8.1. The church at Carman West suggested to the SCBP a change from “everlasting life” to “eternal life” in Answer 75. In the original languages, the same expression underlies both Answer 75 and 79 but is translated “eternal life” in Answer 79. Carman West would like to see consistency, “since both answers deal with the Lord’s Supper.”

2.8.2. The SCBP decided to leave Answer 75 unchanged. It argued that our present English translation sees a more frequent variation in the translation of the original German expression (Lord’s Days 15, 16, 21, 23, 25, 28, 29). “There is indeed a slight inconsistency in translation here, but variety in translation is not wrong.” Carman West does not agree and points out to Synod 2013 that “while variety in translation may not be wrong, it is very confusing for Catechism students when they have to memorize ... unnecessary variations.” And: “We should ... do what we can to avoid making memorizing ... unnecessarily complicated.”

- 2.8.3. Carman West recommends to Synod 2013: “For the sake of consistency and to enhance memorization, it is preferable to use the expression ‘eternal life’ both in Answers 75 and 79 of the Catechism.”
- 2.9. *Heidelberg Catechism font size*
- 2.9.1. The church at Burlington-Rehoboth recommends using the same font size for the Heidelberg Catechism as is used for the rest of the confessions, since this would improve legibility. The church at Spring Creek makes the same point, asking Synod to mandate the SCBP to investigate this matter.
- 2.10. *Belgic Confession, Preface/Introduction and Article 3*
- 2.10.1. The SCBP requests (9.5 and 9.5.1) that Synod 2013 concur with its suggestion for three corrections to the Belgic Confession.
- 2.10.2. The SCBP recommends to remove the word “symbolical” from the last line of the Preface/Introduction to the Belgic Confession (p.501, APV *Book of Praise*). The SCBP argues that while the word “symbolical” is derived from “symbol” as in “confession,” this meaning of the word has become obsolete and obscure. The final sentence would read: “Its excellence as one of the best statements of Reformed doctrine has been generally recognized.”
- 2.10.3. The SCBP recommends to remove the words “In the following year” from the Preface/Introduction to the Belgic Confession since this reading is historically incorrect; it was the *same* year not the following year. The committee proposes to start the sentence with: “A copy was sent to King Philip II...”.
- 2.10.4. The SCBP proposes to change the word “impulse” to “will” in Article 3 of the Belgic Confession: “...did not come by the *impulse* of man...” to read, “...did not come by the *will* of man...” This would remove some lingering RSV language (cf. 2 Pet 1.21).
- 2.11. *Canons of Dort, Chapter 1, Rejection of Errors Introduction*
- 2.11.1. The SCBP requests (9.6 and 9.6.1) that Synod 2013 concur with its suggestion to correct the error in the introductory words of the Rejection of Errors section of Chapter I of the Canons of Dort (p.563, APV *Book of Praise*). The reference to “the perseverance of the saints” is incorrect and ought to

be replaced with “election and reprobation.” Thus it should read: “Having explained the true doctrine of election and reprobation, Synod rejects the following errors...”.

2.12. *Church Order, Article 59*

- 2.12.1. The SCBP requests (9.7 and 9.7.1) that Synod 2013 concur with its correction of Article 59 of the Church Order. The word “engrafted” should be “incorporated”. This would bring the wording of the Church Order more in line with what Synod Smithers 2007 decided in Article 172 (when that Synod dealt with Answer 74 of the Heidelberg Catechism).

**3. Considerations:**

3.1. *Heidelberg Catechism Preface/Introduction*

- 3.1.1. The correction of the SCBP to make the Preface/Introduction of the Catechism historically accurate is fully warranted. As the SCBP suggests, the relevant section should read: “The National Synods of the sixteenth century adopted it as one of the doctrinal standards of the Reformed Churches...”.

3.2. *Heidelberg Catechism Answer 115*

- 3.2.1. The SCBP acknowledges that in the matter of seeking a change of wording in Answer 115 it is proposing more than merely a linguistic change. In connection with this, the church at Spring Creek does not wish Synod 2013 to deal with the matter because it arises out of the SCBP and does not come from the churches. It could be noted that the SCBP had previously received requests to look into this. The mandate of the SCBP does not appear to be clear on the matter of what sort of requests the Committee is to consider and potentially make suggestions about to general synod. This matter should be clarified before going forward.
- 3.2.2. Of the churches which address Synod 2013 with thoughts on the proposal of the SCBP, none are in favour of making changes to Answer 115. And one of the churches (Ancaster) comes with a well-argued endorsement of the present formulation of Answer 115, noting that the present Answer 115 more accurately reflects the original German, which apparently does not have the inherent ambiguity as the SCBP suggests. Therefore, since the desire for a change does not arise out of the churches to Synod 2013 and, in fact, the

churches addressing Synod 2013 on this matter are fully in favour of the present formulation of Answer 115, there is no need to pursue the change proposed by the SCBP.

3.3. *Heidelberg Catechism Answer 4*

3.3.1. When the church at Carman West recommends that Synod 2013 provide the full reference to “Matthew 22:37-40” in the body of Answer 4, it makes reference to other occasions where full Scripture references are found in the text of the Answers of the Catechism. However, there is a subtle difference: in the comparison Answers cited by Carman West (Answers 10, 18, 71), the text references function much more like footnotes at the *end* of direct Scripture quotations. Such text references are brought into the body of these Answers (and not placed in footnotes) because of the direct Scripture quotations to which they are attached. Presumably, such references in parentheses attached to direct Scripture quotations are not for memorization purposes any more than are the footnotes of the Catechism.

3.3.2. In Answer 4 the text reference Matthew 22 does not function as a footnote after a text, but in a more deliberate way to *introduce* a direct Scripture quotation. This text reference belongs in the wording of the Answer and has no footnote-like function. For memorization purposes this is also a much easier way to reference a Scripture text that *must* be memorized because it functions as part of the wording of the Answer.

3.3.3. In response to Carman-West’s concern about good memorization practice (i.e., include the full Scripture reference: “Matthew 22:37-40”), it seems that memorization practice was exactly what the authors of the catechism had in mind (i.e., keep it simple – “Matthew 22”). The church at Carman West states elsewhere in its letter: “We should ... do what we can to avoid making memorizing... unnecessarily complicated” (cf. last part of Observation 2.8.2 above).

3.4. *Heidelberg Catechism Answer 10*

3.4.1. The church at Carman West is correct that the word “displeased” in our Answer 10 is a broader and weaker term than the word “angry.” Carman West is also correct to point out that while “displeased” is not a mistranslation of the original, it is certainly not the best translation of the

original. The arguments of the SCBP against the suggestion of Carman West are not convincing. “Angry” is preferable to “displeased”.

- 3.5. *Heidelberg Catechism Answer 23 and the Apostles’ Creed*
  - 3.5.1. The SCBP was correct in pointing the church at Carman West to what our churches have decided for the text of the Apostles’ Creed. This is not simply a matter of linguistic changes, with the SCBP going back to the original version and lining up with a 1500 year ecclesiastical tradition, but rather it is a matter the churches have previously given some careful and deliberate thought to and made decisions about (e.g. *Acts of Synod Smithville 1980*, Article 107). We have the ICET of the Apostles’ Creed as basis, with variations from this basis, by Synod decision; changes to the wording are not left to the SCBP. If Carman West wishes to see a change, it should interact in the appropriate way with past Synod decisions.
  - 3.5.2. The SCBP is correct to hold to the principle of consistency, so that the text of the Apostles’ Creed is the same in both Answer 23 of the Catechism and in the ecumenical creeds section of the *Book of Praise*.
- 3.6. *Heidelberg Catechism Answer 43*
  - 3.6.1. The church at Carman West has not given sufficient attention to the immediate context of the word “death” in Answer 43.
- 3.7. *Heidelberg Catechism Answer 75 (A)*
  - 3.7.1. The church at Carman-West, pleading for the addition of the words “and broken”, cites 1 Corinthians 11 as rendered in the KJV. The text of our Catechism is based on Synod-approved translations of Scripture which do not support that rendering.
- 3.8. *Heidelberg Catechism Answer 75 (B)*
  - 3.8.1. In the case of preference between “everlasting life” and “eternal life” in Answer 75 of the Catechism, the SCBP is correct to point out that there is already variation throughout the Catechism: sometimes “everlasting life” and other times “eternal life.” However, it is worth noting what Carman West points out, namely, both Answer 75 and Answer 79 have to do with the same subject matter (the Lord’s Supper) and this could warrant similar wording in both Answers. Since memorization of this part of the Catechism

is complicated enough, it is warranted to avoid unnecessary variations that may make memorization of the Catechism unnecessarily complicated. “Eternal life” in both Answer 75 and 79 is preferable.

3.9. *Heidelberg Catechism font size*

3.9.1. Synod agrees with the recommendation of the churches at Burlington-Rehoboth and Spring Creek regarding font size. The SCBP should look into increasing the font size of the Heidelberg Catechism to bring it into conformity with the font size of the other confessions in the *Book of Praise*.

3.10. *Belgic Confession Preface/Introduction and Article 3*

3.10.1. The corrections presented by the SCBP for the Belgic Confession are all warranted and the changes should be made:

3.10.1.1 The final sentence of the Preface/Introduction should be changed to: “Its excellence as one of the best statements of Reformed doctrine has been generally recognized.” The SCBP is correct to note that the word “symbolical” is not generally understood in the way in which it originally was meant here.

3.10.1.2 In the Preface/Introduction to the Belgic Confession, the words “In the following year” should be removed and the relevant sentence begun with: “A copy was sent to King Philip II...” This corrects a historical inaccuracy.

3.10.1.3 In Article 3 of the Belgic Confession, the word “impulse” should be changed to “will” as the SCBP suggests in order to bring this in line with a previous synod decision to use the NIV (as well as the newly-adopted ESV) text and wording for the prose sections of the *Book of Praise*.

3.11. *Canons of Dort, Chapter 1, Rejection of Errors introduction*

3.11.1. The SCBP should make the necessary correction so that the introductory words to the Rejection of Errors after Chapter 1 would read: “Having explained the true doctrine of election and reprobation, Synod rejects the following errors...”

3.12. *Church Order, Article 59*

3.12.1. The SCBP is correct to point to the decision of Synod Smithers 2007 when it suggests a change from “engrafted” to “incorporated” in Article 59 of the Church Order. What Synod Smithers 2007 decided with respect to the wording of Answer 74 of the Catechism would pertain also to the

wording of Article 59. See also the Form for the Baptism of Adults which uses the word “incorporation” (p.590, APV *Book of Praise*).

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

##### 4.1. *Re: Heidelberg Catechism*

- 4.1.1. To adopt the recommendation of the SCBP to change the relevant sentence in the Preface/Introduction to read: “The National Synods of the sixteenth century adopted it as one of the doctrinal standards of the Reformed Churches...”
- 4.1.2. To not approve the proposal of the SCBP to change the wording of Answer 115;
- 4.1.3. To not approve the proposal of the church at Carman West to include the full text reference “Matthew 22:37-40” in Answer 4;
- 4.1.4. To adopt the recommendation of Carman West to change the word “displeased” to “angry” in Answer 10;
- 4.1.5. To not approve the recommendation of Carman West to change the wording of the Apostles’ Creed in Answer 23 of the Catechism and in the ecumenical creeds section of the *Book of Praise*;
- 4.1.6. To not approve the recommendation of Carman West to change the word “death” in Answer 43;
- 4.1.7. To not approve the recommendation of Carman West to add the words “and broken” in Answer 75;
- 4.1.8. To adopt the recommendation of Carman West to change the words “everlasting life” to “eternal life” in Answer 75;
- 4.1.9. To mandate the SCBP to increase the font size of the Heidelberg Catechism to make it the same as the other confessions;

##### 4.2. *Re: Belgic Confession*

- 4.2.1. To adopt the recommendation of the SCBP to remove the word “symbolical” from the Preface/Introduction;
- 4.2.2. To approve the correction of the historical inaccuracy in the Preface/ Introduction as the SCBP proposes;
- 4.2.3. To adopt the recommendation of the SCBP to change the word “impulse” to “will” in Article 3 of the Belgic Confession;

- 4.3. *Re: Canons of Dort*  
To approve the SCBP's correction of the introductory words to the Rejection of Errors after Chapter 1, to read "election and reprobation" instead of "the perseverance of the saints";
- 4.4. *Re: Church Order Article 59*  
To adopt the recommendation of the SCBP to change "engrafted" to "incorporated" (Article 59 CO);
- 4.5. *Re: Mandate Clarification*  
To decide that all requests concerning factual errors, grammatical, typographical or other minor stylistic matters throughout the *Book of Praise* may be addressed by individuals or churches to the SCBP for its consideration and possible suggestion for change to a future synod. All requests concerning other changes to the contents of the *Book of Praise* (e.g. translation of confessions, changes to metrical psalms, rewording and rhyming of psalms and hymns, changes to liturgical forms) need to arise out of the churches in the ecclesiastical way, namely from consistory to classis to regional synod and general synod.

## ADOPTED

### Article 126 – Gereja-Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia (GGRI)

Committee 3 presented its third draft and this was the result:

#### 1. Material:

- 1.1. Report from the CRCA (8.2.1) and the CRCA Supplementary Report (8.2.1.3)
- 1.2. Letters from the churches at Carman West (8.3.1.8), Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.1.17), Lincoln (8.3.1.23), Orangeville (8.3.1.25) and Burlington-Rehoboth (8.3.1.26)
- 1.3. Letter of greeting to Synod 2013 from the GGRI by Rev. Pila Njuka, chairman of the Committee on Relations of the GGRI (8.1.36)

#### 2. Observations:

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 decided "to accept the invitation of the RCI to enter into a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship" and "to maintain the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship under the adopted rules" (*Acts of Synod 2010*, Article 108, Recommendation 4.4-5). These Reformed Churches in Indonesia are referred to in their own language as the Gereja-Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia (GGRI) in the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT).

- 2.2. The CRCA reports that it reverted to the use of GGRI-NTT for these churches instead of the acronym RCI, which Synod Burlington 2010 used. The reason is that the name GGRI-NTT is commonly used by our sister churches and by many in our churches. The use of RCI would only increase confusion about the different churches in Indonesia.
- 2.3. The CRCA explains that “there are three federations in Indonesia which have the name GGRI.” They are located in the provinces of Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT), Kalimantan Barat (KalBar) and Papua. Now that these federations have united, the federation can be referred to as GGRI at the national level and its regional synods can be designated according to its respective provinces as GGRI-KalBar, GGRI-NTT and GGRI-Papua.
- 2.4. The three federations originate from mission work conducted by our sister churches in the Netherlands, they are listed as three distinct groups of churches in Indonesia, and the RCN maintain a sister church relationship with each one (<http://www.bbk.gkv.nl/ecumenical-contacts/732/>). A historical overview of the development of the GGRI in their respective three provinces can be found on the website of the RCN at <http://www.bbk.gkv.nl/styleit/706/>.
- 2.5. The first National Synod of the GGRI took place in Sentani, Papua, Indonesia, from February 22-25, 2012. No invitation was extended to the Canadian Reformed Churches. The FRCA was invited to this national synod and Synod Armadale 2012 of the FRCA has subsequently accepted the GGRI as sister churches.
- 2.6. The CRCA had not been consulted or informed of the merger of the three federations before it took place, but received a letter in November 2012 to inform the Canadian Reformed Churches of the development. The deputies of the GGRI apologized for not inviting the Canadian Reformed Churches as sister churches of the GGRI-NTT to the first National Synod of the GGRI. They expressed appreciation for the presence of Rev. Versteeg even though he was not there officially on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches.
- 2.7. The letter from the GGRI explained that previously the GGRI-NTT held national Conferences of the Reformed Churches in Indonesia together with the Reformed Churches in KalBar and Papua. “The forum of a National Synod has now taken the place of the forum of a National Conference which until now did not have the authority to make binding ecclesiastical decisions. The purpose of forming a

National Synod of the Reformed Churches in Indonesia was to enable the Reformed Churches in their respective three provinces to work together more closely and to help each other. This confirms the unity of faith on the basis of Holy Scripture, as summarized in the Three Forms of Unity and with the Reformed Church Order in Indonesia as our norm in fulfilling our calling and service in a uniform way in order to testify of the Reformed faith in Indonesia more effectively as put into practice by you, our brothers in the federations of the Reformed churches in Canada and the Netherlands.”

- 2.8. The letter from the GGRI goes on to describe the historical background of the GGRI as resulting from joint mission work of the RCN and the Canadian Reformed Churches and speaks of “the joyful developments regarding the unification of the Reformed Churches of Indonesia in these three provinces,” expressing the hope that this will be reported to the upcoming General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches.
- 2.9. The Committee on Relations of the GGRI requests “that the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad of the Canadian Reformed Churches propose to the General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches that the bond of ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI-NTT may be broadened since we now form a national federation of Reformed Churches in Indonesia.”
- 2.10. The Committee on Relations of the GGRI also writes: “We are also looking further ahead to the strategic impact and prospect that this proposal may have in connection with the efforts of your CRCA to promote the unification of the Reformed Calvinist Churches (GGRC) with the GGRI and also remembering the existence of churches which are the results of mission work of the church at Smithville in Timor and the College of the Reformed Christian Religion (Sekolah Tinggi Agama Kristen Reformed Indonesia / STAKRI) in Kupang.”
- 2.11. The CRCA disagrees with the proposal of the GGRI to accept them as a federation at the national level. It states first of all that “we do not know the other two federations (in Papua and in Kalimantan Barat) at all.” Secondly, it questions why neither the GGRC nor the church of Smithville and the mission churches in Timor were informed about this process of unification, whereas other sister churches were invited and were present. Thirdly, it asks how important a relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches is for the GGRI since the Canadian Reformed Churches were not invited

- to the first general synod and it took almost nine months to receive a letter from them.
- 2.12. The CRCA therefore recommends “to suspend the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI (NTT), to take up contact with the Committee on Relations of the Reformed Churches in Indonesia to gain more information about this new federation and to come with a recommendation to the General Synod of 2016 regarding a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI.” The concern of the CRCA is to “tread carefully and follow proper procedure.”
- 2.13. The GGRI-NTT has a sister church relationship with the Calvinist Reformed Churches (GGRC) in West Timor. The CRCA has been actively encouraging these two church federations to become one. The CRCA notes that “as Canadian Reformed Churches we should not make any decision that would cause this process to slow down or come to a stop and both church federations should be encouraged to continue to seek ecclesiastical unity. We have experienced that often this can be done best by someone from or delegated by the CRCA being present there from time to time to bring them together and facilitate a meeting between delegates from both federations.”
- 2.14. The CRCA also notes that it “encouraged the GGRI (NTT) to come to closer cooperation with the Canadian Reformed Church of Smithville, especially in the area of theological education.” A theological school has been established in Kupang, Timor, through the work of Rev. Edwer Dethan, missionary of Smithville. This institution is flourishing and has already received accreditation from the Indonesian government. The theological seminary of the GGRI-NTT has a relatively long history but is struggling to establish itself properly and is not yet accredited by the government.
- 2.15. Burlington-Rehoboth expresses its reservation regarding the recommendation to suspend the relationship with the GGRI-NTT and asks: “What other options did the committee consider? We also note that the FRCA is still maintaining EF with the GGRI (NTT).”
- 2.16. Speaking on behalf of the FRCA, br. Wayne Pleiter cautioned Synod 2013 against following the recommendation of the CRCA to suspend relations, since that would be a “setback” in the interaction between the Canadian Reformed Churches and the GGRI.
- 2.17. The church at Carman West notes the common mission history of the Reformed Churches in Indonesia and emphasizes that the three federations of the GGRI have not become an essentially new body of

churches but a larger body of churches maintaining the same Three Forms of Unity and the Reformed Church Order. Carman West also states that the GGRC have already shown themselves not to be eager to pursue unification with the GGRI-NTT. This should not be used against the GGRI. Rather, the Canadian Reformed Churches should make use of the opportunity to encourage unity between the GGRI and the GGRC as well as with the churches in Timor being established through the mission work of Smithville. Carman West recommends that Synod Carman 2013:

- [1.] Accept the apologies of the GGRI for not having invited us to their First National Synod;
- [2.] Accept the offer of ecclesiastical fellowship with the reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRI);
- [3.] Mandate the CRCA to take up contact with the Committee on Relations of the Reformed Churches in Indonesia and to request them to be mindful of our rules for ecclesiastical fellowship.

- 2.18. Fergus-Maranatha notes that “language barriers, as in the case of contact with churches in Korea and Indonesia and the matter of distance make it difficult to work together fruitfully.”
- 2.19. The church at Orangeville recommends that synod decide:
  - 2.19.1. To suspend the relationship of EF with the GGRI-NTT;
  - 2.19.2. To suspend further efforts at establishing EF with various churches in Indonesia until such a time there is greater clarity on the situation of the Indonesian churches;
  - 2.19.3. To leave it to churches involved in mission work in Indonesia to assist the churches in growing in Reformed character by sending someone when necessary and requested.
- 2.20. The Vineyard Canadian Reformed Church of Lincoln commends the CRCA “for the efforts for the sake of church unity and ecclesiastical fellowship with the churches in Indonesia.”
- 2.21. In the letter of greeting from the GGRI to Synod Carman 2013, Rev. Pila Njuka, chairman of the Committee on Relations of the GGRI, writes: “Rev. Souman witnessed that we invited the GGRC to unify with GGRI in 2016. We would like to give them time to discuss it among themselves. We hope and pray that they will join the GGRI because the GGRI is now one national church or one federation with the GGRI in Papua and West Kalimantan. It would be great if the GGRC would become part of this federation. We will invite them to our upcoming Synod and the same thing will be stressed again.”

2.22. In the same letter, Rev. Pila Njuka informs us in regard to the GGRI-NTT: “We would like to let you know that our Synod is scheduled to be convened from August 6-20 in 2013. A letter of invitation will be sent. We hope that as our sister churches, the Canadian Reformed Churches will send a delegation to our Synod.” This is a regional synod of the GGRI-NTT, not a general synod of the entire federation of the GGRI.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. The GGRI-KalBar, GGRI-NTT and the GGRI-Papua share a common mission history. They have expressed their commitment to uphold Scripture together as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity and confirmed their intent to abide by the Reformed Church Order. Given the prayer of Jesus Christ for the unity of the church (John 17:20-23), it should be a source of joy to note this. It is regrettable that the CRCA was not informed or consulted about the unification of the GGRI-NTT with the GGRI-Papua and the GGRI-KalBar. It would have been good if the Canadian Reformed Churches could join the sister churches in Australia and the Netherlands at the National Synod and express our joy and thankfulness for this unification.
- 3.2. The GGRI apologized for not informing the Canadian Reformed Churches about the plans for unification and for not inviting the Canadian Reformed Churches to the first National Synod in 2012. Synod Carman 2013 would do well to accept these apologies.
- 3.3. The CRCA is overstating matters when it says “we do not know the other two federations (in Papua and in Kalimantan Barat) at all.” While this may apply to the GGRI-KalBar, we should not forget our history of extensive involvement with the GGRI-Papua and current contacts. As can be seen in 2013 Yearbook of the Canadian Reformed Churches, we have been heavily involved in the mission work among the GGRI-Papua from 1960-1976 through the mission work undertaken by Rev. H. Knigge through the church in Toronto and subsequently through Rev. H. Versteeg (1977-1997). He still visits the churches there annually (December-January) and has reported on his activities to the Canadian Reformed Churches in Mission News. Support for the GGRI-Papua also takes place through the Feunekes family, which is supported through a committee of the Canadian Reformed Church of Aldergrove with donations coming from various Canadian Reformed Churches in Western Canada.

- 3.4. It is true, however, that all we know about the GGRI-KalBar is that after having been established by mission work from our sister churches in the Netherlands, they have progressed sufficiently to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCN. Given our relationship with the GGRI-NTT we should be interested in getting to know the GGRI-KalBar and the GGRI-Papua better.
- 3.5. Although information about the GGRI-KalBar and GGRI-Papua can be gleaned from several sources, including the letter which as received from the GGRI, this information is scattered and does not give a complete picture of these churches. Making a decision solely based on the fact that these churches were the fruit of the combined mission efforts of the Dutch sister churches and the church in Toronto is not prudent and is not the way we went about such requests in the past. The GGRI-NTT is the result of the mission work of our Dutch sister churches. Nevertheless, the Canadian Reformed Churches were also careful not to rush into a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI-NTT.
- 3.6. Although the CRCA is correct in stating that we do not have relationships with parts of church federations, this is an exceptional situation. It would not be good for the GGRI-NTT if we would suspend our relationship with them. At the same time we are not ready yet to enter into a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship at the national level with the GGRI. It is best for the coming three years to maintain the status quo and give the CRCA the opportunity to do due diligence in preparing a good recommendation for General Synod 2016, based on its own findings.
- 3.7. Observation 2.11 notes the question of the CRCA: “why neither the GGRC nor the church of Smithville and the mission churches in Timor were informed about this process of unification, whereas other sister churches were invited and were present.” A letter from the CRCA to the GGRI-NTT dated August 5, 2010 shows that the committee did inform the GGRI-NTT of our decision to accept their invitation to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship and it attached the relevant decision of Synod Burlington 2010. However, the letter does not offer an explanation of what it means “to maintain the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship under the adopted rules.” It appears therefore that there was a lack of sufficient information on our part as well as on the part of the GGRI-NTT. In any case, not being invited to the first national synod of the GGRI was an oversight

on the part of the convening church of the GGRI-Papua and a written apology for this has been extended to the Canadian Reformed Churches. This apology should be accepted.

- 3.8. The CRCA has made it clear that the involvement of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Indonesia has already provided opportunities for encouraging church unity between the GGRI-NTT and the GGRC. Now that the GGRI-NTT are united with churches of the same Reformed confessions and church order in KalBar and Papua, the opportunity for further interaction and encouragement is present on an even larger scale. In Observation 2.10, it is clear that the GGRI are interested in the involvement of the Canadian Reformed Churches in promoting “the unification of the Reformed Calvinist Churches (GGRC) with the GGRI.” We should see this as a welcome opportunity to participate in the continuing church gathering work of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
- 3.9. The GGRI in the respective provinces have entered into a period of transition by deciding to federate at a national level. Our knowledge about the current state of affairs in the GGRI-KalBar and GGRI- Papua is limited. Now that men who have functioned in the Committee on Relations of the GGRI-NTT are active at the national level, they can help us come to a fuller understanding of the churches in those other provinces. Until then, it would be difficult to proceed beyond the relationship we have with the GGRI-NTT.
- 3.10. Suspending the relationship with the GGRI-NTT would undermine the potential of the Canadian Reformed Churches to play a positive role among the GGRI and to encourage them to work toward ecclesiastical unity with the GGRC and the churches being established through the mission work of the Canadian Reformed Church of Smithville on the island of Timor. As described by the FRCA delegates, it would be a “setback” instead of a step forward such as has already been taken by the FRCA, which have acknowledged the development of the national federation of the GGRI “with gratitude to the Lord.” (See the “Free Reformed Churches of Australia - Press Release of Synod Armadale 2012 - Week 2,” in the section on “Reformed Churches in Indonesia,” which can be found at [http://synod.frca.org.au/2012/acts/pressrelease2\\_FRCA\\_Synod.pdf](http://synod.frca.org.au/2012/acts/pressrelease2_FRCA_Synod.pdf)).
- 3.11. In regard to the comment of Fergus-Maranatha concerning “language barriers,” it should be noted that this is not a significant issue in

contacts with the Reformed Churches with which we have contact in Indonesia. Various members of these churches (both GGRI-NTT and GGRC) are able to communicate in English. An issue that does play an important role is that of the cultural differences. As is the case in relationships with other church federations in non-Western societies, a good understanding of the culture is important to get a grip on developments within these churches and to be able to help and encourage them. Time and effort should be spent on this.

- 3.12. The proposal of the church at Orangeville essentially involves drawing back rather than continuing or increasing our interaction with the churches in Indonesia. The best way to gain the desired “greater clarity on the situation of the Indonesian churches” is to put greater effort into knowing them better through more regular contact.
- 3.13. The church of Smithville is actively involved in mission work in West Timor. Through Rev. Edwer Dethan a theological school has been established and Smithville has tried to establish contact with the GGRI-NTT. This is starting to have results, but they are limited so far. We can be thankful for progress, but in this situation we cannot expect Smithville to assist these churches in growing in Reformed character by sending someone when necessary and requested, as Orangeville suggests. Strengthening churches and helping them to grow in Reformed character in this context is a responsibility for sister churches, while the church in Smithville focuses on mission work. We have the ability and opportunity to combine our resources with that of the FRCA for the sake of the development of Reformed Churches in Indonesia.
- 3.14. In order to get to know the GGRI better and to offer support and encouragement and foster church unity among the Reformed Churches in Indonesia, it would be beneficial to send a delegation to the Regional Synod of the GGRI-NTT, to be convened on the island of Sumba from August 6-20 in 2013, as well as to the national synod scheduled to take place there in 2016. Combining a visit to the Regional Synod of the GGRI-NTT with a trip to Timor to visit the GGRC and the churches being established through the work of Rev. E. Dethan could also be considered by the CRCA in consultation with the Canadian Reformed Church of Smithville.

#### **4. Recommendation**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To accept the apologies of the GGRI for not having invited us to their first National Synod;
- 4.2. To continue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI-NTT under the adopted rules;
- 4.3. To mandate the CRCA:
  - 4.3.1. To discuss our rules for ecclesiastical fellowship with the Committee on Relations of the GGRI and to gather as much information as is needed to come to a good recommendation to General Synod 2016 regarding a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI;
  - 4.3.2. To gather and evaluate information regarding the GGRI-KalBar and the GGRI-Papua in order to prepare a proposal as to how to deal with the GGRI as a national federation instead of dealing exclusively with the GGRI-NTT, which has become part of this larger federation of churches;
  - 4.3.3. To request input from the FRCA and the RCN;
  - 4.3.4. To try to ensure that a delegation of two brothers is sent to Indonesia to represent the Canadian Reformed Churches at a synod of the GGRI-NTT;
  - 4.3.5. To work in consultation and cooperation with the deputies of the FRCA, with the church of Smithville and the church of Edmonton- Immanuel and as much as possible and desirable with other organizations involved in the work among the GGRI, to encourage and support these churches in their efforts to grow in the Reformed doctrine and Church Polity;
  - 4.3.6. To encourage the GGRI-NTT to seek cooperation with the Reformed Theological School in Kupang (established by the church in Smithville);
  - 4.3.7. To encourage the GGRI-NTT to seek closer contact and cooperation with the GGRC and to monitor the progress of the dialogue between the GGRI-NTT and the GGRC.

## **ADOPTED**

### **Article 127 – Gereja-Gereja Calvini Reformasi di Indonesia (GGRC)**

Committee 3 presented a proposal. With a few changes, this was the result:

#### **1. Material:**

Report from the CRCA (8.2.1) and the CRCA Supplementary Report (8.2.1.3)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 decided the following in regard to the Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia (*Acts*, Article 108, Recommendation 4.1-3):
  - [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.
- 2.2. These Calvinist Reformed Churches are referred to in their own language as the Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Calvinis (GGRC). The CRCA reports that it now uses the acronym GGRC to refer to these churches.
- 2.3. A matter of concern noted in the *Acts of Synod 2010*, Article 108, Observation 2.5 was the “problems between the CRCI (=GGRC) and the GGRM (the Pilgrim Reformed Churches), originally one federation together with the CRCI.” In May 2011, Dr. A.J. Pol accompanied Rev. A. Souman on a visit to the GGRC on the islands of Timor and Rote. The CRCA reports with thankfulness that the visit could be instrumental in bringing the GGRM back together with the GGRC after they had been separated from each other for some time. “Delegates from both groups of churches came together and signed an agreement of reconciliation during this visit. In July 2011 a synod was convened where this reconciliation was confirmed. One of the decisions was to use the name GGRC for the federation. Another decision was that the churches which previously were called GGRM would discontinue the practice of ordaining women as deacons.”
- 2.4. During his visit in July 2012, it became apparent to Rev. Souman that “not all the decisions made in the agreement of reconciliation have been implemented yet.” Also, although progress has been made in regard to ensuring that ecclesiastical assemblies take place, such meetings are not yet regular “and the synod did not finish its work properly.”
- 2.5. The CRCA notes that “the churches depend too much on one person, who has a lot of influence in the churches and several of the delegates were extremely hesitant to commit to anything without his approval.”

- 2.6. The CRCA does however see slow movement “in the right direction.” “Help, encouragement and from time to time also admonition from sister churches” is needed on a regular basis. The Canadian Reformed Churches have been the most involved in this situation even though there is no ecclesiastical fellowship with these churches yet.
- 2.7. Synod notes that “the CRCA is convinced that we do have a responsibility towards the GGRC, even if we cannot decide to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with them. There is still too much uncertainty about the direction of the GGRC” (see *Acts of Synod Burlington 2010*, Article 108, Recommendation 4.2, p.189).
- 2.8. Regular visits are important to continue to encourage ecclesiastical cooperation and the pursuit of ecclesiastical unity between the GGRC and the GGRI-NTT, which have already been sister churches of each other for about twenty years. During his visit in July 2012 Rev. Souman observed that “the GGRI(NTT) showed willingness to work on this unity, while the GGRC also expressed willingness but was a bit more reluctant.”
- 2.9. The pursuit of unity is also important since “the mission churches established through the mission work of Smithville indicated that they intend to join the new federation once the GGRI(NTT) and GGRC decide to unite.”
- 2.10. The CRCA has stayed in touch with the deputies of the FRCA in regard to the GGRC and has the impression “that the deputies of the FRCA and the CRCA agree on most of the issues regarding the relationship between the GGRI and GGRC.”
- 2.11. Given the uncertainty in regard to the direction of the GGRC, the CRCA stresses the responsibility of the Canadian Reformed Churches “to send someone to Timor on a regular basis to encourage the GGRC to become more Reformed and apply the Reformed doctrine and church order in their church life.” This is all the more important since “the Canadian Reformed Churches are in a better position to assist the GGRC to maintain, defend and promote the Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline and liturgy and to be watchful for deviations than any other church federation with which the GGRC has contact.”

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. Faithfulness to Scripture as we confess in the Three Forms of Unity as well as loyal observance of the Reformed Church Order

is essential for ecclesiastical fellowship between Reformed church federations. There are no indications that in the GGRC there is a lack of faithfulness to Scripture. The weaknesses seem to lie in the realm of a proper understanding and implementation of the Reformed Church Order.

- 3.2. The CRCA should give special attention to finding out what obstacles the GGRC are experiencing in understanding and implementing the articles of the Reformed Church Order and how to help the GGRC to remedy the situation. Education given through the Reformed Theological School in Kupang (established by the church in Smithville) can also be helpful in consolidating the GGRC in Reformed doctrine and church polity.
- 3.3. It is good to note with thankfulness to the Lord that the visit of Dr. A.J. Pol and Rev. A. Souman could be instrumental in bringing about reconciliation between the GGRC and the GGRM. The CRCA should be requested to continue to monitor developments to see if the decisions made at that time are implemented.
- 3.4. Since the GGRC are receptive to input from the Canadian Reformed Churches and are willing to work with this, efforts should be made to continue to assist them in their development. This will help to lay the basis for a future relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship in which we as churches help each other “to maintain, defend and promote the Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline and liturgy.”
- 3.5. Given the fact that the FRCA are in close geographical proximity to the churches in Indonesia, it is important to stay in contact with their deputies to ensure a harmonious and fruitful approach in dealing with the GGRC.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. At this time not to offer a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship to the GGRC, but to work toward that goal;
- 4.2. To note with gratitude to the Lord that the work of the Canadian Reformed Churches has borne fruit, also in the reconciliation that could take place between the GGRC and the GGRM;
- 4.3. To mandate the CRCA:
  - 4.3.1. To continue contact with the GGRC to encourage these churches to be faithful to the Reformed doctrine and church order;
  - 4.3.2. When possible to send someone from or delegated by the

- CRCA to help and encourage these churches to grow in Reformed character, giving priority to finding out what obstacles the GGRC are experiencing in understanding and implementing the articles of the Reformed Church Order and how to help the GGRC to remedy the situation;
- 4.3.3. To work in consultation and cooperation with the deputies of the FRCA, with the church of Smithville and the church of Edmonton- Immanuel, and, as much as possible and desirable, with other organizations involved in the work among the Reformed churches in the province of NTT;
- 4.3.4 To encourage the GGRC to make use of the Reformed Theological School in Kupang (established by the church in Smithville) for the training for the ministry in their churches.

## ADOPTED

### **Article 128 – Appeal of Burlington-Fellowship - re: Women’s Voting as Local Matter**

Committee 1 presented its second draft which contained a two part response to Burlington-Fellowship. With respect to Part One, this was the result:

#### **1. Material:**

- 1.1. Letter from the church at Burlington-Fellowship (8.5.24)
- 1.2. Letter of appeal from the church at Burlington-Fellowship re: the decision of Regional Synod East 2008, Article 10 (8.5.24)

#### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Burlington-Fellowship (8.5.24) requests that Synod Carman 2013:
- [1.] Judge that Synod Burlington 2010 (Article 177) erred when it denied Burlington-Fellowship’s appeal without providing observations, considerations, nor adopting a recommendation;
- [2.] Judge that Synod Burlington 2010 failed to do justice to the appeal of Burlington-Fellowship in the manner in which it disposed of the appeal;
- [3.] Accept the re-submission of Burlington-Fellowship’s Appeal of 2010 (attached to its letter) for judgment in 2013 on the basis of Article 31 of the Church Order, unencumbered by Article 33.
- 2.2. *Acts of Synod 2010*, Article 177, shows that Synod Burlington 2010 defeated the advisory committee’s proposal. Based on that, the

chairman ruled that the appeal of Burlington-Fellowship was denied. However, no observations, considerations or recommendations were given to deny the appeal of Burlington-Fellowship.

### **3. Consideration:**

- 3.1. Burlington-Fellowship had the right to appeal a decision of Regional Synod 2008 according to Article 31 of the Church Order. Synod Burlington 2010 did not declare this appeal inadmissible. By implicitly declaring it admissible, Synod Burlington 2010 had the duty to deal with the appeal and also to provide Burlington-Fellowship with the grounds for denying the appeal. A ruling of the chairman that by defeating a proposal from an advisory committee the appeal is denied is not sufficient.

### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. That Burlington Synod 2010 (Article 177) erred when it denied Burlington-Fellowship's appeal without providing observations, considerations, nor adopting a recommendation;
- 4.2. That Synod Burlington 2010 failed to do justice to the appeal of Burlington-Fellowship;
- 4.3. To declare the resubmission of Burlington-Fellowship's appeal against Article 10 in the Acts of Regional Synod East 2008 admissible.

**ADOPTED** with Br. L. Kampen abstaining (as per Article 32 CO)

With respect to Part Two, with a few minor changes, this was the result:

### **1. Observations:**

- 1.1. 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."
- 1.2. 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."
- 1.3. 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.

## **2. Considerations:**

- 2.1. 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.
- 2.2. Regional Synod 2008 used a Consideration from Classis Central Ontario, June 13, 2008, referring to the *Acts of General Synods 1974, 1977, 1986, 1995, 1998, 2001 and 2007* in order to prove that "broader assemblies have determined that the issue of women's voting is a matter of the churches in common."
- 2.3. The above list of general synods does not include the decision of Synod Smithville 1980 which defeated a motion "to leave the matter of Women's Voting Rights in the freedom of the churches." The third ground of that defeated motion is as follows: "Article 22, Church Order [Edition 1968] leaves room to the local churches to act according to local regulations, in accordance with what has been agreed upon by the churches re: the matter of voting in Article 22 of the Church Order" (Art 80).
- 2.4. Synod Carman 2013 notes that the church of Burlington-Fellowship has never appealed the decisions of synods which declared the matter to be a matter for the churches in common. Burlington-Fellowship recognized the federative nature of the women's voting matter when it endorsed the overture of sr. C. VanEerden to Synod Abbotsford 1995 who included as one of her grounds, "Women's voting is a matter which belongs to the churches in common."
- 2.5. Burlington-Fellowship incorrectly reasons that everything that is not in the Church Order should be left for local regulation. In other instances, synods have made binding decisions about matters which are not regulated in the Church Order.

## **3. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 3.1. That Regional Synod East 2008 was correct in stating that "broader assemblies have determined that the issue of women's voting is a matter of the churches in common...";

- 3.2. To deny the appeal of Burlington-Fellowship.

**ADOPTED** with Br. L. Kampen abstaining (as per Article 32 CO)

### **Article 129 – CCU - Coordinators’ Report**

Committee 4 presented its second draft. This was the result:

#### **1. Material:**

- 1.1. Report from Coordinators for the Committee for Church Unity, with appendices (8.2.2)
- 1.2. Addendum from the Coordinators for the Committee for Church Unity (8.2.2.b)
- 1.3. Letters from the churches at Aldergrove (8.3.2.1), Abbotsford (8.3.2.2), Attercliffe (8.3.2.3), Cloverdale (8.3.2.4), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.2.5), Grand Rapids (8.3.2.6), Hamilton-Providence (8.3.2.7), London (8.3.2.9) and Langley (8.3.2.10)

#### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. The coordinators for the CCU note that Synod Burlington 2010 did not give them a specific and well-defined mandate (Article 63); they operated on the assumption that their task was to carry on in the same direction as the previous coordinators, which was to “[promote] unity with the United Reformed Churches in North America” (*Acts of Synod Smithers 2007*, Article 174).
- 2.2. The coordinators report on their many and sundry activities: they attended the URCNA General Synods in London 2010 and Nyack 2012 and coordinated the visit of Drs. G.H. Visscher and J.P. VanVliet to Synod London 2010 at which the professors answered questions from the delegates; the coordinators met with representatives of CERCU several times; they visited various meetings of the classes of the URCNA, which provided opportunity to address “concerns, challenges and fears that live among the URCNA regarding merger with the CanRC.”
- 2.3. The coordinators report on the decisions of Synod London 2010 as they pertain to the unity process. Synod London 2010 decided that the Theological Education Committee’s mandate had been fulfilled and was at an end. It concluded the mandate of the Songbook Committee to produce a common songbook with the CanRC for use in a united federation, but directed the committee to maintain dialogue with the CanRC on this topic. It accepted for continued study the Proposed Joint Church Order 2010 and continued the Proposed Joint Church Order

committee, mandating it to continue working with the CanRC sub-committee to draft joint regulations for synodical procedure. Finally, Synod London encouraged the churches to continue to give feedback to the Liturgical Forms and Confessions Committee in its ongoing work. Synod London wrote a letter to the CanRC (see Appendix 2 of the CCU report) in response to Synod Burlington 2010's letter addressed to the URCNA and to Synod London 2010 (*Acts of Synod Burlington 2010*, Article 169).

- 2.4. Although the CanRC experienced disappointment on several counts because of the decisions of Synod London 2010, the coordinators suggest there is reason for hope. Dialogue between the URCNA's Songbook Committee and the CanRC sub-committee is still with a view to the possibility of a common songbook in a united federation. The PJCO 2010 was accepted for continued study as the church order for a united federation. Furthermore, Synod London 2010 adopted the following recommendation: "That Synod encourage the churches to facilitate further opportunities to interact with the Canadian Reformed Churches by implementing the essential work of organizing events, speaking at conferences, writing columns, filling pulpits and otherwise building the organic, heartfelt unity on which federative unity must be built" (Article 47). The CCU notes the declaration of Synod London 2010, "That Synod explicitly reaffirm our conviction that the Canadian Reformed Churches are a federation of true and faithful churches of Christ, whom we love and respect as fellow-workers in the kingdom" (Article 47).
- 2.5. The coordinators observe that the decisions of Synod London 2010 have slowed down the process leading to merger, but assert that we must recognize that in any relationship both parties must be ready to move forward to the next stage; it would be counter-productive for one to be too insistent on moving ahead. They cite Synod London's recommendation, "That Synod recognize that challenges and concerns remain among both the committees and congregations of the URCNA with regard to our relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches" (Article 47). Likewise, the CERCU report to Synod Nyack 2012 spoke of "concerns and fears" among the URCNA regarding the pursuit of the ecumenical calling.
- 2.6. With respect to the Fifteen Points of Synod London 2010 (an elaboration of the Nine Points of Synod Schererville 2007), the coordinators observe that these points were adopted by synod with

reference to Federal Vision, a movement with particular views on covenant and baptism. The coordinators flag Point 12 of the Fifteen Points as being of most interest to the CanRC; namely, “The sacrament of Baptism does not affect the believer’s union with Christ *or* justification but is a confirmation and assurance of the benefits of Christ’s saving work to those who respond to the sacrament in the way of faith (HC, Lord’s Day 25 and 27).” In explanation, the coordinators state, “Contrary to the Federal Vision movement, we too believe that baptism does not bring about the believer’s union with Christ or justification. One is united to Christ through faith and one is justified through faith. It is good that we state this explicitly, since we are sometimes seen by some as being part of the Federal Vision movement.”

- 2.7. The coordinators contend that we should not feel threatened by Point 6 of the Nine Points adopted by Synod Schererville 2007. In Point 6, Synod Schererville 2007 rejected the error of those “...who teach that all baptized persons are in the covenant of grace in precisely the same way such that there is no distinction between those who have only an outward relation to the covenant of grace by baptism and those who are united to Christ by grace alone through faith alone (HC, Q&A 21, 60; B.C. 29)”. The coordinators comment: “As Canadian Reformed Churches, we too believe that while all covenant children receive the promise of salvation, not all will receive the promised salvation.” Synod London 2010 was asked whether Point 6 was directed at the CanRC and Synod replied that it was not but was intended to address “an error associated with Federal Vision which contends that in baptism a person is granted every spiritual gift, including a true and saving faith, the grace of conversion and justification.”
- 2.8. The coordinators suggest that this analysis offered of the Fifteen Points adopted by Synod London 2010 (and the Nine Points of Synod Schererville 2007) should be sufficient to allay fears among the CanRC regarding the content of these points.
- 2.9. The coordinators report that the URCNA has entered EF with the RCNZ and the RPCNA and continued contact with the RCN.
- 2.10. Besides some pulpit exchanges, between the time of Synod London 2010 and Synod Nyack 2012 the coordinators heard and saw little other activity from the URCNA with a view to facilitating opportunities for interaction, as was recommended by Synod London 2010.
- 2.11. The coordinators also give a summary of the decisions of Synod

Nyack 2012 with respect to the CanRC. Synod reiterated what Synod London 2010 said about local URCNA churches creating opportunities for interaction with the CanRC in order to get to know one another better. Synod decided to continue its PJCO committee and gave it the mandate to work out synodical regulations for a merged federation, while receiving for continued study the PJCO. Synod decided to take up the offer from the OPC to work together in a new Psalter Hymnal. The coordinators note how this decision is disappointing, but that it is understandable because, from the URCNA's point of view, there is no fear of a merger associated with working with the OPC on a songbook.

- 2.12. In an addendum, the coordinators report on a recent meeting with CERCU, at which they talked about ways to promote the process toward unity at the local level. Discussion regarding theological education and the support for at least one seminary is ongoing within the URCNA. At this meeting, the coordinators addressed concerns among some in the URCNA with regard to the position of the CanRC on Federal Vision. The URCNA brothers also reported that they are “giving serious consideration to working toward a recommendation to URC Synod 2016... to enter into a Phase 3A relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches. This would entail a commitment to making preparation for eventual, integrated federative church unity.”
- 2.13. While the coordinators wonder what their exact task is, they recommend reappointment in order to preserve momentum toward unity. They also recommend that Synod Carman 2013 reappoint the CanRC Church Order Committee so that the URC brothers have counterparts with whom to dialogue.
- 2.14. Aldergrove desires an expression of regret from Synod Carman 2013 about the lack of substantial progress in our merger talks with the URCNA and regret particularly that Synod London 2010 did not reappoint a Theological Education Committee and the Songbook Committee. In Aldergrove's view, the apparently faltering merger process receives its energy mostly from the side of the CanRC, with the URCNA appearing as somewhat reluctant partners. Aldergrove is concerned that the URCNA has “outstanding areas of concern” and that there is “suspicion” regarding the CanRC, though these concerns are nowhere clearly identified. Attercliffe, too, laments how our relationship with the URCNA has not progressed.

- 2.15. Aldergrove contests the statement of the coordinators, that “there has existed in the CanRC’s an element of exclusivism which could also create disinterest among the URC’s to join with them” and further, that “the old thinking that existed among some in the CanRC was that there could be only one visible manifestation of the true church so that every other church, other than one’s own, must be a false church.” Aldergrove finds that this statement too easily jettisons our federation’s historic emphasis on the obligation of ecclesiastical unity.
- 2.16. Aldergrove, Cloverdale and Attercliffe question the analysis of the coordinators, that their comments on the Fifteen Points are sufficient to allay fears regarding their content. These churches note that some points of Federal Vision can find sympathy in the CanRC and Cloverdale wonders if the URCNA has a clear picture of the Federal Vision movement. Aldergrove and Cloverdale question whether Point 12 of Synod London 2010 harmonizes with what we confess about the efficacy of baptism in Lord’s Day 26-27 as well as B.C. Article 34. The CanRC understanding of the position of all baptized children is well summarized in the “Prayer of Thanksgiving” in the *Form for the Baptism of Infants*: “We thank and praise you that you have forgiven us and our children all our sins through the blood of your beloved Son Jesus Christ. You received us through your Holy Spirit as members of your only-begotten Son and so adopted us to be your children. You sealed and confirmed this to us by holy baptism.” Cloverdale is concerned about the unclear “sic” in Point 12 and the implicit defense of “the covenant of works” in Point 5. Hamilton-Providence, on the other hand, is satisfied with the coordinators’ conclusions on this matter.
- 2.17. London, Grand Rapids and Aldergrove question the status of the Nine Points and Fifteen Points. First, London notes how this was going to be investigated by the coordinators (*Acts of Synod Burlington 2010*, Article 63, Recommendation 4.4), but it does not reappear in the report: “It is true that the letter from Synod London 2010 to the CanRC churches suggests that these Statements - dubbed “pastoral advice” – are not confessional in nature, but the CCU does not clarify this in its report for Synod 2013.” London recommends that the CCU as yet examine and report on the character and weight of “pastoral advice” or any other categories of synodical statements in the URCNA. Second, Grand Rapids directs attention to the decision of Synod Nyack 2012, where the URCNA defined the categories and respective authority of “Doctrinal Affirmation,” “Pastoral Advice,”

“Study Committee Report,” and “Synodical Judgment.” In particular, the “Doctrinal Affirmation” is of concern, since it requires submission and may not, either directly or indirectly, be contradicted in preaching or writing; Grand Rapids suggests that this represents an extra-confessional binding and must be evaluated by the coordinators and discussed with CERCU. Likewise, Aldergrove expresses unease about the status of the Fifteen Points of Synod London 2010, questioning if the CanRC must agree with these statements in order for merger talks to continue and if candidates for ordination in the URCNA would be questioned about these statements. Aldergrove and Cloverdale insist that we discourage the URCNA from making extra-confessional declarations and that we not give endorsement, implicitly or explicitly, to any extra- confessional declarations of the URCNA.

- 2.18. Grand Rapids notes with concern that the URCNA entered EF with the RPCNA, while Synod Burlington 2010 did not. It first questions if consultation between the CanRC and the URCNA took place before this relationship was formalized; second, it questions, “Do we now have a *de facto* Phase 2 relationship with the RPCNA?” Grand Rapids wants clarity on this matter from the coordinators.
- 2.19. Attercliffe wonders how the URCNA see Phase 3 coming to fruition if there is inactivity among many of the joint committees.
- 2.20. Abbotsford requests that the coordinators be given a clear mandate. Burlington-Ebenezer requests that the coordinators be mandated to encourage the URCNA leadership to implement Article 47 of Synod London 2010, about encouraging opportunities for interaction and seeking to allay suspicions about the CanRC. Aldergrove encourages a renewed consideration of the original Statements of Agreement received by Synod Neerlandia 2001 and by the General Synod of the URCNA in the same year and to uphold them as the basis of our continued dialogue.
- 2.21. Abbotsford draws attention to a number of positive local activities in conjunction with the URCNA, such as ministerial retreats, occasional combined catechism classes and youth gatherings and a combined men’s Bible study society. Abbotsford requests that the coordinators gather and share reports on how local churches foster unity between the CanRC and URCNA.
- 2.22. While the progress toward church unity with the URCNA “has been slow and at times frustrating,” Langley urges that the coordinators be reappointed with a general mandate of continuing discussions with the URCNA.

- 2.23. The coordinators recommend that synod:
- [1] Reappoint Coordinators for the Committee for Church Unity, giving a specific and well-defined mandate;
  - [2] Reappoint a CanRC Church Order Committee;
  - [3] Decide that the discussion concerning the Nine Points of Synod Schererville 2007 and the Fifteen Points of Synod London 2010 has been completed.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. The coordinators have been very active in promoting the unity process with the URCNA.
- 3.2. It should be noted that in many locales in Canada there has been excellent cooperation and fellowship among the CanRC and the URCNA (e.g., pulpit exchanges, joint church services, combined council meetings, Bible studies, ministerials, support of Christian schooling, joint church news).
- 3.3. It is disappointing that the CCU subcommittees, with the exception of the Church Order subcommittee, lack counterparts from the URCNA with which to dialogue and make joint submissions to our respective synods.
- 3.4. It would be beneficial for the coordinators to seek clarification on the authoritative status and definitions of the different categories of doctrinal statements adopted by recent URCNA synods; for example, whether a “Doctrinal Affirmation” binds the church membership or ministers in any way. Further, clarity is needed on the categories in which the Nine Points and Fifteen Points are found and discussion should be continued on their content. It is important that the coordinators do not officially endorse the Nine Points or the Fifteen Points, as the CanRC does not want to be bound by “extra-confessional” statements.
- 3.5. It would be helpful for the coordinators to discuss with CERCU the areas of concern or fear in the URCNA that seem to be hindering progress toward a merger with the CanRC.
- 3.6. It would be valuable for the coordinators to seek ways to facilitate the work of building unity on the local level, as well as to visit churches and classes of the URCNA, particularly in the United States.
- 3.7. A continued consideration of the original Statements of Agreement (*Acts of Synod Neerlandia 2001*, Appendix 9) and the Strategies to Church Unity (*Acts of Synod Neerlandia 2001*, Appendix 12) will provide a basis for continued dialogue between the coordinators

and CERCU. In particular, the Strategies to Church Unity speak of Phase 1 (“An Initial Recognition and Exploration”), Phase 2 (“Acceptance and Cooperation”) and Phase 3 (“Advanced Recognition to Union”). With respect to Phase 3, the Strategies state: “With the assistance of the deputies for ecclesiastical unity... proposals should be coordinated into one mutually acceptable draft plan for union, agreeable to all parties... The more detailed draft plan for union, including the formulation and adoption of a mutually agreed upon text of the Church Order, should be ready for adoption by the broadest assemblies of both federations... The agreement of Phase 2 should include some initial mutually agreeable provisions regarding theological education, song books, liturgical forms and customs and Bible translations. The further coordination of these matters in a definitive form would be the subject of the more detailed arrangement in Phase 3, as well as subsequent negotiations.”

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To thank the coordinators of the CCU for maintaining contact with the URCNA;
- 4.2. To reappoint the Coordinators of the CCU, mandating them:
  - 4.2.1. To discuss with CERCU the areas of concern or fear in the URCNA that seem to be hindering progress toward a merger with the CanRC;
  - 4.2.2. To seek ways to facilitate the work of building unity on the local level, as well as visiting churches and classes of the URCNA, particularly in the United States;
  - 4.2.3. To mandate the coordinators to discuss with CERCU how to make preparations for Phase 3, such as through the reappointment of the subcommittees for theological education, liturgical forms and confessions and a common songbook;
  - 4.2.4. To seek clarification from CERCU on the authoritative status and definitions of the different categories of doctrinal statements adopted by recent URCNA synods and to encourage the URCNA to refrain from making further statements of this nature;
- 4.3. To continue EF (Phase 2) with the URCNA under the adopted rules.

**ADOPTED**

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**Article 130 – CCU – Liturgical Forms and Confessions Subcommittee****1. Material:**

- 1.1. Report from the Liturgical Forms and Confessions Subcommittee of the Committee for Church Unity (8.2.2.1)
- 1.2. Letters from the churches at Attercliffe (8.3.2.3), Lincoln (8.3.2.8), Abbotsford (8.3.2.11) and Hamilton-Providence (8.3.2.12)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 gave the Liturgical Forms and Confessions subcommittee of the CCU the following mandate (*Acts*, Article 88, Recommendation 4.3):
  - [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 six months before the next general synod.
- 2.2. The committee also took note of the words of the letter from Synod Burlington 2010 to the URC Synod London 2010 (*Acts of Synod Burlington 2010*, Article 169): “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.”
- 2.3. The committee observed that Synod London 2010 gave the URC counterparts to the liturgical forms and confessions committee no mandate to cooperate with our committee. Subsequent to Synod Nyack 2012, the committee reports that there has also been no contact. However, Synod Nyack 2012 did decide to “adopt for provisional use the forms and prayers presented by the committee” (Article 44.2) and while its mandate was continued, Synod gave it no instruction to cooperate with our committee.
- 2.4. The committee reports that the Church Order subcommittee of the CCU requested permission to take on the task of drafting Forms for Discipline for a united federation. As this was not the Liturgical Forms and Confessions subcommittee mandate, it agreed.
- 2.5. The committee questions its value as an ongoing entity, as the Liturgical Forms Committee of the URCNA has no mandate to partner with its CanRC counterparts. The committee does not see what would be its function, should it be reappointed. Finally, it notes

the cooperation of the URCNA's songbook committee with the OPC, as confirmed by Synod Nyack 2012. The committee surmises that "if the common songbook with us has been shelved, then common liturgical forms with us are also unlikely."

- 2.6. The Liturgical Forms and Confessions Committee recommends that it not be reappointed at this time and that Synod expresses its sincere willingness to reappoint a Liturgical Forms and Confessions Committee as soon as the United Reformed Churches give their committee a mandate to work with the Canadian Reformed committee in pursuit of eventual merger.
- 2.7. Attercliffe agrees with the committee's suggestion that it not be reappointed, but that it should be, "as soon as the URC give their committee a mandate to work with the CanRC in pursuit of eventual merger."
- 2.8. Hamilton-Providence and Lincoln express disappointment that our committee was unable to function, but urges that the committee be reappointed so that it can correspond without delay with its URCNA counterparts, should it receive a mandate from the next URCNA synod to do so. Abbotsford suggests that the SCBP be the "address" for the URCNA to contact, should the merger come more into view again.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. It is regrettable that the committee has nothing substantial to report because its counterparts from the URCNA lacked the mandate to interact with the committee.
- 3.2. It is advisable to have a committee available to meet with its URCNA counterparts, should the URCNA committee be mandated by its next synod to work together with the CanRC committee.

### **4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide to reappoint the Liturgical Forms and Confessions subcommittee of the CCU and to give it the mandate to be available to review and compare the Creeds, Confessions, Forms and Prayers of the CanRC and URCNA with a view to merger.

**ADOPTED**

## Article 131 – CCU – Theological Education Subcommittee

### 1. Material:

- 1.1. Report from the Theological Education Subcommittee of the Committee for Church Unity (8.2.6)
- 1.2. Letter from the church at Attercliffe (8.3.2.3)

### 2. Observations:

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 adopted the following recommendations in connection to the work of the Theological Education Subcommittee of the CCU (*Acts*, Article 71, Recommendation 4):
  - [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.
- 2.2. The committee notes that subsequent to Synod Burlington 2010, the URCNA Synod London 2010 decided to “declare that the Theological Education Committee’s mandate has been fulfilled and is at an end” (Article 53, Recommendation 2).
- 2.3. The committee reports, “Since we had no URCNA committee with whom to discuss our mandate, we never convened and can only report that there has been no progress in this matter.”
- 2.4. Attercliffe maintains that a theological school ought to be financed by federation-wide assessments.

### 3. Considerations:

- 3.1. It is regrettable that the committee lacked counterparts from the URCNA and so were unable to make progress.
- 3.2. It is advisable to have a committee available to interact on this matter with the URCNA in the future.

#### **4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide to reappoint the Theological Education Subcommittee, should an upcoming URCNA synod re-appoint the corresponding committee and to continue with the mandate as given by Synod Burlington 2010.

### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 132 – Free Reformed Churches of South Africa (FRCSA)**

Committee 3 presented a proposal. With a few changes, this was the result:

##### **1. Material:**

Report from the CRCA (8.2.1)

##### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 gave the committee the following mandate in regard to the FRCSA (*Acts*, Article 82, Recommendation 4):
  - [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.
- 2.2. The CRCA informed the deputies of the FRCSA for relations with churches abroad of the decisions of Synod Burlington 2010 regarding the FRCSA.
- 2.3. An invitation was received to attend the Synod of the FRCSA in 2011, but the CRCA was not able to send a delegate and a letter of greeting was sent.
- 2.4. The CRCA also contacted the committee from the church at Coaldale for financial assistance to the FRCSA.
- 2.5. The FRCSA experience economic struggles and depend on sister churches, including the CanRC, for help.
- 2.6. The FRCSA churches are doing significant mission work and receive 95% of their income for this from sister churches, for which they are thankful.
- 2.7. Regarding theological training, the Sotho-speaking brothers of these churches are being trained at a different institution than the coloured Afrikaans-speaking brothers and the Afrikaans-speaking brothers from

the older churches are being advised to go to CRTS in Hamilton. It is the desire of the FRCSA for the future that all the brothers will be trained in Hamilton and the FRCSA are thankful for the invitation to make use of the training in Hamilton. However, because of practical reasons not all the brothers will be able to study in Hamilton all the time. The deputies of the FRCSA ask if it will be feasible to offer the first year of Hamilton's theological training in South Africa, through distance theological training from Hamilton with the use of facilitators in South Africa.

- 2.8. The FRCSA have contact with the Reformed Churches in South Africa. The Reformed Churches in South Africa rejected the plea to install women in the office of elder but they do install women deacons.
- 2.9. We have not sent a delegation to a synod of the FRCSA in 2011 or 2008. It deserves serious consideration to send a delegation to the next synod of the FRCSA if an invitation is received.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. It is evident that the FRCSA continue to be a faithful church of the Lord Jesus Christ in accordance with the rules for ecclesiastical fellowship.
- 3.2. An *ad hoc* Synod in April 2010 dealt with the issue of finances and made guidelines for deputies to come with new proposals on how to deal with the financial situation. The federation hopes to become less dependent on financial support from sister churches.
- 3.3. With regards to theological training, the FRCSA do value the training in Hamilton and encourage the Afrikaans-speaking brothers from the older churches to study there.
- 3.4. The FRCSA value the relationships with sister churches abroad very much and it is important for us to remember that encouragement from our side means much more for them than we often realize.
- 3.5. Although an invitation was received to attend the Synod of the FRCSA in 2011, the CRCA was not able to send a delegation at that time. Neither was a delegation sent to the 2008 FRCSA Synod. It deserves serious consideration to send a delegation to the next synod of the FRCSA if an invitation is received.

### **4. Recommendations:**

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 investigate together with the FRCSA if there are possibilities to set up a form of distance learning for the first year of theological training, with the use of facilitators in South Africa;
- 4.4. To send a delegation to the next synod of the FRCSA if possible.

## ADOPTED

### Article 133 – Reformed Churches in Brazil (RCB)

#### 1. Material:

Report from the CRCA re: RCB (8.2.1)

#### 2. Observations:

- 2.1 Synod Burlington 2010 gave the CRCA the following mandate (*Acts*, Article 156, Recommendation 4.2):
- [4.2.1.] To continue the relationship of EF with the RCB under the following rules;
- [4.2.2.] To use every opportunity to have contact with the RCB and to provide encouragement to the churches.
- 2.2. The relationship of EF has been maintained and informed to a large extent by the extensive contact that the Canadian Reformed Churches of Hamilton and Surrey have with the RCB through their missionary activities.
- 2.3. The CRCA delegated the brothers Paul Krikke (Hamilton elder and Mission Board member) and John Vanderstoep (Surrey elder and Mission Board member) to the October 2010 Concilio, held in Cabo Frio. The delegates were seated at the Concilio table and invited to address the assembly. The CRCA recently received the *Acts* of the 18<sup>th</sup> Concilio held in Recife in April 2012.
- 2.4. In addition to the work of missionaries there was considerable support provided by the Committee of Three (i.e., the mission churches of Hamilton, Surrey and those of the province of Drenthe, the Netherlands). The Committee of Three was discontinued in 2010. Recently, the RCB drafted a new proposal for undertaking cooperative projects. The April 2012 Concilio has approved this proposal for sharing with sister churches how these cooperative

projects might be undertaken. It may be something that will have the attention of the CRCA in the future.

- 2.5. By God's grace, the federation continues to experience significant growth, not only in preaching points but also in faithfulness. The CRCA notes that the brotherhood in Brazil seriously seeks to proclaim the Word of our Heavenly Father.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. The CRCA has fulfilled its mandate.  
 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 work in Brazil (Aldergrove and Hamilton-Cornerstone).

### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To continue EF with the RCB under the adopted rules;  
 4.2. To mandate the CRCA to use every opportunity to have contact with the RCB and to provide encouragement to these churches.

## **ADOPTED**

### **Article 134 – Free Church of Scotland (FCS)**

Committee 3 presented a proposal. After some discussion, it was taken back for refinement.

### **Article 135 – Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) (FCC)**

Committee 3 presented a proposal. After some discussion, it was taken back for refinement.

### **Article 136 – *Book of Praise* – Publication and Fostering Awareness**

Committee 2 presented its proposal. After some discussion, it was taken back for refinement.

### **Article 137 – Closing Devotions and Adjournment**

Br. B. VanRaalte had the assembly sing Psalm 119:40; he then read Psalm 119:105-112 and led in prayer. Synod was adjourned.

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**Day 10 – Morning Session**  
**Saturday, May 18, 2013**

**Article 138 – Opening Devotions**

The chairman called the meeting to order and the assembly sang Psalm 59:1, 2. Rev. Bouwman then read 2 Chronicles 18 and led in prayer. All members of synod were present.

**Article 139 – Adoption of the Acts**

Articles 116-137 of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted. Synod adjourned for committee work.

**Article 140 – Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN)**

After synod re-convened, Committee 3 presented a third draft on the RCN. After some discussion, it was taken back for refinement.

**Article 141 – Letter from Synod Carman 2013 to General Synod 2014 of the RCN**

Committee 5 presented a draft letter to the RCN. After some discussion, it was taken back for further work.

**Article 142 – *Book of Praise* – Revision of Psalms**

Committee 2 presented a proposal. After some discussion, it was taken back for further work.

**Article 143 – Motion to Amend Article 111 re: SCBP Appointments**

A proposal was put forward to amend Article 111 by appointing an alternate member to the SCBP, namely br. Martin Jongsma.

**ADOPTED**

**Article 144 – *Book of Praise* – Question of Finalization**

The chairman gave opportunity for a general discussion of the arguments for and against having a new *Book of Praise* finalized at this synod or the next. As a result of the discussion, a consensus emerged that synod may need to revisit Article 114.

**Article 145 – Closing Devotions and Adjournment**

Rev. Wielenga read Psalm 84:1-4, had the assembly sing Psalm 84:3, 4 and led in prayer. Synod adjourned for the day.

**Day 11 – Morning Session**  
**Monday, May 20, 2013**

**Article 146 – Opening Devotions**

The chairman called the meeting to order and the assembly sang Psalm 24:2, 3. Rev. Bouwman then read 2 Chronicles 19 and led in prayer. All members of synod were present.

**Article 147 – Adoption of the Acts**

Articles 138-145 of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted. Synod adjourned for committee work.

**Article 148 – Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN)**

After synod re-convened, Committee 3 presented a fourth draft on the RCN. With some minor changes, this was the result:

**1. Material:**

- 1.1. Report of the CRCA Sub-Committee for Contact with the RCN (8.2.1.1), letter from Deputies BBK of the RCN (8.1.5)
- 1.2. Letters from the churches at Yarrow (8.1.31), Orangeville (8.3.1.1), Langley (8.3.1.2), Coaldale (8.3.1.3), Abbotsford (8.3.1.5), Attercliffe (8.3.1.6), Carman West (8.3.1.9), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.1.10), Elora (8.3.1.12), Fergus-North (8.3.1.15), Grand Rapids (8.3.1.18), Guelph-Emmanuel (8.3.1.19), Hamilton-Providence (8.3.1.20), Kerwood (8.3.1.21), Lincoln (8.3.1.23), Lynden (8.3.1.24), Toronto (8.3.1.28), Willoughby Heights (8.3.1.29), Calgary (8.3.1.30), Edmonton-Immanuel (8.3.1.31) and St. Albert (8.3.1.32)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 appointed a special subcommittee for contact with the RCN and gave it the following mandate (*Acts*, Article 86, Recommendation 4):
  - [4.4.] Mandate the subcommittee to:
    - [4.4.1.] 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 Netherlands Reformed Churches 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 months prior to General Synod 2013.
- 2.2. The subcommittee reports the following about the way that it worked out its mandate:
- 2.2.1. At Synod Harderwijk 2011 Rev. J. DeGelder and br. G.J. Nordeman met with BBK and expressed the concern that the RCN appears to be moving away from the reliability and authority of God’s Word, by more and more placing man and his context, ideas, feelings and expectations in the centre rather than God’s revealed will. The deputies of the BBK insisted on the Biblical and confessional integrity of the RCN.
  - 2.2.2. On that same visit to the Netherlands these brothers noted what they regard as a crucial shift in hermeneutics emanating from the TUK. This shift was also noted by several foreign guests and numerous fraternal delegates.
  - 2.2.3. There appears to be some considerable experimentation going on in worship and liturgy in the RCN and this liturgical fragmentation is causing considerable unrest. Some churches simply ignore Article 67 of the RCN Church Order concerning songs to be sung in worship.
  - 2.2.4. In the course of discussions with BBK, the subcommittee exchanged thoughts and insights with inter-church relations committees from the OPC, RCUS, FRCA and FRCSA.

- 2.2.5. A meeting was held with BBK and representatives of TUK to express our concern over Dr. Paas' appointment in spite of protests against his dissertation (*Creation and Judgment*) and the unbiblical views he expounded there, such as the notion that the people of Israel arose from migrant and Canaanite population, calling into question the historicity of the Exodus. The subcommittee emphasized its understanding that Paas never distanced himself from the views defended in his dissertation, but the response was that this is a matter which TUK does not want to revisit and Paas is not teaching Old Testament (the area of his dissertation) anyway. The subcommittee insists that the matter is so serious that any minister who holds such views should be summarily disciplined. In this case the integrity of the Theological University is compromised as well as the views of students (and thus future ministers). According to the subcommittee this is "a watershed moment" in the history of TUK because it is the first time that unbiblical views are being tolerated.
- 2.2.6. Although not specifically mandated to do so, the subcommittee also expressed concern over Dr. van Bekkum's dissertation. Limiting itself to just two points, the subcommittee asserts that – methodologically – van Bekkum considers history writing in the Old Testament as a kind of representational art, a characterization which needs to be factored in along with the community's expectations and beliefs in order to define the nature of its historical truth-claim. The text's truth value can be judged by bringing the results of the above into dialogue with artifactual evidence. The effect of this is that the straightforward historical claims of Scripture are put aside. For example, 1 Kings 6:1 indicates that the Exodus took place 480 years prior to Solomon's fourth year as king. But to accept this date is, according to van Bekkum, a "lazy man's solution." According to van Bekkum, it is methodologically incorrect to accept biblical data at face value. "Its literary artistry and use of genre conventions should be studied first." In the end, the current interpretation of archaeological evidence trumps the biblical testimony and the traditional interpretation is not even discussed. The distinction made by van Bekkum between truth claim and truth value does not reflect a high view of Scripture and

should be rejected. One consequence of his methodology is that the event of the sun standing still (Joshua 10:12-14) is interpreted in a metaphorical way. This is contrary to the obvious meaning of the text. It is therefore very disappointing that in his intricate critical analysis of the text, the manner in which the text has always been understood is not really dealt with. Only problems which van Bekkum sees associated with the traditional interpretation are highlighted. Virtually no positive comments in support of the traditional interpretation are given. The underlying problem is his methodology by which he subjects the biblical passage (initially only the poetic part) to certain rules of literary criticism and ends up being unable to see what the text is actually saying. The end result is that, according to van Bekkum, the text means that the sun and moon did not actually stand still. Rather “the prolonging of the day to defeat the enemy at one time is understood as a rhetorical strategy, reflecting the common ancient Near Eastern literary technique of contracting a great military victory to a single time span.” The subcommittee concedes that van Bekkum wants to be confessionally Reformed, but is not convinced that the methodology followed in his dissertation reflects this commitment because it allows the scholar to determine whether what Scripture claims to be true (truth claim) is actually true (truth value). The subcommittee expresses the fear that traditional Reformed hermeneutics are being replaced with a method of interpreting Scripture that does not do full justice to the nature of God’s Word. The fact that this was a Kampen dissertation and was awarded a *cum laude* designation augments the subcommittee’s concerns. The appointment of Dr. van Bekkum as lecturer at TUK was approved by Synod Harderwijk 2011.

- 2.2.7. The subcommittee notes that a number of concerns about the teachings of persons associated with TUK were addressed to Synod Zwolle-Zuid 2008. These included Dr. A.L.Th. de Bruijne’s views on Scripture which allowed for inaccuracies in the Bible and its use of myth, Dr. J. Douma’s framework hypothesis for the creation week and leaving the door open for evolution, and Dr. G. Harinck’s controversial statements on Christ’s substitutionary sacrifice, homosexuality, the Roman Catholic mass and women office bearers. The subcommittee

- expresses the fear that Synod Zwolle-Zuid has shown itself incapable of dealing substantively with the concerns from within the churches which were brought to this assembly.
- 2.2.8. The subcommittee expresses concern over the appointment of a committee (Man/Woman Committee) by Synod Amersfoort-Centrum 2005 in relation to the theme, “women in the church.” A subsequently appointed committee developed a manual which facilitated reflection on the role of women in the church, but the approach evident in this manual fails to show biblical leadership in that it fails to direct the members to what Scripture says.
- 2.2.9. The subcommittee provides Synod with a historical analysis of the RCN’s relationship with the NRC, showing how these two church federations have come closer together since 2002. The subcommittee suggests that this development was not the result of the NRC becoming more accountable with regard to the adherence to the Reformed doctrine, or with regard to the manner in which they deal with deviations from this doctrine. Instead, it appears that the NRC is growing in a more modern, liberal direction, where the offices in the church have been opened to women, all office bearers are not required to sign the Form of Subscription and some office bearers reject infant baptism. In addition, the National Assembly of the NRC had invited Synod Harderwijk of the RCN to establish a joint study committee to consider, among other things, “What is the way that God’s Word directs us to go when it comes to calling to the office of elder or deacon members of the congregation that live in a homosexual relationship?” While Synod Harderwijk declined the invitation to participate in such a study committee – on the ground that none of the (RCN) churches had requested it – it suggested that individual members of the RCN might participate.
- 2.2.10. In December 2010 members of the Deputies Church Unity (DKE) of the RCN decided to participate in what was termed a “National Synod.” The Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PKN) organized this assembly and invited all protestant churches in the Netherlands to send representatives. More than 50 churches participated. Two theses were discussed: 1. The characteristic of a Christian is not truth, but love; and 2. Church division is no longer of any concern to the youth.

There were a number of appeals at General Synod Harderwijk 2011 concerning official participation in this body, but Synod turned down the appeals and approved the participation of the deputies.

- 2.2.11. The subcommittee draws Synod's attention to the policy of the RCN that allows them to send a female deputy to represent them at synods of churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship. The subcommittee discussed this matter with Deputies BBK who suggested that "if it is the custom of a sister church to allow visiting representatives from another sister church to have an 'advising vote' at its General Synod with the sense of participating in giving spiritual leadership in the church, then it is perhaps best to limit the task of our representatives to participating in the discussion only about our mutual sister church relationship." The subcommittee brings this matter to Synod's attention for judgment.
- 2.2.12. The members of the subcommittee were formerly under the impression that BBK was the address to voice the concerns of the CanRC, but it was informed that the only way to put matters of severe criticism on the Synod agenda is by means of pronouncements of the CanRC General Synod.
- 2.2.13. The subcommittee states that "There are many positive things that could be said about the RCN and the work that is being done by many, both within and outside those churches."
- 2.2.14. In Appendix 4A the subcommittee states that BBK is "very disturbed" about statements made by the subcommittee in *Clarion* of July 29, 2011 about the RCN. The subcommittee had written that the approach to hermeneutics in the RCN was going "off the rails," and also attributed to the chairman of Synod Harderwijk 2011 that his comment about not interacting with the subcommittee's report was equivalent to saying, "Thank you for your letter, but we are going to ignore it." In his address at Synod Carman 2013, Rev. J.M. Batteau requested that these statements be publicly retracted with an expression of regret.
- 2.3. The subcommittee recommends that Synod decide:
  - 2.3.1.
    - [1.] To continue at this time the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the RCN under the adopted rules for this relationship.

- [2.] To express in a letter of concern from this synod to the next RCN synod our brotherly concerns as per the rules for EF (1&6) about the direction we see our sister churches moving in at this time. This letter will express our love for the RCN as church of the Lord and our sincere prayers for our “mother” church in the extremely secular European situation. But it will also describe our disquiet about the following matters:
- [a.] The views coming from or tolerated at the TUK which show marks of Scripture criticism and new hermeneutics.
  - [b.] The work of the Deputies M/W in the Church appointed by Synod Amersfoort-West 2005 and Zwolle 2008 and how Scripture was treated in their reports.
  - [c.] The growing relationship with the NRC, also on a local level, without resolution of crucial differences such as women in office and subscription to the confessions.
  - [d.] A growing sense of estrangement between the CanRC and the RCN which we hope and pray will not lead to a parting of the ways in the future.
- 2.3.2. To decide that in the case that a church sends a female deputy as delegate to a CanRC synod, she not be given synod privilege other than about matters relating to EF with that church.
- 2.3.3. To reappoint a subcommittee to the CRCA for contact with the RCN and to mandate this subcommittee to:
- [1.] Maintain contact with the BBK of the RCN and to represent the CanRC at the next synod of the RCN;
  - [2.] Continue to observe developments at the TUK;
  - [3.] Follow the work of the Deputies concerning the Role of Women in the Church and to assess its report as well as the decisions of the next Synod of the RCN regarding that report;
  - [4.] Follow the ongoing unity discussions between the RCN and the NRC and to review the decisions of the next Synod of the RCN regarding unity with the NRC;
  - [5.] Review the results of the revision of the RCN church order;
  - [6.] Monitor the results of the RCN’s involvement with the “National Synod;”
  - [7.] Report to the churches six months prior to General Synod 2016;

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- 2.4. In response to this subcommittee report, Deputies BBK of the RCN addressed a letter (dated Dec 6, 2012) to Synod Carman 2013 outlining some “serious objections:”
- 2.4.1. The subcommittee report was one-sided because it portrays the whole RCN as “going liberal.” They suggest that this portrayal “is bordering on a violation of the 9<sup>th</sup> commandment.”
- 2.4.2. The TUK is maintaining its character as an orthodox Reformed institution. If the writings of a professor or lecturer are the cause of concern, there are ample church channels to express this concern and have the writings in question examined.
- 2.4.3. Where there is a high degree of cooperation between RCN and NRC congregations, there are only positive developments and with full subscription to the confessions.
- 2.4.4. The allegations made by the subcommittee against the RCN in the report are so serious that “we find it quite strange that the subcommittee recommends that we continue our sister church relationship, while their report indicates that the grounds for such a sister church relationship are shaky if not absent.”
- 2.5. Langley, Coaldale, Carman West, Burlington-Ebenezer, Fergus-North, Kerwood, Lincoln and Lynden support the recommendations of the subcommittee and share its concern. Lynden also supports the recommendations but stresses the benefits of face-to-face dialogue over writing letters every three years.
- 2.6. Fergus-North suggests that the letter be written in stronger tones. Hamilton-Providence recommends that synod write “a call to repentance,” while Kerwood requests that synod “incorporate the phrase *under stress* into the structure of the sentence to impress upon the RCN the seriousness of our concern.”
- 2.7. Guelph-Emmanuel argues that the committee’s report does not appear to justify the recommendation to maintain Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the RCN and if synod would decide to maintain this relationship it would need to be justified to the churches. Edmonton-Immanuel also recommends that Ecclesiastical Fellowship be suspended now because a “lack of definitive action at this stage may appear to CanRC members and others that we are sympathizing or condoning the situation within the RCN, giving credence to the liberal path they are on.” Orangeville and Toronto-Bethel urge synod to develop a clear policy on what critical issues would warrant severing our relationship and how mutual discipline can be applied

between church federations. Attercliffe and Grand Rapids both suggest that a definite date be set – 2016 – for ending Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the RCN if they do not change course.

- 2.8. Orangeville points out that the CanRC is “the federation with the closest ties to the RCN,” and suggests that this creates a significant responsibility for us. St. Albert proposes that our sub-committee should work more closely with the OPC and the FRCA in their dealings with the Dutch churches.
- 2.9. Abbotsford shares many of the concerns of the committee but argues that the RCN has not capitulated on the issue of “women in office” and we should not assume that they will.
- 2.10. Elora questions the logic of giving female delegates the privilege of the floor on one matter and not on other matters, while Yarrow, Calgary and Coaldale are adamant that female delegates should not be given the privilege of the floor at all.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. Our subcommittee portrays the RCN in one way and BBK portrays it in a manner which is quite different.
- 3.2. The letter of BBK emphasizes “the seriousness of the allegations” that are being made against them and they suggest that – if these allegations are correct – “the grounds for [an ongoing] sister church relationship are shaky if not absent.” This indicates that our subcommittee and BBK agree on the seriousness of the allegations and they agree that – if Synod Carman 2013 agrees with the subcommittee – the very existence of our sister church relationship is under threat.
- 3.3. With respect to the allegations made against Dr. Paas and Dr. van Bakkum, we do not understand how a church federation which claims to be subject to the Word of God can tolerate these views as being in accord with Scripture and confession.
- 3.4. The Scripture-critical views of Dr. Paas and Dr. van Bakkum are important because they are both on the teaching staff of the TUK and therefore directly involved with the training of ministers. The comment of the subcommittee – that we do not judge the personal faith of these brothers – is relevant and needs to be remembered and respected. What is most important, though, is that the people who sit in the pew every Sunday must be taught that the Bible is really true and that the events described in the Bible really took place. While synod expresses this concern, this does not take away our impression

that most church members in the RCN hear solid Biblical preaching from Sunday to Sunday.

- 3.5. While the subcommittee signals that the views of Dr. Douma concerning Genesis 1 (the framework hypothesis) are of concern because they could open the door for evolutionistic theories and because his views still have influence in the churches, Dr. Douma is no longer in active service and has become one of the most vocal critics of Paas and van Bekkum.
- 3.6. Synod agrees with the subcommittee that in light of Dr. Harinck's position at the TUK, his views with respect to Christ's substitutionary sacrifice, homosexuality, the Roman Catholic mass and women office bearers must be clearly retracted or dealt with. Synod notes that, in an article in *Nederlands Dagblad* dated Feb 8, 2008, Dr. Harinck made a statement retracting his views on Christ's substitutionary sacrifice, homosexuality and the Roman Catholic mass. Dr. Harinck indicates that, personally, he has no problem with women in office but accepts the position of the churches on this matter.
- 3.7. The involvement of the RCN in the "National Synod" also raises serious questions. While we stand together with the RCN in our confession that the church is catholic, the Belgic Confession distinguishes between true churches and false churches. The "National Synod" was only a meeting where opinions were exchanged, but nevertheless the participation of official representatives of the RCN in the "National Synod" shows us that this distinction is being downplayed.
- 3.8. The fact that merger is even being contemplated with the NRC makes us concerned about the confessional identity of our sister churches. (See Observation 2.2.9.) While these matters are not present in all local congregations in the NRC, it is still a concern because they are present in the federation as a whole.
- 3.9. Many churches have written to support the recommendations of the subcommittee, indicating that there is a sense of estrangement within the CanRC with respect to the developments in the RCN.
- 3.10. The newly appointed Man/Woman Committee has not yet reported to synod and no decision has been made by the churches. Therefore we must be careful about drawing conclusions about this matter.
- 3.11. In response to BBK's challenge that, *if we agree with the committee's portrayal of the RCN, why do we continue in ecclesiastical fellowship?*, the Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship require that

we “assist each other in the maintenance, defence and promotion of the Reformed faith... and be watchful for deviations.” The letter that the subcommittee recommends be sent to the RCN should be accompanied by open communication between our (reappointed) subcommittee and BBK as well as whomever else is involved.

- 3.12. The suggestion of Guelph-Emmanuel and Edmonton-Immanuel that Ecclesiastical Fellowship be severed now cannot be adopted because a process needs to be followed. It would be inappropriate for Synod Carman 2013 to dictate what a following synod should do. On the other hand, the subcommittee should be mandated to give recommendations concerning whether or not we continue in Ecclesiastical Fellowship.
- 3.13. Since Synod receives foreign delegates as official representatives of those churches, female delegates should not be given the privilege of the floor.
- 3.14. In plenary session, Rev. J.M. Batteau indicated that it would probably be sufficient if an expression of regret be made about the statements by the subcommittee in *Clarion* of July 29, 2011. It is appropriate for synod to express regret for some of the strong language in this article.
- 3.15. When asked by the chairman in plenary session whether the facts in synod’s advisory committee’s report were correct, the fraternal delegates of the RCN did not indicate that there were any factual errors. They did, however, question our interaction with the facts.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To thank the committee for its extensive report;
- 4.2. To continue at this time the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the RCN under the adopted rules;
- 4.3. To express – by letter, from this synod to the next RCN synod – our brotherly concerns in a letter of admonition as per the rules for EF (1&6) about the tolerance of deviations from Scripture and confessions that we see in our sister churches at this time. This letter will express our love for the RCN as church of the Lord and our sincere prayers for our sister church in the extremely secular European situation. But it will also describe our disquiet about the following matters:
  - 4.3.1. The views coming from or tolerated at the TUK which show marks of Scripture criticism and which deviate from

- Reformed hermeneutical principles as indicated by Articles 5 and 7 of the Belgic Confession;
- 4.3.2. The work of the Deputies Men/Women in the Church appointed by Synod Amersfoort-West 2005 and Zwolle 2008, especially regarding how Scripture was treated in their reports;
  - 4.3.3. The growing relationship with the NRC, without resolution of crucial differences such as women in office and subscription to the confessions;
  - 4.3.4. A growing sense of estrangement as a consequence of the concerns mentioned above, which we hope and pray will not lead to a parting of the ways in the future;
- 4.4. If churches send female delegates to CanRC synods, they will not be given synod privilege;
  - 4.5. To hereby express regret for the strong expressions used in statements made by some members of the subcommittee in *Clarion* of July 29, 2011;
  - 4.6. To reappoint a subcommittee of the CRCA with the following mandate:
    - 4.6.1. To maintain contact with the BBK of the RCN and represent the CanRC at the next synod of the RCN. If possible, the CRCA subcommittee should be present when this synod's letter is dealt with by the next synod of the RCN;
    - 4.6.2. To inform BBK of our decision concerning female delegates;
    - 4.6.3. To continue to observe developments at the TUK;
    - 4.6.4. To monitor the work of the Deputies concerning the Role of Women in the Church and assess their report as well as the decisions of the next Synod of the RCN regarding that report;
    - 4.6.5. To monitor the ongoing unity discussions between the RCN and the NRC and to review the decisions of the next Synod of the RCN regarding unity with the NRC;
    - 4.6.6. To review the results of the revision of the RCN church order;
    - 4.6.7. To monitor the results of the RCN's involvement with the "National Synod;"
    - 4.6.8. To monitor the developments regarding the application of Article 67 of the RCN Church Order;
    - 4.6.9. To work in consultation with the deputies of the FRCA and OPC;
    - 4.6.10. To report to the churches six months prior to General Synod 2016 giving special attention to the question whether or not we continue in Ecclesiastical Fellowship.

## ADOPTED

### Article 149 – CCU – Church Order Subcommittee

Committee 4 presented a proposal. With some minor changes, this was the result:

#### 1. Material:

- 1.1. Report from the Church Order Subcommittee of the CCU (8.2.5), including appendices: Revised PJCO (2012), Comparing PJCO 2010 and PJCO 2012, Press Release of June 2011 Joint Meeting, Comments on the Changes from PJCO 2010 to PJCO 2012, Proposed Forms for Discipline for a United Federation, Draft Proposed General Synod Regulations for a United Federation, Incorporation Report
- 1.2. Letters from the churches at Attercliffe (8.3.2.3), Grand Valley (8.3.5.1), Elora (8.3.5.2), Aldergrove (8.3.5.3-4), Langley (8.3.5.5), Abbotsford (8.3.5.6), Carman West (8.3.5.7-9), Fergus- North (8.3.5.10), Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.5.11), Grand Rapids (8.3.5.12), Grassie (8.3.5.13), London (8.3.5.14), Lynden (8.3.5.15), Spring Creek (8.3.5.16), Surrey (8.3.5.17) and Flamborough (8.3.5.18-21)

#### 2. Observations:

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 gave the PJCO subcommittee of the CCU this mandate (*Acts*, Article 151, Recommendation 4.4):
  - [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 (e.g., Article 3);
  - [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.
- 2.2. In its main report the committee notes that it has worked closely with the subcommittee for the Church Order from the URCNA.
- 2.3. The committee notes that Synod Burlington 2010 decided to adopt the PJCO 2010 “provisionally” as the Church Order for a united federation, while Synod London 2010 decided to accept PJCO 2010 “for continued study.” The committee reports that Synod London 2010 informed the churches that suggested changes should be directed to Synod by way of overture through the classes. Because of this, the URCNA committee had no further recommendations for the joint committee to consider. Synod London also mandated its PJCO committee to develop Forms of Discipline for a united federation and to draft joint regulations for synodical procedure.

- 2.4. In order to evaluate the input that was received from the CanRC churches at Synod Burlington 2010, the committee first reviewed the letters and then proposed a number of changes to the PJCO 2010 for consideration with the URCNA brothers. The committee reports with gratitude that it was able to finalize Article 4, regarding theological education. It also considered a number of suggested formulations as proposed by Synod Burlington 2010 (see “Comments on PJCO 2012”) and sent a final edition of the PJCO (2012 edition) to the churches.
- 2.5. In consultation with the Liturgical Forms and Confessions subcommittee of the CCU, the committee took over the task to draft, together with the URCNA committee, Forms of Discipline for a united federation (see “Proposed Forms for Discipline for a United Federation”).
- 2.6. While the joint committee could not come with a finalized proposal on regulations for synodical procedure, it submits to Synod a draft “which could give the churches an idea of how the synods of a united federation would work,” and which could serve as basis for a future proposal from the joint committee (see “Draft Proposed General Synod Regulations for a United Federation”).
- 2.7. The committee notes that Synod Burlington 2010 did not deal with the matter of incorporation, though it was mentioned in its report to the 2010 Synod. As it was not part of its mandate, the committee did not take any action on this topic, but has resubmitted its report to Synod Carman 2013 (see “Incorporation Report”).
- 2.8. As an addendum the committee reports that Synod Nyack 2012 did not provisionally adopt the PJCO 2012, though this was recommended by the joint committee. However, Synod Nyack did encourage the URCNA churches to no longer send suggestions for improvement by overture to Synod, but directly to the committee for its evaluation.
- 2.9. The committee now recommends that Synod decide:
  - [1.] To thank the committee for the work it has completed;
  - [2.] To receive the committee report and the PJCO 2012 (with the two-column document comparing PJCO 2010 and PJCO 2012 as an appendix);
  - [3.] To provisionally adopt PJCO 2012 as the Church Order for a united federation of the URCNA and CanRC;
  - [4.] To provisionally adopt the Forms for Discipline for a united federation of the URCNA and CanRC;

- [5.] Reappoint the current committee for the sake of continuity, upon (provisional) adoption of PJCO 2012 by the URCNA general synod, with the mandate to continue working closely with the church order committee of the URCNA to finalize synodical regulations.
- [6.] The committee also recommends that Synod receive their report regarding incorporation and give direction for how to proceed with this matter.
- 2.10. Some of the letters received by Synod Carman 2013 deal with minor corrections relating to internal consistency, sentence structure and word changes. Other letters deal with more substantive issues.
- 2.11. Carman West makes a number of suggestions for improvements to the proposed Forms for Discipline.
- 2.12. Attercliffe urges Synod to make clear that the implementation of the PJCO should only take place once a merger has been finalized, “and to caution the churches to refrain from using the PJCO as a point of argument or basis for church orderly conduct.” Grand Rapids wonders what the exact status is of the PJCO 2012. Langley and Lynden suggest that the PJCO 2012 not be adopted provisionally, since the merger seems not likely to be achieved for some time. Abbotsford urges that not much time and energy be spent on the PJCO at this point.
- 2.13. Spring Creek suggests that Synod not receive the Incorporation Report, as this was beyond the mandate of the committee. Abbotsford urges that the churches not be incorporated, contending that “this unduly compromises our church government.”

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. The report of the committee shows that its mandate could be fulfilled in a spirit of concord between the brothers of the URCNA and CanRC.
- 3.2. Because it is not in the purview of Synod to do the joint committee’s work and because there is no apparent urgency to finalize the PJCO, the letters from the churches that deal with minor matters in the PJCO 2012, the draft synodical regulations and the proposed Forms for Discipline should be referred back to the Church Order subcommittee for consideration and evaluation.
- 3.3. Some letters deal with major items and require input and direction from Synod, including the following:

#### **Article 7 (*et al*) – Place of Deacons**

Surveying the PJCO 2012 as a whole, it can be observed that the place of deacons seems to have been marginalized, without any rationale provided for this change. This is at odds with what we confess in Belgic Confession Article 30, where the elders, deacons and pastors together “form the council of the church.” As Aldergrove states, “The inclusion of the deacons in all aspects of Reformed Church government accords much better with our historical practices and roots dating as far back as Synod Emden 1571.” Articles in the PJCO where the deacons have been removed from the corresponding articles in our present Church Order include 7, 11, 15 and 56. The joint committee should work toward reinstating the role of the deacons within these articles.

### **Article 7 – Examination of Ministers from Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship**

Several churches point out that, according to the PJCO 2012, ministers coming to our federation from a sister church need to undergo a complete examination at classis, whereas presently a colloquium is held. If we take seriously our ecclesiastical relationships and the ordinations that take place in sister churches, there is no need for this provision in our Church Order and a colloquium would be sufficient.

### **Article 26 – Church Visitors**

The practice of making church visitations on an annual basis (instead of every two years, as in the PJCO 2012), should be upheld. When things are going well, the visits appear routine. However, it is beneficial to be held accountable on an annual basis, to be encouraged and challenged and to receive guidance for complex local situations.

### **Article 43 – Admission to the Lord’s Supper**

A number of churches wrote about the current wording of this article, which refers to the consistory admitting “visitors who profess the Reformed faith provided that it secures from them a satisfactory testimony in either written or verbal form about their doctrine, life and church membership.” There continues to be concern that an individual guest may give a verbal testimony about his own doctrine, life and church membership, while the greater responsibility to provide such a testimony should rest with the visitor’s consistory. However, as Synod Burlington 2010 noted, “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... 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” (*Acts*, Article 151). Nevertheless, because of the biblical principle of establishing truth on the basis of two witnesses, the joint committee ought to consider making an addition to the wording of the proposed article to reflect a preference for a written testimony about the member from his consistory.

**Article 57 – The Reception and Departure of Members** There is concern with the provision in this article that, “Departing members remain under the supervision and care of the consistory until they are received as members into [the receiving] church.” The committee notes the role of the individual “to come under the care of other elders of another church,” but stresses that the elders also have a responsibility and that there should be no time when a member is not under supervision. The joint committee needs to consider the point that this makes it difficult for the sending church to maintain interim oversight of a member who moves a great distance from their current church.

- 3.4. While the committee recommends that the PJCO 2012 be adopted, it should be noted that there are some unfinished matters that need to be resolved before final adoption can be given. At this time, it would be prudent to receive the PJCO 2012 for further refinement.
- 3.5. Regarding the matter of incorporation, the committee’s report can be received for information. If a church desires direction on this matter, it can raise it through the ecclesiastical route, but such a church should be mindful that different jurisdictions (e.g., provinces, states, countries) have differing regulations pertaining to incorporating.
- 3.6. With respect to the Forms for Discipline, the committee notes that “given how the discipline forms have a long history, we decided that we should restrict ourselves as much as possible to making only linguistic and stylistic modifications.” Because the CanRC forms are more up-to-date linguistically and because only the CanRCs have a form for excommunication of non-communicant members, the CanRC forms were used as templates for the proposed forms.

The committee notes that the proposed forms still quote from the NIV1984, but highlights this as a matter for further review.

- 3.7. From the letters received, it appears that the status of the PJCO 2012 needs to be clarified. Currently the CanRC is governed by the Church Order adopted at Synod Cloverdale 1983 and it will remain so until such time as a future synod decides that agreement has been reached on merger. Only then will the text of the Joint Church Order be finalized and implemented.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To thank the committee for all the work that it has completed;
- 4.2. To receive the committee report and the PJCO 2012 (with the two-column document comparing PJCO 2010 and PJCO 2012 as an appendix);
- 4.3. To receive the PJCO 2012 for further modification;
- 4.4. To receive the Forms for Discipline for further refinement;
- 4.5. To receive the Incorporation Report for information;
- 4.6. To reappoint the current committee with the mandate to continue working with the church order committee of the URCNA:
  - 4.6.1. To make further changes to the Church Order and the Forms for Discipline in light of the letters received from the churches;
  - 4.6.2. To finalize the synodical regulations.

### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 150 – Appeal of Burlington-Ebenezer re: Regional Synod East 2012**

Committee 1 presented a second draft. After some discussion, it was taken back for further work.

#### **Article 151 – *Book of Praise* – Revision of Psalms**

Committee 2 presented its second draft. With a few minor changes, this was the result:

##### **1. Material:**

- 1.1. Report from the SCBP, Section 1.3 (8.2.4)
- 1.2. Letters from the churches at Smithers (8.3.4.3), Grand Valley (8.3.4.4), Attercliffe (8.3.4.8), Barrhead (8.3.4.9), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.4.16), Grassie (8.3.4.21), Burlington-Rehoboth

(8.3.4.30), Spring Creek (8.3.4.32), Willoughby Heights (8.3.4.39) and Winnipeg-Grace (8.3.4.42)

## 2. Observations:

- 2.1. The SCBP has received numerous suggestions for change to the text of the Psalms. In Section 1.33 it outlines the process by which these changes were considered. In a table on page 8 of its report it indicates that it rejected changes to 39 of the Psalms. The advice and input of various experts was sought. The churches at Barrhead, Grassie, Smithers and Willoughby Heights complain that their suggested changes to the text were not mentioned in the report and thus question whether their suggestions were even considered.
- 2.2. Grand Valley complains that the SCBP employs personal preferences in making changes, citing a number of examples in its complaint. They request Synod to “mandate the SCBP to provide much more interaction with the churches than had occurred, to address the changes and the grounds for those revisions, before Synod adopts these changes and revisions.”
- 2.3. The church at Attercliffe points out that a sharp is missing from Ps. 3:1, line 2, second last note.
- 2.4. The SCBP proposes to change Ps. 8:4, lines 1 and 2, as follows: “Almost divine! So *you, O LORD, have* made him, crowned him with glory and as king arrayed him.” The church at Burlington-Rehoboth suggests retaining the APV 2010 wording of Ps. 8:4, line 2, since it is closer to the NIV “and crowned him with glory and honor” (verse 5b). The church at Spring Creek also proposes to retain the word “honour” in line 2.
- 2.5. The SCBP proposes a thorough revision of Ps. 17:5, lines 3-8, after a discussion about the meaning and exegesis of the original Hebrew. The church at Burlington-Rehoboth points out that the proposed revision of Ps. 17:5, lines 7 and 8, speaking of the reward of the wicked, does not agree with the NIV text which speaks of the reward of the righteous.
- 2.6. In Ps. 18:8, line 5, the word “cunning” is used twice. The SCBP proposes to alter that line to, “The shrewd and crafty you outdo in cunning.”
- 2.7. The church at Burlington-Ebenezer observes that the SCBP’s proposed change in line 1 of Ps. 19:1 to, “The heav’ns above declare” does not solve the problem of singing a two-syllable word “heavens” on a single note and requests to return to the 1984 version.

- 2.8. The SCBP responds to many comments about the unfamiliar word “unstinted” in Ps. 20:2, line 3 and suggests replacing the line with “May songs in celebration chanted.” The churches at Burlington-Ebenezer, Burlington-Rehoboth and Spring Creek suggest instead “May songs in celebration shouted” or “May songs of celebration shouted” or “May shouts of celebration chanted.”
- 2.9. Several churches wanted to return to the wording “The Lord my Shepherd” in Psalm 23:1, line 1. The SCBP defends the change to “Lord’s.”
- 2.10. The first half of Psalm 25:6 is somewhat obscure and not very close to Scripture. The SCBP suggests a major revision of this verse.
- 2.11. The SCBP wishes to correct the omission in Ps. 30:1 of the reference to David being healed (verse 2). The churches at Burlington-Rehoboth and Spring Creek observe that “depths” has been changed to “depth” and opine that “depths” is better.
- 2.12. The SCBP considered changes to Ps. 36:1, lines 1-2. Having consulted with the experts the SCBP decided no changes were necessary.
- 2.13. The SCBP proposes to change the punctuation in Ps. 44:1, lines 4-6.
- 2.14. The SCBP accepts the suggestion to eliminate the unfamiliar word “wended” and proposes to reword lines 3-4 of Ps. 57:3.
- 2.15. The church at Willoughby Heights suggests that some of the wording of Psalms 68, 98 and 118 lead to an unbiblical understanding that God does battle as though the outcome is yet to be determined.
- 2.16. The SCBP agrees with the comment that Ps. 71:2, line 6, should be formulated as a statement rather than a wish.
- 2.17. The SCBP proposes a change to Ps. 81:6 to incorporate the element of thunder as found in the Hebrew text and to improve the grammar of the last two lines.
- 2.18. The SCBP proposes a change in Ps. 81:11, line 6, to prevent that “Israel” would be sung to two notes in line 2 but to three notes in line 6. The Committee’s solution is to eliminate the use of “Israel” from the last line.
- 2.19. The SCBP proposes a change in Ps. 89:10, line 2, from “earth’s most exalted king” to “highest of earthly kings” to avoid the plethora of consonants.
- 2.20. The churches at Burlington-Rehoboth and Spring Creek propose to reject the SCBP’s proposed change from “heavens” to “heaven” at the end of line 6 in stanza 10 of Ps. 89 and the end of line 5 in stanza 12.
- 2.21. The church at Willoughby-Heights proposes to go back to 8 stanzas

- for Ps. 90 rather than add material which is not in the Biblical text to fill 9 stanzas. The church at Grand Valley concurs.
- 2.22. The church at Grassie observes that Ps. 92:1 is composed of one long sentence.
- 2.23. The SCBP proposes to change “far mightier than” in Ps. 93:3, line 2, which is awkward to sing, to “more mighty than.”
- 2.24. The SCBP proposes to change Ps. 101:3, line 2, from “The faithless and their deeds I hate sincerely” to “All deeds of faithless men I hate sincerely.”
- 2.25. The church at Grand Valley requests an explanation of why the words “scandalmonger” and “palace” were added to Ps. 101:5, lines 2-3.
- 2.26. The church at Grand Valley is unconvinced of the need to eliminate the word “benefit” from Ps. 103:1, line 3.
- 2.27. The church at Grand Valley asks why Ps. 116 was changed when the wording does not take us closer to Scripture.
- 2.28. The church at Grand Valley asks why the word “Lord” was taken out of Psalm 118:6.
- 2.29. The SCBP proposes to improve the unnatural word order of Ps. 119:34, line 1. It suggests “Forever fixed in heaven is your word” to replace “Fixed in the heavens is your eternal word.”
- 2.30. The SCBP notes that the words “all owing” in Ps. 119:38, line 2, do not sing well. It proposes the wording “for all your precepts I have been observing.”
- 2.31. The SCBP proposes to return to the 1984 version of Ps. 120:1, line 2.
- 2.32. The SCBP observes that the phrase “so our eyes, too, look to...” in Ps. 123:1, line 7, is open for improvement. It suggests “so do our eyes look to...”
- 2.33. The SCBP observes that the wording “the Amorites” is awkward to sing in Ps. 136:10, line 1 and propose to change this line to read “Sihon of the Amorites.”
- 2.34. The churches at Burlington-Ebenezer and Burlington-Rehoboth observe that in the SCBP’s proposed revision of Ps. 148:4, lines 4-6, Israel becomes the object of praise whereas praise should be identified with the horn of Israel.
- 2.35. The church at Winnipeg-Grace makes a suggestion about the musical notation of the last note of each Psalm, noting that the double half note currently used is baffling to them. It suggests to use a whole note instead or a fermata or even a half note.

- 2.36. Regarding the text of the Psalms, the SCBP recommends that Synod decide:
- [1.] To approve the proposed changes in the text of the APV 2010;
  - [2.] To declare the revision of the 150 Psalms to have been completed;
  - [3.] To adopt the text of the Psalms as presented in the APV 2010 along with the incorporated changes under 2.36.1 as the definitive text of the Anglo-Genevan Psalter in the 2013 edition of the *Book of Praise*.

### 3. Considerations:

- 3.1. In Section 1.3.4 of its report, the SCBP gives some examples of changes suggested by the churches but rejected by the Committee. It appears that the sheer volume of input from the churches was somewhat overwhelming for the Committee. The SCBP is correct when it asserts that, "...it is not possible nor is it our mandate to list all the comments and suggestions received from the churches..."
- 3.2. Grand Valley has not presented sufficient evidence that the work of the SCBP should be devoid of "personal preference." Nor has Grand Valley proven that the SCBP has the mandate to be accountable for every change to individual churches.
- 3.3. The change in Ps. 3 musical notation, namely to add a sharp to the second last note of line 2, needs to be reviewed by the musical advisors to the SCBP. The musical notation of the Psalms is intended to match the Dutch *Liedboek der Kerken (Acts of Synod Winnipeg 1989, Article 146)*. It is not clear whether the church at Attercliffe is proposing a change to this notation or whether it has noticed that our notation differs from that of the Dutch churches. It should be noted that many churches in our federation do not adhere strictly to the musical notation of the Psalms and they are free to do so as decided by Synod Winnipeg 1989 (Article 146).
- 3.4. The approved Bible translations all use the word "honour" in Psalm 8:5. It would be advisable then to retain the word "honour." In addition, the beginning of line 1: "Almost divine! ..." is awkward and the text proposed by the SCBP for line 2 doubles the same "royal" metaphor.
- 3.5. The NIV in Psalm 17:14 speaks clearly about the reward of the wicked so there is no conflict between the NIV text and the SCBP proposed new version.
- 3.6. The proposal of the SCBP for Ps. 18:8, line 5, has merit.

- 3.7. In Ps. 19:1, line 1, singing the two syllable word “heaven” on one note is awkward. The change proposed by the SCBP has the same problem and therefore the 1984 original version “The spacious heavens laud” is certainly less awkward. However, the APV 2010, “The spacious heavens declare” and the proposed revision of the SCBP, “The heavens above declare” are improvements over the 1984 version since they use “declare” which is found in both the NIV and ESV. The proposal of the SCBP places “heavens” in a subordinate part of the melody whereas this word should appear at the climax of the line as it is in the APV 2010 version: “The spacious heavens declare.”
- 3.8. The word “shouted” at the end of line 3 of Ps. 20 does not rhyme with “granted” (line 1) but it does conform better to the NIV and ESV text (“shout for joy”). The best rendition is, “May songs of celebration shouted.”
- 3.9. The SCBP’s reasoning is correct in that the APV 2010 version of Ps. 23:1 line 1 is closer to the Biblical text.
- 3.10. The newly proposed version of Ps. 25:6 is an improvement over the APV 2010 version.
- 3.11. The proposed version of Ps. 30:1, lines 2-4, is an improvement. However, the word “depths” should be retained in line 2.
- 3.12. Synod accepts the expert advice on Ps. 36:1, lines 1-2 and does not attempt to make its own judgment.
- 3.13. The punctuation change in Ps. 44:1, lines 4-6, are an improvement since lines 4-5 belong together and not lines 5-6.
- 3.14. The SCBP’s revision of Ps. 57:1, lines 3-4, is an improvement.
- 3.15. The church at Willoughby Heights does not sufficiently reckon with the reality that Ps. 68 is a war psalm in which God is portrayed as doing battle for his people; this does not take away the fact that the overall victory is his.
- 3.16. Psalm 71 verse 5 in the ESV and NIV is in the form of a statement so an emendation of lines 5-6 of Ps. 71:2 to reflect that is desirable.
- 3.17. It is desirable for the text of Ps. 81:6 to reflect the Hebrew original as closely as possible.
- 3.18. The SCBP’s recommendation for Ps 81:11, line 6, is an improvement.
- 3.19. The SCBP’s proposal for Ps. 89:10, line 2, is an improvement.
- 3.20. The NIV uses “heavens” and ESV “skies” in the Biblical text relating to Ps. 89:10, line 6 and Ps. 89:12, line 5. The churches at Burlington-Rehoboth and Spring Creek observe that “heaven” has a different connotation of the dwelling of God. The lack of rhyming of

- “heavens” and “given” is not alleviated much by changing “heavens” to “heaven.”
- 3.21. The APV version of Psalm 90 essentially makes two stanzas out of stanza one in the 1984 version. It does so by adding Lines 3-5 in stanza one and by forming a second stanza in which only 23 words (of the 42 in total) comprise the biblical text. There is no apparent justification for this expansion which moves further away from the biblical text. The 1984 version should be retained without the archaisms.
  - 3.22. All the stanzas of Ps. 92 except the first are composed of two or three sentences. Sentence length warrants consideration by the SCBP.
  - 3.23. The SCBP’s suggestion to amend Ps. 93:3, line 2, as noted in Observation 2.23 is a definite improvement.
  - 3.24. Psalm 101:3 speaks about hating the deeds of the faithless, not that we hate the faithless themselves. The SCBP revision is a definite improvement.
  - 3.25. Clearly the word “palace” was used in Ps. 101:5, line 2, to rhyme with “malice.” Strong’s Hebrew concordance shows “palace” as an acceptable translation of the Hebrew original. “Scandalmonger” is not an everyday word but perhaps there is no alternative that fits there.
  - 3.26. The church at Grand Valley makes a good point about Ps 103:1, since the ESV contains both “benefit” and “pit.” The SCBP should take this into consideration.
  - 3.27. A number of members treasure the poetic language of Psalm 116. However, there were errors in the 1984 version. In stanza 3 of the 1984 version, we ask God to prove himself as Saviour. This element is not in the Biblical text and it is questionable whether God needs to prove himself.
  - 3.28. It would be preferable to mention the Lord’s name rather than replace it with a pronoun in Ps. 118:6, line 5, because the biblical text has “LORD.”
  - 3.29. The SCBP’s suggestion to smooth out Ps. 119:34, line 1, is commendable.
  - 3.30. The SCBP’s suggestion for Ps. 119:38, line 2 (Observation 2.30), uses the ESV “precepts” and flows much better.
  - 3.31. The SCBP’s suggestion to replace the pronoun “my” with “his” in line of Ps. 120:1 has merit.

- 3.32. The SCBP's suggestion for Ps. 123:1, line 7 (Observation 2.32), is a definite improvement as the repetition of "to (too)" is avoided and "eyes" appears at the climax of the line.
- 3.33. Although it would be preferable to stay close to the biblical text of Ps. 136:10, line 1 and include the word "king," the present rendition is awkward to sing. Therefore it is acceptable to revise this line.
- 3.34. The churches of Burlington-Ebenezer and Burlington-Rehoboth are correct in stating that in the APV 2010, Ps. 148:4, line 5, incorrectly associates "praise and splendour" with "his saints" whereas it should be with "his people's horn." The church at Burlington- Rehoboth's suggestion is preferable. It reads, "He raised his people's horn on high/ Which Israel, his faithful nation/Did praise in joyful celebration." One difficulty of not only the APV 2010 version and the proposed change of Burlington-Rehoboth but also the 1984 version is that they speak of the horn of Israel being raised up, whereas the biblical text (ESV) speaks clearly of a horn being raised up for Israel, namely Jesus Christ. Line 6 of the APV 2010 is acceptable but the content is not found in the biblical text which is another reason why Burlington-Rehoboth's suggestion is an improvement.
- 3.35. The recommendation of Winnipeg-Grace re: the musical notation of the last note of each Psalm needs to be reviewed by the musical advisors to the SCBP.
- 3.36. Regarding the recommendations of the SCBP re: the text of the Psalms:
- 3.36.1. Synod has interacted with the recommendations of the SCBP, as well as considered feedback from the churches;
- 3.36.2. Future changes should be made in accordance with the pertinent recommendations adopted by Synod Carman 2013.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. That the SCBP did fulfill its mandate in considering suggestions from the churches;
- 4.2. To send Consideration 3.2 as a response to Grand Valley;
- 4.3. To instruct the SCBP to seek advice from its musical advisors whether Ps. 3, line 2, second last note needs to be corrected;
- 4.4. To instruct the SCBP to retain the APV 2010 version of Ps. 8:4, line 1, 2;
- 4.5. To approve the SCBP's proposed change to Ps. 17:5;

- 4.6. To approve the SCBP's proposed change to Ps. 18:8, line 5;
- 4.7. To retain the APV 2010 version of Ps. 19:1, line 1;
- 4.8. To request the SCBP to consider a change in Ps. 20:2, line 3 to "May songs of celebration shouted;"
- 4.9. To endorse the SCBP's decision to retain "Lord's" in Ps. 23;
- 4.10. To approve the SCBP's proposed change to Ps. 25:6;
- 4.11. To approve the SCBP's proposed revision for Psalm 30:1, lines 1-4, with the exception of "depth" in line 2 which should read "depths;"
- 4.12. To retain the APV 2010 version of Ps. 36:1, lines 1-2;
- 4.13. To approve the SCBP's proposed punctuation change in Ps. 44:1, lines 4-6;
- 4.14. To approve the SCBP's revision of Ps. 57:3, lines 3-4;
- 4.15. Not to accept the suggestion of Willoughby Heights; instead to retain the APV 2010 version of Pss. 68, 98 and 118;
- 4.16. To approve the SCBP's revision of Ps. 71:2, lines 5-6;
- 4.17. To approve the SCBP's revision of Ps. 81:6;
- 4.18. To approve the SCBP's revision of Ps. 81:11, line 6;
- 4.19. To approve the SCBP's revision of Ps. 89:10, line 2;
- 4.20. To judge that the churches of Burlington-Rehoboth and Spring Creek are correct in their recommendations to leave Ps. 89:10, line 6 and Ps. 89:12, line 5 as they were in the APV 2010;
- 4.21. To judge that too many words have been added to Ps. 90:1, 2 and to return to the 1984 version without archaisms;
- 4.22. To instruct the SCBP to consider Observation 2.22 and Consideration 3.22;
- 4.23. To approve the SCBP's revision of Ps. 93:3, line 2;
- 4.24. To approve the SCBP's revision of Ps. 101:3, line 2;
- 4.25. To send Consideration 3.25 as Synod's answer to Grand Valley;
- 4.26. To instruct the SCBP to consider the suggestion regarding Ps. 103:1;
- 4.27. To send Consideration 3.27 as Synod's answer to Grand Valley;
- 4.28. To ask the SCBP to revert to the 1984 version of Ps. 118:6, line 5;
- 4.29. To approve the SCBP's revision of Ps. 119:34, line 1;
- 4.30. To approve the SCBP's revision of Ps. 119:38, line 2;
- 4.31. To approve the SCBP's revision of Ps. 120:1, line 2;
- 4.32. To approve the SCBP's revision of Ps. 123:1, line 7;
- 4.33. To approve the SCBP's revision of Ps. 136:10, line 1;
- 4.34. To direct the SCBP to implement the suggestion of Burlington-Rehoboth re Ps. 148:4, lines 4-6 (Consideration 3.34);

- 4.35. To instruct the SCBP to seek advice regarding the musical notation of the last note of each Psalm;
- 4.36. General recommendations re: completion of the work:
- 4.36.1. Synod Carman 2013 instructs the SCBP to implement the relevant recommendations under 4 regarding the revision of the text of the Psalms;
- 4.36.2. Synod Carman 2013 adopts the text of the Psalms as presented in the APV 2010, along with the incorporated changes under 4.36.1 as the definitive text of the Anglo-Genevan Psalter in the 2013 edition of the *Book of Praise*;
- 4.36.3. Any further changes should be made in accordance with the *Acts of Synod Carman 2013*, Article 125, Recommendation 4.5.

## ADOPTED

### **Article 152 – Free Church of Scotland (FCS)**

Committee 3 presented its second draft. After some discussion, it was taken back for refinement.

### **Article 153 – Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) (FCC)**

Committee 3 presented its second draft. After some discussion, it was taken back for refinement.

## **Day 11 – Evening Session Monday, May 20, 2013**

### **Article 154 – Reopening**

The chairman reopened synod by having the assembly sing Psalm 147:3, 4. All members of synod were present.

### **Article 155 – Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea (KPCK)**

Committee 3 presented a proposal on the KPCK. After some discussion, this was the result:

#### **1. Material:**

Report from the CRCA (8.2.1), Supplementary Report from the CRCA (8.2.1.3) and letter from the church at Abbotsford (8.3.1.4)

#### **2. Observations:**

2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 gave the committee the following mandate in regard to the KPCK (*Acts*, Article 105, Recommendation 4):

- [4.1.] To continue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the KPCK<sup>2</sup> under the adopted rules;
- [4.2.] To continue to discuss with the KPCK 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 KPCK in meaningful ways, such as by regular communication, by visiting the General Assembly of the KPCK and by meeting and interacting with their delegates at the 2013 ICRC.
- 2.2. The CRCA reports that the Relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship according to the adopted rules was maintained with the KPCK. There were multiple contacts made with their Fraternal Relations Committee through Prof. Yoo. These communications included short reports of their annual General Assemblies.
- 2.3. The CRCA delegated the brother H. Leyenhorst and J. Vanderstoep to visit the churches in Korea and attend the General Assembly in September 2011. Brother Vanderstoep was not able to attend because of sudden illness. Brother Leyenhorst also met with a delegate from the Fraternal Relations Committee of the KPCK. A visit was made to one of the churches in Seoul with the opportunity to join in worship and Bible study.
- 2.4. The CRCA received reports from the RCN about their visit in 2009 and from the FRCA about their visit in 2010. These reports are consistent with the CRCA's observations and have proven a positive way of maintaining regular contact and receiving information. The KPCK is appreciative of this arrangement and the regular visits and contact. Special mention was made at their GA of the positive influence of our relationship, since we were instrumental through encouragement in their decision "...to keep the Lord's Table holy and to fence it from abuse."
- 2.5. The KPCK has no official relations with the RCK or the IRCK, although there is some contact with the IRCK through their publishing house. The KPCK was encouraged to take up contact with these federations and to help us to know and understand them. They have promised to make contact with the RCK and to have discussions with them including items of mutual concern.

<sup>2</sup> Synod Burlington 2010 used the former acronym "PCK" but for the understanding of the reader of the present Acts, the acronym is revised according to the information received in the interim from the Kosin Presbyterian Church of Korea, hence KPCK.

- 2.6. The 61st General Assembly of the KPCK formed a committee to seek union with the Presbyterian Church of Korea (Hap-shin). Abbotsford asks for (a) more information about the Hapshin churches and (b) the CRCA's judgment on this development.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. The CRCA continues to have good contact with the KPCK by various means of communication.
- 3.2. The visit to Korea by the delegate, Br. H. Leyenhorst, appears to have been fruitful in terms of maintaining EF.
- 3.3. The Committee is pleased with reports from the RCN and the FRCA regarding their visits in 2009 and 2010 respectively. The Committee states that "these reports are consistent with our observations and have proven to be a positive way of communicating regular contact and receiving information."
- 3.4. Although the KPCK has been encouraged to take up contact with the RCK, they have no official relations with the RCK or the IRCK.
- 3.5. Information about the Hapshin churches is not vital for the CanRC. If our Korean sister churches enter into EF with those churches we may need to know more about them.

### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To continue the relationship of EF with the KPCK under the adopted rules;
- 4.2. To mandate the CRCA:
- 4.2.1. To continue to discuss with the KPCK its relationship with the IRCK and the RCK, with the goal of seeking further insight into these two federations;
- 4.2.2. To continue to work cooperatively with the RCN and the FRCA in exercising our relationship with the KPCK in meaningful ways, such as by regular communication, by visiting the General Assembly of the KPCK and by meeting and interacting with their delegates at the 2013 ICRC.

## **ADOPTED**

### **Article 156 – Reformed Churches in Korea (RCK)**

Committee 3 presented a proposal on the RCK. After some discussion, the committee took it back for refinement.

**Article 157 – Independent Reformed Church in Korea (IRCK)**

Committee 3 presented a proposal on the IRCK. After some discussion, this was the result:

**1. Material:**

Report from the CRCA (8.2.1)

**2. Observation:**

2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 provided no mandate concerning the IRCK except where it was mentioned concerning the KPCK (*Acts*, Article 105, Recommendation 4.2) that we discuss their relationship with the IRCK. The IRCK is also mentioned several times in the *Acts of Synod* (Article 105, Observation 2.11, Consideration 3.2 and Article 173, Observations 2.4.2, 2.5.2, Consideration 3.2) as well as in the CRCA report to Synod 2010.

**3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. A CRCA delegate visited the IRCK in September 2010 at the same time that the visit was made to the KPCK. The visit included attendance in a worship service and at a lecture at their seminary, a visit to their church and publishing house in Seoul, a meeting with delegates from their churches and several discussions with Rev. Heon Soo Kim.
- 3.2. The delegate was informed that the IRCK has withdrawn their request for relations with the Canadian Reformed Churches. The reasons given were that they already have relations with the OPC and the Christian Reformed Church in the Netherlands and that their federation is too small for more relations. They also note the visit and lectures at their seminary by Dr. C. Van Dam in 2011 and the publication of his book *The Elder* in Korean.
- 3.3. They have requested that Synod Carman 2013 correct two errors in the *Acts of Synod Burlington 2010*. It is stated in the *Acts* that they have adopted the Three Forms of Unity, even though they have not adopted the Belgic Confession. Additionally, Article 173, Consideration 3.2 states “...they do respect the KPCK seminary,” whereas their respect is for one of the professors and they have their own seminary.
- 3.4. While the CRCA proposes that we encourage the IRCK to continue contact with the CanRC, it makes more sense for synod to encourage them to seek contact with the KPCK and the RCK.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To take note of the above-mentioned errors;
- 4.2. To mandate the CRCA to thank the ICRK for their cooperation and discussions and to encourage them to seek contact with the KPCK and the RCK.

### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 158 – Appeal of Winnipeg-Redeemer re: General Synod Guidelines**

Committee 5 presented a proposal. After some discussion, it was taken back for further work.

#### **Article 159 – Appeal of Kerwood re: Hymns 30, 45 & 79 of the APV**

Committee 4 presented a proposal. With a minor change, this was the result:

##### **1. Material:**

Letter of appeal from the church at Kerwood against the inclusion of Hymns 30, 45 and 79 in the APV of the *Book of Praise* (8.5.31)

##### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Kerwood appeals the decisions of Synod Burlington 2010 in Articles 124, 127 and 163, to approve of the hymns *We Come O Christ to You* (Hymn 79), *Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands* (Hymn 30) and *Jesus Shall Reign* (Hymn 45). Kerwood requests that all three hymns be removed from the final version of the *Book of Praise*.
- 2.2. Regarding Hymn 79 (*We Come O Christ to You*) Kerwood states that this hymn unnecessarily blends the three persons of the Trinity into the one person of Jesus Christ. Kerwood sees this hymn as fitting with a modern evangelical notion of overemphasis on Christ instead of a balanced approach to the unity in the Trinity.
  - 2.2.1. Kerwood disputes the phrase in stanza 1, "By whom all things consist." Kerwood maintains that this does not agree with Hebrews 2:10, "For it was fitting that [the Father] for whom and by whom all things exist," and with how the confessions refer to God the Father as the one by whom all things were made.
  - 2.2.2. Kerwood argues against the phrase in stanza 2, "Your love has met your law's demand," for it erases the distinction between the Father and the Son, who came to do the Father's will and fulfilled the law.

- 2.2.3. The phrase in verse 3 (spoken of Christ), “You are the source of every skill” is described as a downplaying of the work of the Holy Spirit. Further, Kerwood argues that “the one eternal True” in verse 3 conflicts with the teaching that the Holy Spirit is also true and eternal God.
- 2.3. Concerning Hymn 30 (*Christ Jesus Lay in Death’s Strong Bands*), Kerwood detects a confusion about the meaning of Christ’s death and his descent into hell.
- 2.3.1. Kerwood says the first two lines of stanza 2 are questionable, “It was a strange and dreadful strife when life and death contended,” as this may suggest that Christ’s resurrection was not a sure reality when his body was lying in the grave.
- 2.3.2. Kerwood highlights the historical context of this hymn, written by Luther. It asserts that the Lutheran belief about Christ’s time in the grave is evident (stanza 1: “Christ Jesus lay in death’s strong bands;” or stanza 2: “It was a strange and dreadful strife when life and death contended”). Kerwood argues that this reflects the Lutheran belief that after his burial the whole person of Christ descended into hell, conquered the devil and destroyed the power of hell and Satan.
- 2.4. With respect to Hymn 45 (*Jesus Shall Reign*), Kerwood questions the logic of modernizing the Psalms in the *Book of Praise*, while adding hymns like this one, which uses challenging phrases.
- 2.4.1. Kerwood seeks clarification on what is meant by “prisoners leap to lose their chains.” While the simple reading would imply that prisoners leap *in order to* lose their chains, it could mean that prisoners leap *because* they have lost their chains. The English is unclear, which could also be said of the phrase describing the moons “waxing and waning.”
- 2.4.2. Kerwood complains that this hymn speaks in generalizations and highlights that stanza 2 could be confused for supporting the notion of universal salvation, or at least for anyone who suffers, that “The prisoners... the weary... and all who suffer want” will “lose their chains” and “find eternal rest... [and] are blest.”
- 2.4.3. Kerwood questions the origin of the phrase in stanza 3: “Angels descend with songs again,” arguing that it seems scripturally imprecise.

**3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. Regarding Hymn 79 and the phrase, “By whom all things consist,” it may be pointed out that Scripture speaks of Jesus as the agent of God’s creation (John 1:2) and the one in whom “all things hold together” (Col 1:16-17). The phrase “Your love has met your law’s demand” emphasizes how the Triune God made provisions to satisfy his own justice, through the active and passive obedience of the Son. When this hymn speaks of Jesus as being “the source of every skill,” this is not a downplaying of the work of the Holy Spirit, but a recognition that Christ equips his people through his Spirit (John 14:16). In all of these points Kerwood can be pointed to the SCBP Report to Synod Burlington 2010 (p. 34), where it stated, “The Committee considers that this hymn very well, correctly and beautifully ascribes attributes of the LORD God to the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. John 8:58 and the other IAM sayings of Christ; the Prologue of the Gospel according to John; Acts 3:15; Col. 1:16 and 2:9; Rev. 1:8; 21:5-7; 22:13). Finally, it is not clear how the phrase “the one eternal True” conflicts with the teaching that the Holy Spirit is also true and eternal God; Kerwood also does not interact with Synod Burlington 2010’s explanation of this line (*Acts*, Article 124).
- 3.2. With respect to Hymn 30, where Kerwood alleges the presence of the Lutheran theology of Christ’s descent, there is no interaction with what the SCBP wrote in its report to Synod Burlington 2010 on this point. There it cautioned against reading the hymn through the lens of Lutheran theology and pointed out that the hymn instead “sings about the intense life and death struggle on the cross and about how Christ won the victory through His death and resurrection” (SCBP Report to Synod 2010, pp. 35-36).
- 3.3. Concerning Hymn 45, the notion of “prisoners leaping to lose their chains” should be understood in the wider context of the hymn, which speaks of the exalted Christ’s redeeming and governing work. We know that it is He who has set the captives and prisoners free (Luke 4:18). It is this context which also prohibits reading stanza 2 in a universalistic way. As for the notion of angels descending (and ascending) in worship of the Christ, John 1:51 is a suggestive text.

**4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide to deny the appeal of the church of Kerwood and maintain Hymns 30, 45 and 79 in the final edition of the *Book of Praise*.

**ADOPTED****Article 160 – Appeal of Burlington-Ebenezer re: Regional Synod East 2012**

Committee 1 presented its third draft with this result:

**1. Material:**

Letter of appeal from the church at Burlington-Ebenezer (8.5.26)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Burlington-Ebenezer appeals a decision of Regional Synod East 2012, Article 8, on the basis of its claim that Regional Synod East 2012 erred on three points:
  - 2.1.1. Regional Synod East 2012 should have interacted with Burlington- Ebenezer’s exegesis on 1 Corinthians 11 because the appeal of br. Nordeman was more than a case of Nordeman vs. Classis Central Ontario September, 2012. The appeal was ultimately a challenge to the position of the Ebenezer consistory with the deacons. That challenge should have been dealt with fairly and fully.
  - 2.1.2. Consideration 1 misses the point of contention and therefore serves neither br. Nordeman nor Burlington-Ebenezer;
  - 2.1.3. Consideration 1 creates the impression that 1 Corinthians 11 does teach a general headship of men over women in church. Burlington-Ebenezer provides the following supporting grounds:
    - [2.1.3.1.] Br. Nordeman and Burlington-Ebenezer agree that 1 Corinthians 11 applies to women in a general sense;
    - [2.1.3.2.] Since the term headship does not occur in Scripture the use of the term is context specific;
    - [2.1.3.3.] The context of 1 Corinthians 11 is decorum in worship where what is proper for the man is improper for the woman and *vice versa*;
    - [2.1.3.4.] Since 1 Corinthians 11 has a very specific context (i.e., worship) it is biblically unwarranted to transpose a headship principle to other Bible passages within a different context;
    - [2.1.3.5.] Numbers 30:9 negates the idea of a general headship of men over women in church while it reinforces the headship of the husband over his wife and that of the father over his unmarried daughter;

- [2.1.3.6.] The use of the term “general headship principle” is foreign to Scripture and should therefore not be made into a general principle.
- 2.2. Burlington-Ebenezer requests Synod Carman 2013 to judge that Regional Synod East 2012 erred in its Consideration 2b that 1 Timothy 2:12-14 does “teach a general headship principle which ‘applies to matters of congregational life in general.’” Burlington-Ebenezer provides the following supporting grounds:
- 2.2.1. In 1 Timothy 2:12-14 Paul stresses the specific application that only the men may be office bearers in church;
- 2.2.2. The context of 1 Timothy 2:12-14 does not allow for a general application about the role of men versus the role of women in the church;
- 2.2.3. This text does not teach a general headship principle applying to congregational life in general otherwise it would have been wrong for Priscilla to teach Apollos in Acts 18:26.
- 2.3. From the appeal of Burlington-Ebenezer the following chronology is determined:
- [1.] The consistory with the deacons of Burlington-Ebenezer accepted the decision of Synod Burlington 2010 concerning women’s voting (Article 176) as settled and binding.
- [2.] Br. Nordeman appealed this decision to Burlington-Ebenezer.
- [3.] Burlington-Ebenezer denied br. Nordeman’s appeal on the basis of a different interpretation of passages he put forward.
- [4.] Br. Nordeman appealed this to Classis Central Ontario September 2011 (which denied his appeal) and again to Regional Synod East November 2011 which ruled the matter unfinished in the minor assembly due to the addition of another Scripture passage in his arguments.
- [5.] Br. Nordeman again appealed to Burlington-Ebenezer and they again denied his appeal.
- [6.] Br. Nordeman subsequently appealed Burlington-Ebenezer’s denial of his appeal to Classis Central Ontario September 2012 and classis denied his appeal.
- [7.] Br. Nordeman then appealed the decision of Classis Central Ontario September 2012 to Regional Synod East November 2012, which upheld part of his appeal concerning a general headship principle in the church in 1 Corinthians 11.

[8.] Burlington-Ebenezer believes that neither Classis Central Ontario September 2012 nor Regional Synod East 2012 did due diligence in interacting with br. Nordeman's disagreement with his consistory about 1 Corinthians 11 showing a general headship principle and thus it asks Synod Carman 2013 to rule that Regional Synod East 2012 erred in its response to br. Nordeman about whether 1 Corinthians 11 teaches a general headship principle of men over women in church.

2.4. As can be seen from Observation 2.3, extensive correspondence has taken place. However, Burlington-Ebenezer does not provide us with copies of the actual correspondence, but only with excerpts in its letter of appeal to Synod Carman 2013.

### **3. Consideration:**

In regard to both requests of Burlington-Ebenezer, Synod Carman 2013 only received Burlington-Ebenezer's letter of appeal and none of the actual documents that are important for the entire appeal process. Burlington-Ebenezer requests Synod Carman 2013 to come to a judgment based only on its own version of the entire situation. Although Burlington-Ebenezer did copy and paste several decisions of minor assemblies into its own letter, it did not provide copies of the material relevant to its appeal. It would not be appropriate to come to a judgment based on this letter from Burlington-Ebenezer only. In order to come to a full understanding of what is at stake Synod requires complete documentation to make a proper determination.

### **4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide to declare the appeal of Burlington-Ebenezer inadmissible.

## **ADOPTED**

### **Article 161 – Free Church of Scotland (FCS)**

Committee 3 presented its third draft. With a minor change, this was the result:

#### **1. Material:**

Report of the CRCA (8.2.1), letter from the church at Abbotsford (8.3.1.4)

#### **2. Observations:**

2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 decided (*Acts*, Article 81, Recommendation 4.1 and 3):

- [4.1.] To continue the relationship of EF with the Free Church of Scotland (FCS) under the adopted rules:
- [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;
  - [4.3.3] 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.
- 2.2. CRCA report the following:
  - 2.2.1. The brothers Jake Van Laar and John Vanderstoep attended the 2012 General Assembly of the FCS in Edinburgh and addressed the assembly.
  - 2.2.2. The schism between the FCS and the FCC continues to be a sore point. There is ongoing conflict between the two federations. The offer of the CRCA to assist was gratefully noted, but not made use of. The fact that in 2010 the FCS adopted the possibility of singing hymns and using musical accompaniment in worship services has become a further block to the FCC for reunification. The CRCA does not know how it can assist.
  - 2.2.3. In 2010 the Ecumenical Relations Committee of the FCS reported to the Assembly its decision to suspend discussions with representatives of the Church of Scotland.
  - 2.2.4. The Free Church of Scotland continues to be a faithful church of the Lord Jesus Christ and seeks to abide by the Scriptures and the adopted confessions.
- 2.3. The CRCA recommends that Synod Carman 2013 gives them the following mandate:
  - [1.] To continue the Relationship of EF with the FCS under the adopted rules;
  - [2.] To be available to assist the FCS and FCC in any efforts at reconciliation and reunion, should that be requested;
  - [3.] To continue personal contact with the FCS whenever that is possible or feasible (e.g. at meetings of the ICRC, mutual presence at assemblies of sister churches).
- 2.4. Abbotsford “finds it odd” that the CRCA report makes no mention of FCS congregations on the North American continent.

### 3. Considerations:

- 3.1. The CRCA has been diligent in carrying out its mandate. Because the FCS has suspended discussions with the Church of Scotland there is no longer a need to monitor this relationship and therefore this element can be removed from the mandate.
- 3.2. The CRCA's proposal that its mandate be changed from *encouraging* the FCS and the FCC to work at reconciliation and reunion to *being available to assist* signals that the CRCA would rather be reactive than pro-active in this respect. This makes for less urgency to visit the FCS.
- 3.3. Abbotsford's observation that there are FCS congregations on the North American continent was already noted by Synod Lincoln 1992 when EF began with the FCS. The presence of both the FCS and the FCC in North America is due to the fact that the split between the FCS and the FCC also impacts the North American scene.

### 4. Recommendations:

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To continue the relationship of EF with the FCS under the adopted rules;
- 4.2. To mandate the CRCA:
  - 4.2.1. To be available to assist the FCS and FCC in any efforts at reconciliation and reunion, should that be requested;
  - 4.2.2. To continue personal contact with the FCS whenever that is feasible (e.g., at meetings of the ICRC, mutual presence at assemblies of sister churches) and to leave it in the freedom of the CRCA to send delegates to their assemblies.
  - 4.2.3. To encourage the congregations to seek out and strengthen ties with local FCS congregations in North America.

## ADOPTED

### Article 162 – Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) (FCC)

Committee 3 presented its third draft. With a minor change, this was the result:

#### 1. Material:

Report of the CRCA (8.2.1), letter from the church at Abbotsford (8.3.1.4)

#### 2. Observations:

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 decided (*Acts*, Article 81, Recommendation 4.2 and 3):

- [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:
- [4.3.2.] To encourage the Free Church of Scotland (FCS) and the FCC to work earnestly at reconciliation and reunion.
- [4.3.3.] 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.
- 2.2 The CRCA reports the following:
- 2.2.1. The brothers Jake Van Laar and John Vanderstoep attended the 2012 General Assembly of the FCC in Edinburgh and addressed the assembly.
- 2.2.2. The schism between the FCS and the FCC continues to be a sore point. There is ongoing conflict between the two federations. The offer of the CRCA to assist was gratefully noted, but not made use of. The fact that in 2010 the FCS adopted the possibility of singing hymns and using musical accompaniment in worship services has become a further block to the FCC for reunification. The CRCA does not know how it can assist.
- 2.2.3. The FCC seeks to be a faithful church of the Lord Jesus Christ, abiding by the Scriptures and the adopted confessions.
- 2.3. The CRCA proposes the following new mandate:
- [1.] To continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the FCC under the adopted rules;
- [2.] To be available to assist the FCS and FCC in any efforts at reconciliation and reunion, should that be requested;
- [3.] To continue personal contact with the FCC whenever that is possible or feasible (e.g., at meetings of the ICRC, mutual presence at assemblies of sister churches).
- 2.4. Abbotsford “finds it odd” that the CRCA report makes no mention of the FCC and the FCS congregations on the North American continent.
- 3. Considerations:**
- 3.1. The CRCA has been diligent in carrying out its mandate.
- 3.2. The CRCA’s proposal that its mandate be changed from *encouraging* the FCS and the FCC to work at reconciliation and reunion to *being*

*available* to assist signals that the CRCA would rather be reactive than pro-active in this respect. This makes it less urgent to visit the FCC.

- 3.3. The presence of both the FCC and the FCS in North America is due to the fact that the split between the FCC and the FCS also impacts the North American scene.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To continue the Relationship of EF with the FCC under the adopted rules;
- 4.2. To mandate the CRCA:
- 4.2.1. To be available to assist the FCC and FCS in any efforts at reconciliation and reunion, should that be requested;
- 4.2.2. To continue personal contact with the FCC whenever that is feasible (e.g. at meetings of the ICRC, mutual presence at assemblies of sister churches) and to leave it in the freedom of the CRCA to send delegates to their assemblies;
- 4.2.3. To encourage the congregations to seek out and strengthen ties with local FCC congregations in North America.

### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 163 – Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Restored) (RCR)**

Committee 3 presented a proposal. After some discussion, it was taken back for further work.

#### **Article 164 – Appeal of Br. G.J. Nordeman re: Regional Synod East 2012**

Committee 1 presented its first proposal with this result:

##### **1. Material:**

Letter of appeal from br. G.J. Nordeman against a decision of Regional Synod East 2012 (8.5.37)

##### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Br. Nordeman requests Synod Carman 2013 to rule that:
- 2.1.1. Regional Synod East 2012 did not interact with the substance of his appeal regarding the character and weight of the voting for office bearers.
- 2.1.2. Considering the arguments outlined by br. Nordeman regarding the headship principle and the binding nature of the voting, it would be improper for a woman to participate in the

voting for office bearers. Therefore, he asks Synod Carman 2013 to declare that:

- 2.1.2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 erred in stating that "...neither the Scriptures nor the Confessions provide instructions regarding the participation of women in the voting for office bearers ..." (*Acts of Synod Burlington 2010*, Article 176, Consideration 3.10);
  - 2.1.2.2. The consistory with the deacons of Burlington-Ebenezer erred in accepting the decision contained in Article 176 of the *Acts of Synod Burlington 2010*.
- 2.2. In his appeal to Regional Synod East 2012 br. Nordeman requested it to judge that Classis Central Ontario September 2012 erred "by denying that the accepted Church Order allows for the 'approval by the congregation' in the matter of voting for office bearers."
- 2.3. Regional Synod East 2012 denied the appeal of br. Nordeman, stating that "Brother Nordeman has not demonstrated that classis denied that the Church Order allows 'for the approval by the congregation' in the matter of voting for office bearers."
- 2.4. Classis Central Ontario September 2012 had denied the appeal of br. Nordeman. Regional Synod East 2012 decided that Classis had erred in the first two grounds. The third and the fourth ground are connected. In these two grounds Classis had considered: "Consideration [3]:
- [3.1.] Reformed Church polity is Presbyterian (elder-rule).
  - [3.2.] All authority in the church flows from Christ the Head of the church, to the special offices.
  - [3.3.] The Church Order of Dort does not defer any authority to the congregation with respect to the calling to office.
  - [3.4.] Voting is not an exercise of authority. If it were, men should not vote either because they would be exercising authority over their office bearers.
- Consideration [4]:
- Based on all the considerations above Classis judges that br. Nordeman has not demonstrated that the consistory together with the deacons has erred in its decision to accept Article 176 of the *Acts of Synod Burlington 2010* as settled and binding according to Article 31 of the Church Order."
- 2.5. Br. Nordeman, in his appeal to Regional Synod 2012, states that he fully agrees with the first two statements (Observation 2.4, points 3.1 and 3.2). His issue is with the third consideration. He agrees

with it to the point that the Church Order of Dort does not defer any authority to the congregation with respect to the calling to office. Article 31 CO does not defer any authority to a broader assembly, yet the churches abide by the decisions of that broader assembly. In the same vein the churches abide by the decision of the congregation in the election of office bearers. It has a binding nature. In Article 3 of the Church Order the word “shall” is used which makes it binding, according to br. Nordeman. Article 5C makes clear that the consistory needs the approval of the congregation to call a minister. He agrees that voting is not exercising authority. However, if women were permitted to vote they might be in a position to determine the outcome of the vote and thereby overrule the decisions of the men in the congregation.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. Br. Nordeman states repeatedly that he agrees that voting by the congregation does not mean that the consistory defers authority to the congregation, but his disagreement concerns the binding character of the vote. Because it is binding, br. Nordeman continues, women might outvote men and therefore should not be allowed to vote. Classis Central Ontario September 2012 did not pick up this element and in its Consideration 3.4 stated that voting is not an exercise of authority. Classis clearly misunderstood br. Nordeman.
- 3.2. Br. Nordeman, in his appeal to Regional Synod East 2012, again made it clear that he never claimed that the vote for office bearers is an exercise of authority. In his appeal to Regional Synod East 2012 he asked Regional Synod to judge that Classis Central Ontario September 2012 had erred by denying that the accepted Church Order allows for the “approval by the congregation” in the matter of voting for office bearer. However, Classis did not say this. What Classis considered in 3.3 and 3.4 was not relevant to the appeal of br. Nordeman. If br. Nordeman had simply asked Regional Synod to judge that Classis did not do justice to his appeal, he would have been correct. Considering the way br. Nordeman formulated his appeal, Regional Synod East 2012 was correct in its response to him. There is an inconsistency between br. Nordeman’s comments on the decision of Classis and his appeal regarding this decision to Regional Synod East 2012.

- 3.3. The request in the second part of the appeal of br. Nordeman is dependent on a decision regarding the first part of his appeal. Since the first part of br. Nordeman's appeal cannot be sustained, the second part becomes irrelevant.

**4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide to deny the appeal of br. G.J. Nordeman.

**ADOPTED**

**Article 165 – Letter from Synod Carman 2013 to  
General Synod 2014 of the RCN**

Committee 5 presented a second draft of its letter. With a few minor changes this is the result:

The General Synod of the  
Canadian Reformed Churches  
Meeting in Carman, Manitoba, Canada  
May, 2013

**To the General Synod 2014 of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands:**

Esteemed Brothers in Christ:

Synod Carman 2013 greets the Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN). We praise our faithful God for his continuing work of grace in the midst of your churches. As observers from afar, we are thankful for the confession, worship and witness of the RCN. We recognize in your midst the faithful preaching of the gospel of salvation and that fills us with joy. Between you in The Netherlands and us in North America, there is a bond of some 60 years. Many of our members trace their ancestry to your country. With you, we find our roots in the Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and we are united to you in our common confession of faith. Even though the present generation of Canadian Reformed believers is much less connected to Europe than in previous times, there remains among our churches, in general, a keen interest in the RCN. Ministers and other members of our churches continue to benefit from the scholarly labours of members of our sister churches in the Netherlands. We think, for example, of the *Commentaar op het Nieuwe Testament* (Derde Serie) which has been well received in Canada among those who can still read the Dutch language.

Even as we notice much faithfulness among the RCN, the apostolic exhortation to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) compels us to also express a number of serious concerns. We present them in humility and yet with the heartfelt desire that you would take heed to the matters we bring before you. Our rules for ecclesiastical fellowship state that “the churches shall assist each other in the maintenance, defence and promotion of the Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline and liturgy,” and shall be “watchful for deviations.” It is in this context of ecclesiastical accountability that we direct our exhortations to you.

To a great extent, our concerns revolve around the Theological University in Kampen (TUK). For some time, we have noticed the influence of critical scholarship upon the methodology and conclusions of some publications associated with the TUK. These concerns have been communicated on various occasions to the BBK Deputies and have also been expressed by our delegates at Synod Harderwijk 2011. An “Interim Report” of our Subcommittee for Relations with the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands was received by Synod Harderwijk which conveyed to you many of the details of our concern. In a recent letter to our Synod Carman 2013, the Deputies BBK assure us that the TUK is maintaining its character as an orthodox Reformed institution. However, there was no interaction in this letter with our specific concerns. Since we have not seen any indication that our concerns have been recognized and given a serious response, we feel the need at this time to intensify our exhortation to you. Indeed, we are appealing to you as our sister churches to return to the right path of faith in regard to the interpretation of Holy Scripture.

Specifically, we ask you as sister churches to indicate clearly that the views of Dr. Stefan Paas expressed in his dissertation, *Creation and Judgment*, are not in harmony with the Word of God and the *Three Forms of Unity* to which we subscribe as Reformed Churches. When Paas puts forward the notion that the people of Israel arose from migrant and Canaanite populations and when he calls into question the historicity of the exodus, this constitutes an attack on the trustworthiness of the Word of God. To us, it is inconceivable that a person holding such views could be appointed as a professor at the TUK. That Paas does not teach in the area of Old Testament studies is no reassurance for us. Introducing doubt about the historical veracity of the Word of God cannot be contained; eventually, it will permeate all the disciplines of theological study. It is our view that the Directors of the TUK ought to have dealt with this matter by not allowing Paas to teach at the TUK so long as he held to the views expressed in his dissertation. Failure to do so means that a foothold has been established at the TUK for the methods and conclusions of scholarship

which does not take seriously the special nature of Scripture as the inspired and therefore infallible Word of God.

Similarly, we are deeply concerned about the methodology and conclusions expressed in the dissertation of Dr. Koert van Bekkum, *From Conquest to Coexistence: Ideology and Antiquarian Intent in the Historiography of Israel's Settlement in Canaan* (2001). Methodologically, van Bekkum believes that the factuality of historical events in the Bible cannot be accepted without question. In evaluating the truth of statements in the Bible about historical events, says van Bekkum, scholarship must consider the evidence of archaeology and the findings of literary criticism. Only in this way can a scholar arrive at the "truth value" of a text. The end result of his methodology is that certain biblical data are not accepted at face value. For example, according to van Bekkum, the Biblical data in Joshua 10:12-14 cannot mean that the sun and moon actually stood still. Similarly, the straightforward historical statement of 1 Kings 6:1 is set aside by van Bekkum. What we observe in such scholarship is a diminished appreciation for the authority and accuracy of the Word of God. The fact that this was a dissertation promoted under the auspices of the TUK and was awarded a *cum laude* designation augments our concerns. That van Bekkum was subsequently appointed to the faculty of the TUK creates grave concern among us for the future training of ministers of the RCN. Allowing such views to be presented and promoted undermines the orthodox Reformed character of the TUK and jeopardizes the training of future ministers of the Word. For the safeguarding of the RCN, we urge you as yet to deal with this matter in a way that honours the Holy Spirit who has breathed out for us the living and abiding Word of God.

In short, we believe that we are witnessing the acceptance of higher-critical scholarship in the Theological University of Kampen which is under the governance of the RCN. In our own North American context, we have observed the disastrous spiritual and numerical decline of various church federations due to the inroads of historical criticism of the Bible. Out of our love for you, we beseech you to take our concerns seriously and to be resolute in refuting opinion and scholarship which does not honour the infallibility, clarity and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures (Article 7, Belgian Confession).

We would also like to communicate our dismay about developments in your federation of churches in regard to the matter of women in office. While your Synods have thankfully not made a decision allowing for women office-bearers, we are concerned about the process that has been set in motion. When a Committee appointed by Synod Amersfoort-Centrum 2005 developed a manual to facilitate reflection on the role of women in the

church, it failed to direct the membership of your churches to what Holy Scripture says on this matter. Instead, what Scripture clearly reveals in regard to this matter became merely one option to be considered among others. Synod Harderwijk 2011 appointed deputies with a mandate to answer the question of whether Scripture permits the appointment of women to the offices of deacon, elder or minister. In our opinion, this gave evidence of a diminished regard for the plain teaching of the Bible that these offices are to be filled by faithful men who are chosen in agreement with the instructions provided through the Holy Spirit by the apostle Paul (1 Timothy 2:11-14, 1 Corinthians 14:33-35). In the RCN, as in any faithful church of the Lord Jesus Christ, the matter of women in office should not be framed as an open question. When the unambiguous teaching of the Word of God about male leadership in the church becomes a matter of debate, then we fear that a new and dangerous hermeneutical approach is showing its influence. We urge you in the Lord to defend the Biblical truth that God calls men to give leadership in the churches and we ask you to encourage your churches to resist the inroads of egalitarian thinking in regard to offices in the church.

Finally, we express our concerns about the ongoing relationship between your churches and the Netherlands Reformed Churches (NRC). As you know, the NRC allows women to be ordained to the offices of minister, elder and deacon and has recently mandated a study into whether practising homosexuals may fill the office of elder or deacon. A further reason for alarm is that full subscription to the confessions is not required of office-bearers in the NRC. When there is such deviation in the NRC from Scripture and the Reformed confession, it seems impossible to us that churches in your federation could amalgamate even with NRC churches which do not have women in office since each NRC church is part of a federation of churches and thus co-responsible for the direction of the whole. We urge you in the Lord to turn back from ecumenical relationships which are not built squarely on the truth of God's Word as confessed in the *Three Forms of Unity*.

Brothers, in addressing you as we have, we do not imagine for a moment that we are above reproach or that our churches do not also face many challenges. Both your churches and ours are involved in a deep spiritual battle for the preservation of the truth of God's Word. In this battle we need each other. We appreciate and thank the Lord for all the help you can give us to stay true to the Word of God as confessed by all of us in the ecumenical creeds and the *Three Forms of Unity*. In the same way, we hope and pray that you will hear our concerns and consider our admonitions and turn back from the wrong path on which you have set out in recent years. Should you stay on your present course in regard to the matters we have raised in this letter, we fear

that the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship which we have with you will be jeopardized. We urge your Synod and your churches to stand firm in confessing the whole truth of the Word of God and to defend this truth boldly and vigorously even when it is denounced and hated by the world. We hope and pray that our concerns may one day be put to rest and that our churches and yours may remain faithful until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory, majesty and power.

We look forward to your response to our next General Synod via our Subcommittee for Contact with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands Liberated. With Christian greetings, on behalf of General Synod Carman 2013, (Signed by the chairman and second clerk of Synod Carman 2013)

## **ADOPTED**

### **Article 166 – Reformed Churches of New Zealand (RCNZ)**

Committee 3 presented a proposal. After some discussion, it was taken back for further work.

### **Article 167 – International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC)**

Committee 3 presented a proposal and this was the result:

#### **1. Material:**

Report of CRCA (8.2.1)

#### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 (*Acts*, Article 156, Recommendation 4.2) decided 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.
- 2.2. A review committee, formed in 2009, is seeking recommendations for improving the working of the conference.
- 2.3. Dr. A.J. de Visser attended the ICRC Missions Representatives meeting in May 2011 on behalf of the CRCA and sent a report to the CRCA.
- 2.4. The CRCA recommends that Synod decide:
  - [1.] To continue the membership of the CanRC in the ICRC;
  - [2.] To send a delegation of two voting members and two advisory members to the next conference scheduled to meet in Cardiff, Wales in 2013.

**3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. The ICRC appears to be serving a useful function and it also provides a good opportunity to meet with other churches.
- 3.2. Having four members of the CRCA attend the ICRC was beneficial in the past and this practice should be maintained.

**4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To continue the membership of the CanRC in the ICRC;
- 4.2. To send a delegation of two voting members and two advisory members to the next conference scheduled to meet in Cardiff, Wales, 2013.

**ADOPTED****Article 168 – Closing Devotions and Adjournment**

Br. P.A.M. Broekema read Revelation 2:1-7, had the assembly sing Psalm 16:3, 4 and led in prayer. Synod was adjourned.

**Day 12 – Morning Session  
Tuesday, May 21, 2013**

**Article 169 – Opening Devotions**

The chairman called the meeting to order and the assembly sang Psalm 57:1, 2. Rev. Bouwman then read 2 Chronicles 20:1-30 and led in prayer. The chairman noted that all members of synod were present. Some house-keeping matters were explained.

**Article 170 – Adoption of the Acts**

Articles 146-168 of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted. Synod adjourned for committee work.

**Article 171 – Book of Praise – Revision of Hymn Texts**

After Synod was re-convened, Committee 4 presented its proposal. With a small change, this was the result:

**1. Material:**

- 1.1. Report from the SCBP, Section 1.4 (8.2.4)
- 1.2. Letters from the churches at Coaldale (8.3.4.2), Grand Valley (8.3.4.5), Cloverdale (8.3.4.14), Grand Rapids (8.3.4.20), Burlington-Rehoboth (8.3.4.30), Spring Creek (8.3.4.33), St. Albert (8.3.4.37) and Winnipeg-Grace (8.3.4.42)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 passed on to the SCBP for its consideration the letters that were received from the churches. The SCBP notes that it has implemented the changes to APV Hymns 35, 61 and 78 as decided by Synod Burlington 2010 (*Acts*, Article 122). The SCBP requests that the proposed text of the Hymns serve as the final version for the 2013 edition of the *Book of Praise*.
- 2.2. Winnipeg-Grace recommends that the phrase “heaven and earth” in Hymn 1 of the APV 2010 be changed to “heav’n and earth” (as in the 1984 version), because the former is more awkward to sing.
- 2.3. St. Albert suggests that in Hymn 1 “from thence He shall come” be changed to “from there He shall come”, because “thence” is archaic and because “there” is more consistent with the text of the Apostles’ Creed (as found also in the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Day 7).
- 2.4. The SCBP proposes to maintain the text of Hymn 3 as it is presently printed in the APV.
- 2.5. The SCBP proposes to make the singing of the “Amen” in Hymn 8 standard (i.e., to remove the brackets, the asterisk and the phrase “May be sung with Amen-cadence”). Coaldale prefers to omit the “Amen” altogether from Hymn 8.
- 2.6. Spring Creek and Burlington-Rehoboth suggest a change to the first line of Hymn 17 (Song of Mary), so that it reads, “My soul does magnify,” instead of “My soul will magnify.” They want to preserve the present tense of the song, as found in most English translations of this text. The SCBP points out that according to rules of English usage, the verb “will” does not have to refer to the future; Spring Creek and Burlington-Rehoboth do not find this convincing as it is not the common understanding of the word. Spring Creek provides a rendering of Hymn 17:1 with “will” replaced by “does/do.”
- 2.7. Cloverdale disagrees with the proposed change to the last line of Hymn 18:1, where the SCBP wanted to include the word “covenant.” Cloverdale points out that no grounds are provided for this change and that the SCBP has not demonstrated that the alteration from “has kept the oath he swore to Abraham” to “has kept the covenant he made with Abraham” is an improvement. Cloverdale submits that although the proposed alteration faithfully reflects the biblical text, so does the present version and that “God’s oath-keeping is a particular manifestation of his covenant faithfulness.”
- 2.8. Grand Valley suggests to be rid of Hymn 30 because of many imprecise statements.

- 2.9. A few churches objected that Hymn 45 refers to our Lord and Saviour simply with “Jesus.” However, the committee notes that we have long had hymns that refer to our Lord only by his personal name, Jesus (e.g., Hymns 23, 28, 41, 43, 47, 55, 61, 68, 71, 82 and 84). Other objections to this song were addressed by Synod Burlington 2010, Article 163.
- 2.10. Grand Rapids disputes the inclusion of Hymn 46 (“Christ Shall Have Dominion”), a paraphrase of Psalm 72, because we already have Psalm 72.
- 2.11. The SCBP proposes to change “straight” to “strait” in the last line of Hymn 56:3, because the notion of a “strait gate” comes from the KJV of Matthew 7:13-14. The committee explains, “This might be perceived as the introduction of an archaism, but it fits with the tenor of the hymn (cf. “suffer not” of the preceding line).”
- 2.12. Coaldale and Grand Rapids request the deletion of Hymn 58 (“Our Children, Lord, in Faith and Prayer”) because of its sentimentality and baptistic theology. The SCBP notes that Synod Burlington 2010 addressed the question of a possible Arminian or Baptist tone in the idea of parents presenting their children to the Lord (Article 135). Nevertheless, the Committee believes it is good to alter the text in order to prevent future misunderstandings and to strengthen the hymn’s overall content. It proposes:
1. Our children, LORD, as covenant heirs,  
are baptized in your name,  
for they your steadfast promise share,  
which you to us proclaim.
  2. Such children Jesus did embrace  
while dwelling here below;  
to us and ours, O God of grace,  
the same compassion show
  3. As they grow up, keep them secure  
from worldly snares, we pray;  
O let them to the end endure  
in every righteous way.
- 2.13. Grand Rapids states that Hymn 66 is “less than robustly Trinitarian.”
- 2.14. The SCBP proposes to update the language of Hymn 77, in order to make it more consistent with other revised hymns in the *Book of Praise*. It proposes:

1. We praise you, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;  
in grateful devotion our tribute we bring.  
We lay it before you, we kneel and adore you;  
we bless your holy name, glad praises we sing.
2. We worship you, God of our fathers, we bless you;  
through life's storm and tempest our Guide you have been.  
When perils o'ertake us, you will not forsake us,  
and with your help, O Lord, our battles we win.
3. With voices united our praises we offer;  
our songs of thanksgiving to you we now raise.  
Your strong arm will guide us, our God is beside us;  
to you, our great Redeemer, fore'er be praise.

- 2.15. The SCBP proposes to alter the punctuation in Hymn 78:2 to remove an awkward phrase; they suggest lines 3-4 to read:  
Have you not seen? All that is needful has been  
sent by his gracious ordaining.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. In section 1.4.3 of its report the SCBP provides examples of changes that were suggested by the churches but not implemented by the committee.
- 3.2. The change to "heav'n and earth" in Hymn 1 is an improvement.
- 3.3. It would be advisable for Hymn 1 to correspond more closely with the Apostles' Creed (also as found in the Heidelberg Catechism).
- 3.4. The committee has provided a clear explanation of its revision of Hymn 3 (SCBP Report to Synod, p. 14).
- 3.5. The singing of the "Amen" after the Doxology (Hymn 8) is consistent with a long liturgical tradition.
- 3.6. While both the APV rendition and the proposal by Spring Creek are acceptable, it is preferable to revert to the 1984 version of Hymn 17:1 because it clearly speaks in the present tense.
- 3.7. Cloverdale is correct to point out that "oath" in Hymn 18:1 faithfully reflects the biblical text. Further, to sing the proposed SCBP change requires a contraction of "covenant" or of "Abraham."
- 3.8. The concerns about the language in Hymn 30 have been addressed by the SCBP in its report to Synod Burlington 2010 (p. 35-36).
- 3.9. The Committee is correct to point out the use of the personal name of the Saviour in not only Hymn 45, but numerous other hymns in the *Book of Praise*.

- 3.10. The SCBP explained the inclusion of Hymn 46 (“Christ Shall Have Dominion”) by noting in its report to Synod Burlington 2010, “While Psalm 72 is a prayer of David for blessing on his son Solomon, [“Christ Shall Have Dominion”] shows the messianic fulfilment by applying the text directly to the risen Christ” (p. 40).
- 3.11. “Straight” in Hymn 56 is an inaccurate way to describe the road that leads to eternal life. “Strait” describes how the road that leads to eternal life is restricted to certain boundaries.
- 3.12. The proposed new wording for Hymn 58 is an improvement as it strengthens the covenantal aspect of the hymn.
- 3.13. It is unclear why Hymn 66 is singled out as being “less than robustly Trinitarian,” as other hymns in the *Book of Praise* focus on different aspects of the work of each person of the Trinity.
- 3.14. It is advisable to have consistent language as much as possible in the *Book of Praise* and the changes to Hymn 77 serve to that end.
- 3.15. The suggested punctuation change in Hymn 78 is an improvement.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. That the SCBP fulfilled its mandate in considering suggestions from the churches;
- 4.2. To revert to the 1984 version of line 2 in Hymn 1, “heav’n and earth”;
- 4.3. To instruct the SCBP to change “thence” to “there” in Hymn 1;
- 4.4. To retain the APV 2010 version of Hymn 3;
- 4.5. To approve the SCBP’s proposed change to Hymn 8;
- 4.6. To revert to the 1984 rendition of Hymn 17:1;
- 4.7. To maintain the APV 2010’s rendition of the last line of Hymn 18:1;
- 4.8. To retain Hymn 30 in the 2013 edition of the *Book of Praise*;
- 4.9. To maintain the text of Hymn 45 as it is presently in the 2010 APV;
- 4.10. To retain Hymn 46 in the 2013 edition of the *Book of Praise*;
- 4.11. To approve the SCBP’s proposed change to Hymn 56:3;
- 4.12. To approve the SCBP’s proposed changes to Hymn 58;
- 4.13. To retain Hymn 66 in the 2013 edition of the *Book of Praise*;
- 4.14. To approve the SCBP’s proposed changes to Hymn 77;
- 4.15. To approve the SCBP’s proposed change to Hymn 78;
- 4.16. To mandate the SCBP to implement the relevant recommendations under point 4 regarding the revision of the text of the hymns;
- 4.17. To adopt the text of hymns as presented in the APV 2010, along with any incorporated changes under point 4, as the definitive text of the Anglo-Genevan Psalter in the 2013 edition of the *Book of Praise*;

- 4.18. To decide that any further changes to the text of the Hymns be made in accordance with the *Acts of Synod Carman 2013*, Article 125, Recommendation 4.5.

## ADOPTED

### Article 172 – *Book of Praise* – Revision of Hymn Tunes

Committee 2 presented its proposal. With a few minor changes, this was the result:

#### 1. Material:

- 1.1. Report from the SCBP, Section 1.5 (8.2.4)
- 1.2. Letters from the churches at Coaldale (8.3.4.2), Grand Valley (8.3.4.5), Attercliffe (8.3.4.8), Brampton (8.3.4.10), Chilliwack (8.3.4.13), Cloverdale (8.3.4.14), Flamborough (8.3.4.18), Grand Rapids (8.3.4.20), Grassie (8.3.4.21), Lincoln (8.3.4.26), Lynden (8.3.4.28), Burlington-Rehoboth (8.3.4.30), Toronto (8.3.4.38), Willoughby Heights (8.3.4.40), Winnipeg-Grace (8.3.4.42), Calgary (8.3.4.43) and St. Albert (8.3.4.47)

#### 2. Observations:

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 passed along many letters regarding the hymns to the SCBP for its consideration. The Committee reports that, subsequent to Synod 2010, it solicited feedback on the Hymn section and received many letters which were all duly considered.
- 2.2. Synod 2010 was informed by the SCBP via a letter to Synod dated Feb 2010 that it intended to make changes to the musical notation of the hymns. This letter was for information only since the Committee understood that, as a rule, General Synods do not concern themselves with the technical matters and details related to musical notation (*Acts of Synod Winnipeg 1989*, Article 146).
- 2.3. In addition, the SCBP informed Synod that it would like to introduce two new hymn melodies: A rhythmic (alternate) version of the melody for the hymn *Christ has Risen! Hallelujah!* (Hymn 26 in the 1984 edition) and a new melody – called “Thornbury” – for the hymn *Come Praise the Holy Spirit* (Hymn 37 in the 1984 edition).
- 2.4. Synod Burlington 2010 mandated the SCBP to incorporate the changes in musical notation as well as the addition of two new melodies, Hymns 31A and 48, in the 2010 APV (*Acts*, Article 123).
- 2.5. In May 2011, the SCBP sent a letter to the churches requesting feedback to be submitted by May 1, 2012; this generated an

enormous amount of feedback from more than half of the churches. Much of the feedback received was of a critical nature. The committee also expresses its gratitude for the advice of the synodically appointed musical advisor, br. Frank Ezinga (Langley), as well as brs. James Teitsma (Winnipeg) and Martin Jongsma (Fergus).

- 2.6. The SCBP observes in its Report to Synod 2013: “Looking back over the developments, the Committee now recognizes that it had underestimated the challenges of trying to implement changes to well-known melodies. It is also recognized that what the Committee believed to be improvements, were not received as such by various church accompanists.... The Committee recognizes that melodies and musical notation should not be a cause of unrest or unhappiness in the churches. In the present situation the Committee feels that the best solution will be to revert to the previous versions of hymns that were changed. Clearly, the majority of churches find the ‘old’ versions to be more singable.” As a result, the SCBP proposes to return to previous musical notations.
- 2.7. Observations regarding specific hymns:
- 2.7.1. *Hymn 1*: Several churches suggested minor changes to rest values which the SCBP rejects. The church at Winnipeg-Grace endorses the current notation of 5 beats for the word “hell” (3 beats, plus the 2 rests following it) and notes it has implemented this successfully in its congregational singing with the use of a harmonization by br. Frank Ezinga. It notes that there exists a tradition of pausing after the word “hell” when the Creed is recited.
- 2.7.2. *Hymn 2*: The SCBP wants to restore rests but no breath marks. Some churches wish to revert to the 1984 version.
- 2.7.3. *Hymn 4*: One church wishes to reinstate breath marks.
- 2.7.4. *Hymn 7*: One church wishes to reinstate breath marks.
- 2.7.5. *Hymn 12*: The SCBP wants to restore rests but no breath marks.
- 2.7.6. *Hymn 18*: The SCBP admits that removing all the rests was a move that was not well-received in the churches and therefore proposes to restore some of the rests. It observes that the structure of the text which consists of four parts (lines 1-2, 3-4, 5-7 and 8-10) needs to be taken into account. The SCBP proposes to restore rests after lines 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9. Synod Carman 2013 has also received a number of letters regarding the proposed changes. The SCBP alleges that the changes to

- the melody have been generally accepted by the churches. A number of churches, however, wish to revert to the 1984 version of the melody because they feel that it is more singable.
- 2.7.7. *Hymn 20*: One church wishes to reinstate breath marks.
  - 2.7.8. *Hymn 27*: One church proposes to restore the 1967 version which affects only the melody in the last line.
  - 2.7.9. *Hymn 29*: One church recommends bringing this hymn in line with North American Hymnals, that is, to align with the blue Psalter- Hymnal # 348 which makes it more singable.
  - 2.7.10. *Hymn 30*: The SCBP recommends that the churches return to the melody for this hymn as published in the Augment.
  - 2.7.11. *Hymn 31A and 31B*: Many churches responded negatively to the addition of Hymn 31A. Some wish to delete it altogether; others suggest that if it is retained, the churches be given both options (31A and 31B). One of the churches objects to the manner in which Hymn 31A was presented to Synod without informing the churches beforehand and for that reason alone the change should be rejected.
  - 2.7.12. *Hymn 33*: One church expresses its preference for the version of this hymn as it was published in the Supplement 1967 since the melody of this hymn in the APV is “very dreary for a resurrection song.”
  - 2.7.13. *Hymn 37*: SCBP recommends that the 1984 version should be restored but with the breath marks deleted. Some churches want the 1984 version restored which includes rests after each line.
  - 2.7.14. *Hymn 40*: One church suggests reverting to the 1984 version which includes breath marks and fermatas. The SCBP suggests reinstating fermatas at the end of lines 3 and 6;
  - 2.7.15. *Hymn 41*: One church wishes to revert to the 1984 version which includes breath marks.
  - 2.7.16. *Hymn 42*: SCBP proposes that the APV notation be retained because the half notes suggest a somewhat slower tempo which is fitting for the content of the hymn.
  - 2.7.17. *Hymn 47*: Two churches wishes to reinstate breath marks.
  - 2.7.18. *Hymn 48*: The SCBP proposes that the “Thornbury” melody be retained because the SCBP considers the old melody to be a sad one for a joyful Pentecostal hymn. Various musical technical arguments were used to reject the old tune. By far most churches prefer the old Hymn 37 melody or to at least

- allow for both. One church notes correctly that Hymn 48 was introduced late without informing the churches.
- 2.7.19. *Hymn 49*: One church wishes to revert to the 1984 version which includes breath marks.
- 2.7.20. *Hymn 51*: One church wishes to revert to the 1984 version which includes breath marks.
- 2.7.21. *Hymn 53*: The SCBP proposes to restore the fermatas at the end of lines 2, 4 and 9. One church wishes to revert to the 1984 version which includes breath marks.
- 2.7.22. *Hymn 57*: One church proposes to restore the 1967 version which affects only the melody in the last line.
- 2.7.23. *Hymn 63*: In response to a few churches the SCBP proposes to retain the APV version because the notation with half notes suggests a slower tempo.
- 2.7.24. *Hymn 65*: In response to a few churches requesting that the last line be changed back to the 1984 version, the SCBP proposes that the APV notation be retained because it claims that the 1984 version was an error.
- 2.7.25. *Hymn 67*: One church wishes to revert to the 1984 version which includes breath marks.
- 2.7.26. *Hymn 69*: One church wishes to revert to the 1984 version which includes breath marks.
- 2.7.27. *Hymn 73*: The SCBP proposes that the APV notation be retained because with moderate tempo the congregation will be able to sing it. Two churches wish to revert to the 1984 version which includes breath marks.
- 2.7.28. *Hymn 74*: One church wishes to revert to the 1984 version which includes breath marks.
- 2.7.29. *Hymn 76*: One church wishes to revert to the 1984 version which includes breath marks.
- 2.7.30. *Hymn 77*: The SCBP proposes that the APV notation be retained. One church endorses the SCBP's proposal.
- 2.7.31. *Hymn 78*: The SCBP proposes to revert to the notation in the 1967 Supplement. This received endorsement by a number of churches.
- 2.7.32. *Hymn 80*: One church wishes to revert to the 1984 version which includes a breath mark and a fermata.
- 2.7.33. *Hymn 82*: One church proposes to alter the melody of Hymn 82, line 5 (adding a sharp to the second last note).

2.7.34. *Hymn 83*: The SCBP proposes that the APV notation be retained (half-notes instead of quarter notes). One church agrees with the SCBP's proposal.

### 3. Considerations:

- 3.1. The SCBP received many letters from the churches re: the hymn melodies. It is clear from its report that the SCBP carried out its mandate and duly considered this extensive feedback. Much appreciation should be directed to the SCBP, as well as to its advisors for their expertise and devotion to this task.
- 3.2. Synod Winnipeg 1989 decided that matters of musical notation should be left up to the SCBP and therefore the musical notation changes recommended by the SCBP should be accepted unless compelling evidence to the contrary is presented.
- 3.3. Because the introduction of new hymn melodies was met with significant resistance, caution must be exercised prior to adopting new hymns.
- 3.4. Regarding specific hymns:
  - 3.4.1. *Hymn 1*: The SCBP is correct in its conclusion and its recommendation should be adopted.
  - 3.4.2. *Hymn 2*: The SCBP is correct in its conclusion and its recommendation should be adopted.
  - 3.4.3. *Hymn 4*: Whether or not breath marks are included does not impact how the hymn is sung.
  - 3.4.4. *Hymn 7*: Whether or not breath marks are included does not impact how the hymn is sung.
  - 3.4.5. *Hymn 12*: The SCBP is correct in its conclusion and its recommendation should be adopted.
  - 3.4.6. *Hymn 18*: The SCBP's proposal regarding reinstating the rests sufficiently follows the text of the hymn and therefore should be approved. The 1984 version is well-known and appreciated and the subtle changes to the melody create confusion and thus are not justified.
  - 3.4.7. *Hymn 20*: The breath mark after line 2 is not necessary.
  - 3.4.8. *Hymn 27*: There is no compelling reason not to adopt this hymn in the APV.
  - 3.4.9. *Hymn 29*: The version in the blue Psalter Hymnal #348 may be easier to sing but it has not been presented to the churches for consideration. This can be done by a church in future by following the ecclesiastical route (see *Acts of Synod 2013*,

Article 125, Recommendation 4.5).

- 3.4.10. *Hymn 30*: There is no reason to reject the SCBP's proposal.
- 3.4.11. *Hymn 31A and B*: The response from the churches strongly suggests that the alternate melody (A) is neither necessary nor an improvement. The original (B) version is well-loved and there is no need to offer a new or alternate melody.
- 3.4.12. *Hymn 33*: This church should have submitted this suggestion to the SCBP much earlier in the process of revision.
- 3.4.13. *Hymn 37*: After reviewing the SCBP's proposal for the 1984 notation (without rests) and seeing the churches' expressed desire for the 1984 version with rests, the latter position is more convincing.
- 3.4.14. *Hymn 40*: The SCBP's proposal is acceptable.
- 3.4.15. *Hymn 41*: Whether or not breath marks are included does not impact how the hymn is sung.
- 3.4.16. *Hymn 42*: The SCBP's proposal is acceptable.
- 3.4.17. *Hymn 47*: There is no need to reinstate breath marks. Whether or not breath marks are included does not impact how the hymn is sung.
- 3.4.18. *Hymn 48*: The response from the churches strongly suggests that the "Thornbury" melody was neither necessary nor an improvement. The original version was well-loved and there is no need to offer a new or alternate melody.
- 3.4.19. *Hymn 49*: There is a legitimate need for a rest or a breath mark after the second line.
- 3.4.20. *Hymn 51*: The SCBP's proposal is acceptable. Whether or not breath marks are included does not impact how the hymn is sung.
- 3.4.21. *Hymn 53*: The need for fermatas is compelling here. Thus the SCBP's proposal is warranted.
- 3.4.22. *Hymn 57*: There is no compelling reason not to adopt this hymn in the APV.
- 3.4.23. *Hymn 63*: The SCBP's proposal is convincing.
- 3.4.24. *Hymn 65*: The 1984 version is well-loved and well-known and should be reinstated.
- 3.4.25. *Hymn 67*: Whether or not breath marks are included does not impact how the hymn is sung and thus the APV can stand.
- 3.4.26. *Hymn 69*: Whether or not breath marks are included does not impact how the hymn is sung and thus the APV can stand.

- 3.4.27. *Hymn 73*: Fermatas should be inserted on lines 2, 4 and 6 for ease of singing.
- 3.4.28. *Hymn 74*: Fermatas should be inserted after lines 2 and 4 for ease of singing.
- 3.4.29. *Hymn 76*: Whether or not breath marks are included does not impact how the hymn is sung and thus the APV can stand.
- 3.4.30. *Hymn 77*: The SCBP's proposal is sufficiently convincing.
- 3.4.31. *Hymn 78*: The SCBP's proposal is sufficiently convincing.
- 3.4.32. *Hymn 80*: Whether or not breath marks are included does not impact how the hymn is sung and thus the APV can stand.
- 3.4.33. *Hymn 82*: No reason is given to change the notation in the APV.
- 3.4.34. *Hymn 83*: The SCBP's position is sufficient.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To thank the SCBP for its work and to thank advisors Dr. Karen Dieleman, Dr. Benne Faber, Dr. Deanna Smid, Dr. Jannes Smith, Dr. Cornelis Van Dam, Dr. William Helder, brs. Frank Ezinga, James Teitsma and Martin Jongsma;
- 4.2. To direct the SCBP to implement the recommendations listed in its report, incorporating the following specific instructions:
  - 4.2.1. *Hymn 1*: adopt the SCBP recommendations;
  - 4.2.2. *Hymn 2*: adopt the SCBP recommendations;
  - 4.2.3. *Hymn 4*: adopt the SCBP recommendations;
  - 4.2.4. *Hymn 7*: adopt the SCBP recommendations;
  - 4.2.5. *Hymn 12*: adopt the SCBP recommendations;
  - 4.2.6. *Hymn 18*: revert to the 1984 version of this melody;
  - 4.2.7. *Hymn 20*: retain the APV version and not reinstate the breath mark after the second line;
  - 4.2.8. *Hymn 27*: retain the APV version of this melody;
  - 4.2.9. *Hymn 29*: retain the APV version of this melody;
  - 4.2.10. *Hymn 30*: adopt the SCBP recommendations;
  - 4.2.11. *Hymn 31*: adopt the **B** version only of this melody;
  - 4.2.12. *Hymn 33*: retain the APV version of this melody;
  - 4.2.13. *Hymn 37*: revert to the 1984 version of this melody;
  - 4.2.14. *Hymn 40*: adopt the SCBP recommendations;
  - 4.2.15. *Hymn 41*: adopt the SCBP recommendations;
  - 4.2.16. *Hymn 42*: adopt the SCBP recommendations;
  - 4.2.17. *Hymn 47*: adopt the SCBP recommendations;

- 4.2.18. *Hymn 48*: revert to the 1984 version of this melody;
- 4.2.19. *Hymn 49*: retain the APV version, but insert a rest or breath mark after the second line;
- 4.2.20. *Hymn 51*: adopt the SCBP recommendations;
- 4.2.21. *Hymn 53*: adopt the SCBP recommendations;
- 4.2.22. *Hymn 57*: retain the APV version of this melody;
- 4.2.23. *Hymn 63*: adopt the SCBP recommendations;
- 4.2.24. *Hymn 65*: revert to the 1984 version of this melody;
- 4.2.25. *Hymn 67*: retain the APV version of this melody;
- 4.2.26. *Hymn 69*: retain the APV version of this melody;
- 4.2.27. *Hymn 73*: retain the APV version, but fermatas should be inserted after lines 2,4 and 6;
- 4.2.28. *Hymn 74*: retain the APV version, but fermatas should be inserted after lines 2 and 4;
- 4.2.29. *Hymn 76*: retain the APV version of this melody;
- 4.2.30. *Hymn 77*: adopt the SCBP recommendations;
- 4.2.31. *Hymn 78*: adopt the SCBP recommendations;
- 4.2.32. *Hymn 80*: retain the APV version of this melody;
- 4.2.33. *Hymn 82*: retain the APV version of this melody;
- 4.2.34. *Hymn 83*: adopt the SCBP recommendations;
- 4.3. To adopt the melodies of the hymns as presented, along with the incorporated changes under 4.2, as definitive in the final edition of the *Book of Praise*.
- 4.4. That any further changes should be made in accordance with the *Acts of Synod Carman 2013*, Article 125, Recommendation 4.5.

## ADOPTED

### Article 173 – *Book of Praise* – Hymn Mandate

Committee 5 presented its proposal. With a minor change, this was the result:

#### 1.1. Material:

- 1.1. Report from the SCBP Section 1.6 (8.2.4)
- 1.2. Letters from the churches at Attercliffe (8.3.4.8), Carman West (8.3.4.12b), Willoughby Heights (8.3.4.41), Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.4.17), Grand Rapids (8.3.4.20), Grassie (8.3.4.21), Guelph-Emmaunel (8.3.4.22), Lynden (8.3.4.29), Burlington-Rehoboth (8.3.4.30), Spring Creek (8.3.4.34), Calgary (8.3.4.43), Burlington-Fellowship (8.3.4.11), Hamilton-Cornerstone (8.3.4.24); London (8.3.3.22), Calgary (8.3.3.27) and Edmonton-Immanuel (8.3.3.28)
- 1.3. Letter of appeal from the church at Coaldale (8.5.16)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 gave the SCBP the following mandate with respect to the hymns (*Acts*, Article 142, Recommendation 4):
  - [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.
- 2.2. The SCBP states that, due to the heavy workload of the publication of the APV and dealing with the material for the 2013 edition of the *Book of Praise*, it was “unable to engage meaningfully with this part of its mandate.” The SCBP “wishes to stress that, once the 2013 edition of the *Book of Praise* is complete, it looks forward to be able to devote more time and energy on this part of the mandate in the future.”
- 2.3. The SCBP also wishes “to stress that the proposed hymns must adhere to the *Principles and Guidelines for the Selection of Music in the Church* adopted by General Synod Chatham 2004” (*Acts*, Article 115, Section 6).
- 2.4. A number of churches have addressed Synod Carman 2013 with various suggestions about the mandate concerning hymns. Carman West and Willoughby Heights propose a re-evaluation of current hymns in order to delete unused hymns and possibly to replace them in time with “time-tested favourites.” Willoughby Heights also asks synod to re-affirm the limit of hymns to be a maximum of 100 as decided upon by Synod Chatham 2004.
- 2.5. The churches at Carman West, Fergus-Maranatha, Grassie, Grand Rapids, Lynden, Burlington-Rehoboth, Spring Creek and Calgary all urge synod not to repeat the mandate to add new hymns at this time. Among the reasons given are that it causes a certain amount of unrest in the congregation, it takes a great deal of council’s time and energy to evaluate the proposed hymns, the current hymn selection is more than suitable to sing about the redeeming work of the Lord, and publishing supplements or adding hymns to the existing *Book of Praise* adds unnecessarily increased costs to church members (some of whom struggle financially).
- 2.6. The church at Coaldale has launched a formal appeal against Article 42 of the *Acts of Synod Burlington 2010*, requesting Synod Carman 2013 to “rescind the decision of Article 142, section 4.1 and to judge

that the matter of reviewing and updating the hymn section of the *Book of Praise* to be concluded for the time being.” Coaldale argues that while there are no “principal reasons why more hymns could not be included...there are also no principal reasons why more hymns should be included. The decision whether or not to include more hymns is not a matter of principle but of wisdom.” Coaldale suggests that it would be wise to let the present hymn section (with its recent additions) be left in place for “at least one generation (25 years)” so that the congregations can learn them and “grow to use them as a deep and meaningful way to praise God.”

- 2.7. The church at Burlington-Fellowship and Hamilton-Cornerstone support the desire of the SCBP to carry on with the mandate of Article 142. Hamilton-Cornerstone believes that a church songbook “should constantly be open to revision.”

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. Given the heavy workload of the SCBP over the last three years in preparing both the APV and the new *Book of Praise* material, it is understandable that the Committee did not engage meaningfully with this portion of its mandate during this time frame.
- 3.2. At the same time, the SCBP and the churches have been busy since 2001 reviewing and suggesting hymns. The Committee could report already to Synod Smithers 2007 that it had “reviewed in excess of 500 hymns from various sources, many of which were suggested by the churches” (Report to Synod Smithers 2007, p.156). This led to the recommended 28 hymns for testing in the churches which Synod Smithers adopted. It is clear that both the SCBP and the churches have been amply and actively engaged for some 12 years in the consideration of new hymns.
- 3.3. While the SCBP would like to pursue the mandate received in 2010 and two churches support this, nine churches have requested some form of temporary moratorium on adding new hymns. The arguments raised by some of those churches do have merit. Hymn evaluation, testing and learning does take much time from the SCBP, church councils and congregations themselves, has at times created upset in the churches, and does come with a certain financial cost. These factors need to be borne in mind as a new mandate is formulated.
- 3.4. The church at Coaldale is correct that the adding or not adding of additional hymns is not a matter of *principle* but a matter of *wisdom*. It is not desirable to have a constantly-changing hymn section nor

is it desirable to close the door entirely to additional suitable hymns at some point in the future. A mechanism must be found where the churches can give expression to their desire for more hymns and where the churches can also assess together the wisdom of adding more hymns at a certain time.

- 3.5. The mechanism of following the ecclesiastical route of bringing overtures for new hymns to the minor assemblies (consistory to classis to regional synod to general synod) is well-suited for this. If the churches, through their delegates at the minor assemblies, agree that the time is right to consider adding more hymns and general synod agrees too, then a general consensus will have been reached as to the wisdom of adding new hymns. At that point, general synod can pass along to the SCBP any hymns it has received in this manner from the churches for its own internal evaluation and recommendation. This mechanism can also be used by the churches at Carman West and Willoughby-Heights (and others) if they have a proposal for the deletion of certain existing hymns.
- 3.6. In considering new hymns, both individual churches as well as the minor assemblies must bear in mind the *Principles and Guidelines for the Selection of Music in the Church* adopted by General Synod Chatham 2004. The decision to limit the hymns to a maximum of 100 remains in place since no arguments have been brought against it. However, even more important to keep in mind is the reason for this restriction, "... since Psalms have a predominant place in the liturgy of the Reformed churches" (*Acts of Synod Chatham 2004*, Article 115, Section 6).
- 3.7. Since Coaldale admits it is a question of wisdom (and not justice) as to when to adopt more hymns, it has not proven that Synod Burlington 2010 wronged them or the churches (according to Article 31 CO) when deciding at that time to mandate the SCBP to, "seek, receive, evaluate and recommend additional hymns to be compiled and proposed at a future date for testing by the churches."

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To thank the SCBP for its efforts over the years in reviewing, evaluating and suggesting to the churches new hymns;
- 4.2. Not to renew the mandate of the SCBP given in Article 142 of Synod Burlington 2010 but to direct the churches which desire the addition of new hymns to take their proposals through the ecclesiastical route (see Considerations 3.3-3.6);

- 4.3. To deny Coaldale's appeal.

## ADOPTED

### Article 174 – Appeal of Fergus-Maranatha re: Addition of Hymns

Committee 1 presented its proposal. After some discussion, this was the result:

#### 1. Material:

Letter from the church at Fergus-Maranatha in which they appeal a decision of Synod Burlington 2010 to add new hymns to the *Book of Praise* (presumably Article 142) (8.5.27)

#### 2. Observation:

- 2.1. Fergus-Maranatha mentions that it sent a letter to Synod Burlington 2010 regarding the addition of hymns and it is now 'extending' its position with this appeal.
- 2.2. Fergus-Maranatha does not indicate which article of the *Acts of Synod Burlington 2010* it is appealing.
- 2.3. Fergus-Maranatha brings forward many quotes from church fathers and others throughout church history to show that the introduction of new hymns led to deviation from the truth.
- 2.4. Fergus-Maranatha mentions four Bible texts (Deuteronomy 12:8, 32; Amos 5:23; 8:10; Isaiah 23:16), which it claims prove that we should not introduce hymns.

#### 3. Consideration:

- 3.1. It is not clear which decision Fergus-Maranatha is appealing, nor is there interaction with actual decisions of Synod Burlington 2010.
- 3.2. Using quotes from historical figures does not provide new evidence that the introduction of hymns is against Scripture or the Church Order.
- 3.3. The quotes from Scripture do not speak about the use of hymns and are taken out of context. Fergus-Maranatha does not provide new scriptural evidence which shows that the introduction of hymns is unbiblical (Article 31 CO)

#### 4. Recommendation:

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

## ADOPTED

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**Article 175 – Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) –  
Miscellaneous Items**

Committee 3 presented its proposal. With some minor changes, this was the result:

**1. Material:**

Report of CRCA (8.2.1), letter from the church at Abbotsford (8.3.1.4)

**2. Observation:**

- 2.1. The CRCA reports on incidental contact with several church federations around the world. In instances where that contact was initiated by those other church federations, the CRCA sought to be of assistance. Where that contact came about through CanRCs, the CRCA encouraged those congregations to do their own research and bring proposals to synod through the minor assemblies if they thought that pursuing contact would have value.
- 2.2. The CRCA has customarily provided letters of testimony for ministers preaching in foreign countries. It now argues that it should not be the designated body for issuing their ‘declarations’ because (a) it is never officially informed about the changing status of candidates and ministers; and (b) when a minister leaves a church to serve elsewhere it is the consistory with the deacons that issues an official declaration.
- 2.3. The CRCA proposes that synod decide:
  - [1.] The practice of issuing declarations by the CRCA to ministers who will be preaching in sister churches shall be discontinued;
  - [2.] Ministers who need such a declaration should request one from their own consistory.
- 2.4. Abbotsford supports the CRCA proposal.

**3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. It is evident from all the reports prepared by the CRCA that the committee has been diligent in fulfilling its mandate.
- 3.2. It is appropriate that the CRCA continues to follow the established rule that new contacts with other churches should not be pursued by the CRCA without the prior involvement of the minor assemblies.
- 3.3. For CRCA declarations to be meaningful, they require input from the local consistory which has oversight over the ministers (and candidates) concerned. Since it would be simpler for the consistory to issue such declarations and also consistent with Article 5 CO, this is appropriate.

**4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To thank the CRCA for the manner in which it has fulfilled its mandate;
- 4.2. That the practice of issuing declarations by the CRCA to ministers who will be preaching in sister churches be discontinued;
- 4.3. That those declarations be provided by the consistories instead.

**ADOPTED****Article 176 –Synod Guidelines: Changes to**

Committee 4 presented its proposal with this result:

**Sections I.A, I.D and III.B.1** (See *Acts of Synod Burlington 2010*, Appendix 11, p.340)

The *old* rules are as follows:

**I.A.** The convening Church shall set the date on which Synod shall meet (cf. Article 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.

**I.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.

**III.B.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.

**Proposal to change Section I.A (re: the convening church) as follows:**

The convening Church shall set the date on which Synod shall meet (cf. Article 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 digital format and five paper 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.

**Proposal to add a new Section I.B (re: the convening church) as follows:**

Correspondence from the convening church, including the notice of convocation, agendas, reports and proposals may be sent to the churches and/or delegates as digital files. However, in order to maintain the confidentiality of potentially sensitive material, personal appeals as well as other documents which contain personal information (e.g., letters of appointment) must be sent from the convening church as password-protected digital files.

**Proposal to change Section I.D (re: the convening church) [*to be changed to I.E*] as follows:**

All material for Synod should be received by the convening Church (in digital format and five paper 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.

**Proposal to change Section III.B.1 (re: synodical committees) as follows:**

All committees appointed by Synod shall see to it that they send a copy of their report in digital format to each of the local churches.

**ADOPTED**

**Article 177 – Appointments – General**

**Part 1 – Recommending Names for Appointment**

**1. Material:**

Letters from the churches at Spring Creek (8.1.10), Willoughby Heights (8.1.27); reports from SCBP (8.2.4), CCCNA (8.2.3.2) and CRCA (8.1.43)

**2. Observation:**

There has been inconsistency in the way standing committees recommend replacements for their members. Some committees send their recommendations for appointments well in advance in their reports, others much later in sealed envelopes directly to a particular advisory committee of general synod, and others not all.

### **3. Consideration:**

It would be helpful if all synod committees would recommend suitable replacements so that general synod may be assisted in determining whom to appoint to the various committees. While such recommendations need not be publicized, they should be duly considered by all delegates to general synod in sufficient time.

### **4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide to mandate all committees of synod to send the names of recommended replacements for members of their respective committees to each general synod (for distribution to all delegates) at least 6 weeks in advance of general Synod.

## **Part 2 – Appointments**

### **1. Material:**

Letters from the churches at Spring Creek (8.1.10) and Willoughby Heights (8.1.27); reports from SCBP (8.2.4), CCCNA (8.2.3.2) and CRCA (8.1.43)

### **2. Board of Governors of the Theological College**

#### **2.1. Academic Committee:**

2.1.1. From Eastern Canada: E. Kampen (2016), J. Ludwig (2019), M. VanLuik (2022) (Substitute: P.G. Feenstra)

2.1.2. From Western Canada: A.J. Pol (2016), R. Aasman (2019), A. Souman (2022) (Substitute: J. Louwerse)

2.2. Finance and Property Committee: A. Bax (2016), H. Kampen (2016), B. Hordyk (2019), C.H. Medemblik (2022), F. Oostdyk (2022) (Substitutes: A. Schutten, M. DeBoer, in that order)

### **3. Committee for Pastoral Training Program Funding**

The church at Guelph-Emmanuel

### **4. Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA)**

4.1. J. VanderStoep (2016), T. Lodder (2016), J. VanLaar (2019), A. Souman (convenor) (2019), O. Bouwman (2022), Arend Witten (2022)

4.2. Subcommittee for Contact with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands: J. DeGelder, J. Moesker (convenor), G.J. Nordeman, C. Van Dam

**5. Committee for contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA)**

- 5.1. For Subcommittee East: E. Kampen (convenor) (2016), C. Poppe (2019), D.W. Vandeburgt (2019), G. Bos (2022)
- 5.2. For Subcommittee West: P.H. Holtvliüwer (2016), J. Poppe (2019), H. VanDelden (2019), L. VanderVeen (2022)

**6. Committee for Church Unity (CCU)**

- 6.1. Coordinators: W. den Hollander and C.J. VanderVelde
- 6.2. Subcommittees:
- 6.2.1. Church Order Subcommittee: G. Nederveen, G.J. Nordeman, J. VanWoudenberg (convenor), Art Witten
- 6.2.2. Theological Education Subcommittee: B. Faber, J.L. VanPopta (convenor), K.J. Veldkamp, G.H. Visscher
- 6.3. Common Songbook Committee: the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise*
- 6.4. Creeds and Forms Committee: C. Bouwman (convenor), J. VanVliet, T.G. VanRaalte

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

Chris Nobels (2016), G. Ph. Van Popta (convenor) (2016), A. Den Hollander (2019), J. Smith (2022), D. Wynia (2022); Alternate: Martin Jongsma (2022)

**8. Committee for Bible Translation (CBT)**

P.Aasman (2016), R. Bredenhof (2019), W. Bredenhof (convenor) (2019), D. deBoer (2019), R. Vermeulen (2022)

**9. Committee for Official Website (CWEB)**

W. Bredenhof (convenor) (2016), J. Koopmans (2016), Jonathan Reinink (2019), Darryl Shpak (2019)

**10. Churches for Days of Prayer and Article 54 CO**

The churches of Burlington-Rehoboth and Edmonton-Providence

**11. General Fund**

The church at Carman East

**12. The Committee for Needy Students Fund**

The church at Grassie

**13. Archive Church**

The church at Burlington-Ebenezer

**14. Archive Inspection**

The church at Burlington-Rehoboth

**15. Audit Finances of Synod Carman 2013**

The church at Carman East

**16. Address Church**

The church at Burlington-Ebenezer

**17. Committee for the Printing of the Acts**

The clerks of Synod Carman 2013

**18. Convening Church for Next Synod**

The church at Dunnville, Ontario

**ADOPTED****Article 178 – Appeal of Spring Creek re: Capitalization of Pronouns**

Committee 2 presented its proposal with this result:

**1. Material:**

Letter of appeal from the church at Spring Creek (8.5.18)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Spring Creek is appealing the decision of Synod Burlington 2010 in Article 109, asking that said decision be rescinded and to instruct the SCBP to once again capitalize all pronouns referring to God throughout the entire *Book of Praise*.
- 2.2. Spring Creek introduces a number of pertinent elements in its appeal:
  - 2.2.1. The issue of the capitalization of pronouns referring to God in the *Book of Praise* was first raised by the church at Chatham to General Synod Chatham 2004. Chatham wanted to ensure that the *Book of Praise* would maintain its capitalization of referent pronouns, because the *Book of Praise* was employing the NIV which, (like the RSV and ESV) does not employ this practice. The request was passed onto the SCBP.
  - 2.2.2. It is important to note that the issue stems from changes being undertaken to the prose section of the *Book of Praise*, not the

- song section. Since the finalized *Book of Praise* came into being in 1984, the song section has always had the pronouns in question capitalized – and there have been no objections.
- 2.2.3. The SCBP obtained the permission of the publishers of the NIV to capitalize the said pronouns whenever the NIV was quoted within the *Book of Praise*.
  - 2.2.4. Two churches objected to such capitalization to Synod Smithers 2007 and Synod then decided that consistency with past practice was best: capitalized pronoun referents to God were maintained.
  - 2.2.5. The church at Surrey appealed the decision of Synod Smithers 2007 to Synod Burlington 2010 and the matter was reviewed once again. Synod decided to overturn previous decisions and “bring all pronouns for God in the entire *Book of Praise* into conformity with the NIV.”
- 2.3. Spring Creek expresses its view that “We are convinced that Synod 2007 made the wisest decision and that Synod [Burlington] 2010 had no compelling reason to overturn it.”
  - 2.4. Spring Creek notes that “The *Book of Praise* (1984) employs capitalization of pronouns referring to God, a practice which had not been appealed until the APV was approved by Synod Burlington 2010.”
  - 2.5. Among the Bible translations recommended by various general synods over the years, the RSV, ESV and NIV do not capitalize the pronouns in question whereas the NKJV and NASB do.
  - 2.6. Spring Creek notes that prior to Synod Burlington 2010, successive synods since the 1984 *Book of Praise* was published either did not deal with this matter, or decided to maintain capital referents.
  - 2.7. Synod Smithers 2007 supported the “past practice” position and thus favoured employing the capitalized referents to God, despite the following summarized points opposing this practice:
    - 2.7.1. This is not done in the NIV;
    - 2.7.2. This does not follow current rules of English usage;
    - 2.7.3. This is not supported by the original languages of Scripture;
    - 2.7.4. Maintaining such capitalization has no biblical grounds.
  - 2.8. Synod Burlington 2010 considered the following points which led it to instruct the SCBP to refrain from capitalizing referent pronouns for God (*Acts*, Article 109):
    - [3.1.] “...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.

[3.3.] "...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 arguments for this convention."

[3.4.] "...[U]sing an uppercase initial letter may obscure the immediate Old Testament referent.' As well, '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."

- 2.9. Spring Creek takes issue with the first two arguments (3.1 and 3.3, above) by stating the following: "It is true that the Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic languages do not know of any usage to distinguish a referent by the capitalization of pronouns – but the English language does. If English allows for it (which it does) and God's name is worthy of distinction from all others (which it surely is), then it is certainly quite appropriate for the church to make use of this convention... The Bible constantly exhorts Christians to honour God's Name. When given the choice, Christians do well to use whatever convention of language available to duly honour God's Name."
- 2.10. Spring Creek takes issue with the third argument (3.4, above) by stating that "The argument that capitalizing pronouns for God at times obscures the Old Testament referent or that at times the original referent may not be clear is no reason not to return to the capitalization of the pronouns for God because the obscurity is not removed by leaving all pronouns in the lower case. In fact, even greater obscurity results when all pronouns are placed in the lower case!"

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. Spring Creek has clearly demonstrated (Observations 2.2 and 2.6) that the matter of capitalization of pronouns referring to God has a long history in our federations of churches. Capitalizing referent pronouns, however, had not been closely scrutinized as a legitimate practice prior to the Synods of 2007 and 2010.
- 3.2. Spring Creek claims (Observation 2.3) that "Synod Smithers 2007 made the wisest choice... and Synod Burlington 2010 was not justified in overturning it." This claim is a matter for debate. Synod

Smithers 2007 approved the capital referents primarily on grounds of “past practice” (Observation 2.8). Synod Burlington 2010 overturned for the more compelling reasons involving the original languages, usage and biblical norms (Observations 2.8, 2.9).

- 3.3. Spring Creek notes that the original languages do not reflect the call to capitalize referents (Observation 2.10). They also cite the fact that English usage “allows for” the use of capital referents. It could be argued then, that neither the original languages, nor the conventions of current language *require* the capital referents. It remains, then, a personal preference rather than a matter of fully considering evidence.
- 3.4. Spring Creek correctly notes (Observation 2.10) that both capitalizing and not capitalizing referents will lead to obscurity/ambiguity and subsequent interpretation. Spring Creek has not proven its claim that *more* obscurity results when capital referents are not employed.
- 3.5. A key element in Spring Creek’s appeal is that using capitals to refer to God’s pronouns is a legitimate way to give honour to His name. In Spring Creek’s view, “The sole purpose of capitalizing is to give recognition to the unique character of the Divine referent, namely, that he is the one, true God.” Moreover, they state that “we should use every means at our disposal to bring such honour... to God.” The element of praising God was, in fact, dealt with by Synod Burlington 2010, but it was deemed insufficient grounds to offset the other arguments presented. The onus is on Spring Creek to prove (with scriptural, church orderly or confessional evidence) that Synod Burlington 2010 erred in its decision to remove the capital referents to God. Thus Spring Creek’s evidence only amounts to preference.

#### **4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide to deny the appeal of the Spring Creek church.

### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 179 – Overture of Winnipeg-Redeemer re: General Synod Guidelines**

Committee 5 presented its second draft with this result:

##### **1. Material:**

Letter from the church at Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.1.3)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Winnipeg-Redeemer expresses concern with Article 22 of the *Acts of Synod Burlington 2010*. Winnipeg-Redeemer notes that the SCBP requested and received the privilege of the floor at Synod to participate in the discussion on their proposal and to demonstrate two new melodies. It notes that it is not contrary to the guidelines for Synod because the guidelines do not address this matter. Winnipeg-Redeemer notes that the guidelines only mention standing Synodical Committees in III.B.I. “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.” It notes that “although not stated it is understood that the requirement of guideline I.E. also applies to Standing Committees.” “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 Synod.”
- 2.2. Winnipeg-Redeemer expresses the concern that although Guideline I.I. allows for synod to seek advice, this should come from synod once it has established that advice is needed and advice should always come from a third party and not from a committee explaining and promoting its own report.
- 2.3. Winnipeg-Redeemer expresses the concern that synod should only deal with material in accordance with Guideline I.E. with the following exception: if for reasons beyond its control a committee has material after the deadline and a synod accepts such material, then the material should also go to the churches and synod should accept submissions interacting with the late material also.
- 2.4. Winnipeg-Redeemer expresses the concern that standing committees already have a significant impact on the churches because of their task. This needs to be kept in balance by synods considering and judging their reports together with input received from the churches but independent from further influence by a committee. It also expresses concern that as a federation grows, centralization of certain activities and the influence of committees can lead to a hierarchy. Lastly it is concerned that having committee members appear before synod would lead to an unnecessary expense or it would favour one committee over another because of the different locations of our synods.

- 2.5. In light of the above mentioned concerns, Winnipeg-Redeemer requests Synod Carman 2013 to judge that Synod Burlington 2010 erred in giving the SCBP the privilege of the floor at synod.
- 2.6. Winnipeg-Redeemer also requests three additions to the Guidelines for Synod under III. B. Synodical Committees (Standing):
  - [a.] For all matters pertaining to their mandate the committee shall send its report to Synod to all the churches 6 months prior to general synod
  - [b.] If synod accepts late submissions from a committee it shall also accept input from the churches on these late submissions
  - [c.] That the Standing Committees shall not receive the privilege of the floor at synod

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. Winnipeg-Redeemer acknowledges that Article 22 of the *Acts of Synod Burlington 2010* is not contrary to the guidelines because the guidelines do not address this matter.
- 3.2. Winnipeg-Redeemer expresses concern because Synod Burlington 2010 used information to make decisions when the churches did not have prior access to that information. Winnipeg-Redeemer wants to use the Guidelines for Synod to prevent this from happening again. Yet Winnipeg-Redeemer does not fully consider the last article of the Guidelines for Synod which states that these guidelines may be suspended, amended, revised or abrogated by a majority vote of synod. It is impossible for one synod to use the guidelines to restrict the possible choices that a future synod might make.
- 3.3. Guideline I.I allows for synod to seek advice. As this article of the guideline indicates, normally the request for advice comes from synod once they have established that advice is needed. However, due to the nature of the material (the melodies of the hymns), the SCBP made the request to participate in the discussion of its proposals and to demonstrate the proposed new melodies. Synod heard merit in this request and agreed to it.

### **4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide not to adopt the proposed additions to the guidelines of general synod.

### **ADOPTED**

Synod was adjourned for committee work.

**Day 12 — Afternoon Session**  
**Tuesday, May 21, 2013**

**Article 180 – Reopening**

The chairman reopened synod and noted that all the members of synod were present.

**Article 181 – Adoption of the Acts**

Articles 169-179 of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

**Article 182 – SCBP – Common Song Book**

Committee 2 presented a proposal. With a minor change, this was the result:

**1. Material:**

- 1.1. Report from the SCBP, Section 8.0 (8.2.4)
- 1.2. Letters from the churches at Barrhead (8.3.4.9), Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.4.17) and Langley (8.3.4.45)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 instructed the SCBP to try to involve the Common Songbook Committee (sub-committee of the CCU) in its review of the provisional *Book of Praise* (*Acts*, Article 146).
- 2.2. The SCBP reports that there was only one combined meeting with the URCNA's Psalter Hymnal Committee (PHC). This was because Synod London 2010 (URCNA), changed its committee's mandate and directed it to focus on a distinctively URC songbook rather than on a common songbook to be used by a future merged federation. This change of events brought the good progress that had been made to a halt.
- 2.3. The SCBP reports that Synod Nyack 2012 accepted the invitation of the OPC to work together in their respective tasks of producing updated songbooks for their respective churches. On the one hand, the URCNA has altered course and is now working together with the OPC in the production of a common OPC-URCNA songbook. On the other hand, the PHC in its report to Synod Nyack noted that the Synod London 2010 had mandated its committee "to be in dialogue with the Canadian Reformed Churches in a manner consistent with Phase 2 relations."
- 2.4. The SCBP recommends maintaining contact between the committees, but does not know what that contact should look like and therefore awaits direction from Synod Carman 2013.

- 2.5. The church at Barrhead is of the opinion that the reason for the SCBP's mandate to revise the Psalms was to facilitate the committee's work towards a common songbook with the URCNA. Since that is no longer happening, this negates the SCBP mandate regarding the revision of the psalms.
- 2.6. The church at Fergus-Maranatha requests that Synod Carman 2013 not accede to the recommendation of the SCBP that contact be maintained between the SCBP and the PHC because "that task of the committee has been completed; besides, we feel that this recommendation is not considered part of its mandate."
- 2.7. The church at Langley is saddened that the CanRC has been excluded from the URCNA-OPC songbook initiative, but recommends that Synod Carman 2013 mandate the SCBP to "communicate to the URC and the OPC our interest on working with both of them to develop a combined psalter hymnal-type common songbook."

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. It is regrettable that the PHC turned its attention to its own song book and subsequently initiated a joint project with the OPC, after so much had been accomplished with the SCBP in working toward a common song book.
- 3.2. It would still be advantageous for the SCBP to find ways to renew this initiative with the PHC in view of Synod London's decision to mandate the URCNA Committee "to be in dialogue with the Canadian Reformed Churches in a manner consistent with Phase 2 relations."
- 3.3. Since the decision to develop a common songbook has not been revised or rescinded, this should remain a stated objective since the goal is federative unity.
- 3.4. Seeing as the previous synods appointed the members of the SCBP as the Committee for a Common Songbook, Synod Carman 2013 should do the same.
- 3.5. The churches at Fergus-Maranatha and Barrhead are incorrect in asserting that since the PHC is no longer working with the SCBP toward a common songbook, the SCBP no longer has a mandate to revise the Psalms. Synod Burlington 2010 considered, "The inclusion in a common songbook 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” (*Acts*, Article 146, Consideration 3.2).

- 3.6. Given the history, Church Order and Confessions that we share with the URCNA, as well as the goal of federative unity that is being pursued with them, there are good reasons to monitor developments in both the URC as well as OPC songbook committees.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

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 SCBP for its work and to reappoint it with the mandate to work out Consideration 3.2;
- 4.3. To send Consideration 3.5 as an answer to the churches of Fergus-Maranatha and Barrhead;
- 4.4. To send Consideration 3.6 as an answer to the church at Langley.

### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 183 – *Book of Praise* – Psalms: Nature and Extent of Changes**

##### **1. Material:**

- 1.1. Letters from the churches at Grand Valley (8.3.4.4) and Barrhead (8.3.4.9)
- 1.2. Report from the SCBP, Section 1.3.3 (8.2.4)

##### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. The church at Grand Valley approaches Synod Carman 2013 with the complaint that, “the degree of written interaction by the SCBP with the churches has been insufficient with respect to the Psalm section of the *Book of Praise*.” Further, Grand Valley requests Synod 2013 to “mandate the SCBP to provide much more interaction with the churches than has occurred, to address the changes and the grounds for those revisions.” Grand Valley requests that this occur before Synod adopt and implement the recommendations of the SCBP.
- 2.2. More specifically, Grand Valley requests Synod 2013 to mandate the SCBP to address a number of points in detail:
- 2.2.1. Grand Valley cites a consideration of Synod Smithers 2007, where that Synod considered: “It is important to make a

distinction between archaic language on the one hand and poetic language or biblical language on the other. Therefore the committee (SCBP) should be careful in changing language that is perceived to be archaic” (*Acts*, Article 148, Consideration 3.3). Grand Valley states: “it appears this direction given by Synod to the SCBP was largely ignored, or at least it is not addressed in their Reports.”

- 2.2.2. Grand Valley states, “Memorization should not be quickly discouraged through revisions that are insignificant and/or unnecessary.” Further: “We feel that memorization was not given any consideration.” And: “It is quite discouraging to have what was put to memory taken away, where there are no clear reasons for the changes or the degree of changes.”
- 2.2.3. Grand Valley cites an instance (although pertaining to confessions) in which the SCBP previously described how it understood its mandate for revision work: “the Committee assumes that the consistent viewpoint of our Synods occupied with revisions has been to restrict linguistic changes to those strictly necessary” (*Acts of Synod Abbotsford 1995*, Appendix IV.5.g). Grand Valley asks: “should this not likewise apply in a certain degree to the Psalm section” of the *Book of Praise*?
- 2.2.4. Citing a number of examples, Grand Valley argues that the SCBP did not follow its stated goal consistently, namely, to provide “a more faithful rendering of the Scripture text” (Report to Synod Smithers 2007, Section 15.2.8). Says Grand Valley: “We as churches need to know why that mandate was not followed at all times.”
- 2.3. The church at Barrhead also has a number of concerns pertaining to the revision process as a whole, along with concerns pertaining to particular Psalm and Hymn revisions:
  - 2.3.1. Barrhead had sent a letter to the SCBP re: revised wording of the Psalms. However, Barrhead does not find its concerns addressed in the SCBP Report, which leads it to “feel that General Synod 2013 cannot consider the report of the SCBP to accurately portray the interests of the Churches.”
  - 2.3.2. Barrhead has concern about the revised wording of the Psalms and believes that the “push” for changes has not come from the churches but from the SCBP. Barrhead cites

Synod Chatham 2004 (*Acts*, Article 115, 5.3.2), which had concurred with the decision of Synod Fergus 1998 not to proceed with changes to the Psalms and Hymns. Barrhead then points out that it was the SCBP which approached Synod Smithers 2007 with the suggestion that the Psalms be reworded on the “new grounds” that a best possible metrical version of the Psalms be available for a Common Songbook with the URCNA. In response to the SCBP, Synod Smithers 2007 mandated the SCBP to “initiate a thorough review” of the Psalms (*Acts*, Article 148). Churches which had written with concerns about this to Synod Smithers 2007 were assured by Synod Smithers 2007 (as the SCBP had explained to Synod in its Report) “that this undertaking will not be such a major undertaking as was assumed by Synod Chatham 2004.” Synod Smithers 2007 had also noted: “It is important to make a distinction between archaic language on the one hand and poetic or biblical language on the other. Therefore the committee should be careful in changing language that is perceived to be archaic.”

- 2.3.3. In light of this assurance from Synod Smithers 2007, Barrhead believes Synod Smithers 2007 was misleading. Says Barrhead: “Many of the best-loved Psalms are now unrecognizable; this does not constitute a ‘minor revision.’” And, “too much has been lost in many of the revised Psalms.” Barrhead speaks of “how invasive the changes to our well-loved Psalms” has been; they “have not been revised, but rewritten.” Barrhead goes on to present a number of arguments to counter the arguments which the SCBP had presented to Synod Smithers 2007 to initiate the process of revision.
- 2.3.4. The church at Barrhead had requested the SCBP to review many of the revisions of the Psalms and Hymns. This request was not granted. Overall, in looking back to how the project of Psalm revision was initiated and then decided upon and carried out, Barrhead feels that it has been misled by Synod Smithers 2007 and the SCBP.
- 2.3.5. Barrhead concludes: “We ... request that Synod [1.] direct the SCBP to revisit the changes that have been made” in the list of Psalms and Hymns which

- Barrhead had presented to the SCBP for review;
- [2.] advise the SCBP “to respect the text of these songs as we find them in the 2008 edition” of the *Book of Praise*;
- [3.] thereby live up “to the assurances made to the Churches that these changes would not be a ‘major undertaking.’”
- 2.4. In its Report (Section 1.3.3) to Synod Carman 2013, the SCBP notes the following about 1) how it interacted with feedback from the churches and 2) how it understands its mandate re: revisions in light of past synod decisions.
- 2.4.1. The SCBP states, “it is not possible nor is it our mandate to list all the comments and suggestions received from the churches.”
- 2.4.1.1. Summarizing the feedback from the churches, the SCBP notes: “Many expressed appreciation,” with several churches reflecting the sentiment that “the text of many of the psalms [is] closer to the actual wording in Scripture.” However, the SCBP “received critical comments as well,” among which is “disappointment at the loss of well-known phrases and expressions in well-known Psalms.”
- 2.4.1.2. Among the submissions of critical feedback, the SCBP highlights that one church had submitted to the SCBP “a detailed review of several Psalms.” This church had requested the SCBP to provide much more interaction with the churches on the proposed revisions, with the SCBP demonstrating how various changes/revisions are necessary or are a significant improvement and conforming to the meaning of the scriptural texts. The SCBP states, “The Committee judged that this request went beyond our current mandate.”
- 2.4.1.3. The SCBP reports that “In order to do justice to each submission, . . . we reviewed each letter (and additional documentation when included) carefully.” And: “Many comments and questions submitted by the churches could be addressed by the Committee. On several matters that were raised by the churches, we sought the input of the expert advisors.” Finally, the SCBP states, “we cannot possibly begin to include all the details of

this review and revision process.” In its Report, the SCBP gives some examples to illustrate the process.

- 2.4.2. The SCBP describes how it understands its mandate and the various critical comments regarding its execution of the mandate:
- [1.] “General Synod Smithers 2007 gave the Committee the mandate to initiate a thorough review of the Psalms, to involve the churches by soliciting input and to publish a revised and updated Psalm version.”
  - [2.] “General Synod Burlington approved the way the Committee fulfilled its mandate.”
  - [3.] “Objections to the mandate adopted by General Synod 2007, or to the procedures proposed and followed by the Committee, should have been brought before General Synod 2010.”

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. The church at Grand Valley is not correct in its expectation that the SCBP account to individual churches for every change and revision to the *Book of Praise*. The SCBP is appointed and given a mandate by general synod and reports to general synod. This is due to the fact that the churches have together decided on a common songbook (Article 55 CO). The churches have given the task to their broadest assembly, which mandates a committee (the SCBP) to do much of the work for synod (between synods), which in turn benefits the churches together. This does not exclude the involvement of the local churches in the work of the SCBP, but it does determine the direction of accountability. The opportunity for churches to give input to the SCBP’s work on the way to a revision of the churches’ *Book of Praise* does not mean the SCBP is obligated to enter into discussion directly with a local church to explain and defend its work.
- 3.2. From the specific points which the church at Grand Valley raises, it is evident that Grand Valley sees that the SCBP has either gone too far with revisions to the *Book of Praise* (2.2.1 and 2.2.2) or has not worked consistently with particular principles in the revision process (2.2.3 and 2.2.4). It should be remembered that the SCBP receives its mandate from general synod and its work is subject to the scrutiny of general synod. Synod Smithers 2007 gave the SCBP its mandate and Synod Burlington 2010 approved the first phase of the revision work or the initial execution of the SCBP’s mandate. Synod Burlington 2010 endorsed the work of the SCBP and did not raise concerns

about the direction, the extent, or the character of the revision work of the SCBP. It should also be remembered that by the time of Synod Burlington 2010, the churches had already had the opportunity to be engaged in the revision process via online access to the revision work of the SCBP as it was being produced. Further, at Synod Burlington 2010, the churches also had the opportunity to alert Synod to legitimate concerns in the work of the SCBP. Synod Burlington 2010 was not alarmed either by what it saw in the work of the SCBP or by the letters of concern from the churches on Synod's table. Rather, Synod Burlington 2010 – having examined the work and the letters and making necessary changes and adjustments – saw good reason to make the bulk of the work of the SCBP its own and passed it on to the churches in the APV of the *Book of Praise*, recommending it for testing by the churches. When it comes to revision of the churches' songbook, it is understandable that disappointments will be felt and adjustments may be difficult in and among the churches. This cannot be avoided entirely. Nevertheless, in general and in most specifics, the work of the SCBP did gain and receive the confidence of the churches gathered in their broadest assembly in 2010. Synod Carman 2013 has received the second phase of the revision work of the SCBP and can for the most part also endorse the further review and revision undertaken by the SCBP after the period of testing in the churches between 2010 and 2013.

3.3. Regarding the concerns of the church at Barrhead:

3.3.1. The church at Barrhead, after having submitted its concerns about revisions to the SCBP, does not find these concerns addressed in the SCBP Report to Synod Carman 2013. The SCBP Report itself does address this apparent omission. The SCBP reports that "In order to do justice to each submission,... we reviewed each letter (and additional documentation when included) carefully." This should assure the church at Barrhead that its submission of concerns to the SCBP was duly considered. However, says the SCBP, "it is not possible nor is it our mandate to list all the comments and suggestions received from the churches." And again: "we cannot possibly begin to include all the details of this review and revision process." In light of the process (carefully reviewing all letters with necessary limitations in reporting) described by the SCBP, Synod Carman 2013 can consider the report of the SCBP to accurately portray the interests of the churches.

3.3.2. Barrhead is understandably concerned about the process by which the revision of the *Book of Praise* was initiated as well as the extent of the revisions. Barrhead argues that 1) the “push” for change did not come from the churches but from the SCBP and 2) the churches were misled by Synod Smithers 2007 as to the extent of the revision of the *Book of Praise*.

3.3.2.1. It is true that the request for the revision of the *Book of Praise* came from the SCBP and this after two Synods (Fergus 1998 and Chatham 2004) had decided *not* to make changes to the Psalms and Hymns. However, the context of the SCBP request to Synod Smithers 2007 made it reasonable as a request coming *from the SCBP* – that context being: the work of the SCBP on the combined committee working towards a Common Songbook with the URCNA – a project already underway. The SCBP, as part of that combined committee, wanted to contribute the “best possible metrical version” of the Psalms to that project. Although the initial context and grounds for the revision of the *Book of Praise* (for a Common Songbook with the URCNA) has since fallen by the wayside as the primary context for the revision of the *Book of Praise*, the churches, gathered at their broadest assembly in Synod Burlington 2010, did not see fit to abandon the project. This in spite of what Synod Fergus 1998 and Synod Chatham 2004 had decided previously. As Synod Burlington 2010 considered, “The inclusion in a common songbook 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” (*Acts*, Article 146, Consideration 3.2). Due consideration must be given to the fact that by the time of Synod Burlington 2010 much good work had been done towards a revised *Book of Praise*.

3.3.2.2. Barrhead is correct that Synod Smithers 2007 gave the churches the expectation for a more modest revision to the *Book of Praise* than we have now. The words of

the SCBP to Synod Smithers 2007, and taken over by Synod Smithers, “that this undertaking will not be such a major undertaking as was assumed by Synod Chatham 2004,” can legitimately be taken as an assurance for a modest revision. And although Synod Smithers 2007 did also mandate the SCBP to “initiate a thorough review,” a “thorough review” does not necessitate that the end product be a thorough revision. Looking at something closely does not need to lead to changing something extensively. Synod Smithers 2007 also cautioned the SCBP to “be careful in changing language that is perceived to be archaic.” Be this as it may, Synod Smithers 2007 did not mislead, but had a limited perspective of what a review process would all entail and what the product of such review would actually look like. Synod Burlington 2010, in its day, had a better view of things and, rather than express concern, indeed endorsed the revision work of the SCBP.

- 3.4. It is evident from the Report of the SCBP to Synod Carman 2013 that the SCBP did duly consider the input of the churches, even where such input did not result in what a local church asked for and even where such input was not reported on specifically. The SCBP correctly understood its mandate in this matter and sufficiently accounts to Synod Carman 2013 for its work of reviewing and interacting with the churches’ input. Synod Carman 2013, in adopting a finalized 2013 *Book of Praise*, also indicates that the SCBP is no longer mandated to receive input from the churches *towards a revision* of the *Book of Praise*, since that particular project is now completed.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. Not to accede to the requests of Grand Valley and Barrhead;
- 4.2. To approve how the SCBP interacted with and reported on the feedback from the churches during the revision process;
- 4.3. That where churches wish to pursue concerns re: the *Book of Praise* to direct these churches to Article 125, Recommendation 4.5 of the *Acts of Synod Carman 2013*.

**ADOPTED**

**Article 184 – SCBP – General Matters****1. Material:**

- 1.1. Report from the SCBP, Section 1.1, 1.5.5, 1.5.6, 1.8, 1.8.1, 1.9, 5.0, 5.1, 11.0 (8.2.4)
- 1.2. Letters from the churches at Smithers (8.3.4.3), Carman West (8.3.4.12b), Cloverdale (8.3.4.14), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.4.16), Flamborough (8.3.4.18), Grand Rapids (8.3.4.20), Grassie (8.3.4.21), Lincoln (8.3.4.26), London (8.3.4.27), Burlington-Rehoboth (8.3.4.30), Spring Creek (8.3.4.35), Toronto (8.3.4.38), Langley (8.3.4.46)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. The “Core Directive” of the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise*, as mandated by Synod Burlington 2010 is quoted on p. 2 of the SCBP report: “to present a final version of the *Book of Praise* to Synod [Carman] 2013 for approval and prepared for publication” (*Acts*, Article 142, 4.2.5).
- 2.2. The SCBP noted in its report that “The Committee spent most of its energies on finalizing the text of the psalms and the text and melodies of the hymns. In addition to carefully reviewing the material received by General Synod [Burlington] 2010, the Committee also engaged the churches by inviting them to send feedback on the psalms and hymns published in the *Authorized Provisional Version* at the direction of General Synod [Burlington] 2010.”
- 2.3. There has been significant feedback to this report. The SCBP noted, “The Committee is very grateful for the tremendous response it has received from the churches.” In addition to the 43 pages of the SCBP report, Synod Carman 2013 received 48 letters from the churches.
- 2.4. Concerning rests and breath marks:
  - 2.4.1. A number of churches commented on the approach to the matter of rests and breath marks:
    - 2.4.1.1. The SCBP noted that in a number of cases, rests were reinstated after hearing feedback from the churches.
    - 2.4.1.2. Carman West asserts that breath marks and/or rests are better for singing joyfully;
    - 2.4.1.3. Cloverdale agreed with the removal of breath marks but requested an explanation in “lay-person’s language” why they have been removed.
    - 2.4.1.4. Flamborough feels strongly that the removal of rests and breath marks has removed the flow of the songs and

- negated the authors' intent, as well as reducing the focus on the words being sung;
- 2.4.1.5. Grand Rapids feels that the removal of the rests and breath marks has left the congregation out of breath at the end of the hymn;
  - 2.4.1.6. Burlington-Rehoboth noted that the elderly would have some difficulty with the lack of rests and is grateful that the rests were restored to some songs;
  - 2.4.1.7. Toronto feels that "the congregants are not professional singers and need more time to breathe."
  - 2.4.1.8. Smithers asserts that while the removal of rests might be technically more accurate, it comes at the cost of "ease of singing" for so many church members who are untrained singers. Between the lack of rests and the high/low notes, the tunes are not as easy to sing.
- 2.4.2. The SCBP (1.5.1) makes a number of comments regarding the removal of rests/breath marks: "As a Committee, we have always understood that, as a rule, General Synods do not concern themselves with technical matters and details related to musical notation as such (*Acts of General Synod Winnipeg 1989*, Article 146); yet we wanted the synod to be informed. ...it was explained to synod that [the SCBP] intended to make changes. ...these changes included the removal of breath marks, the deletions of most fermatas, etc...."
  - 2.4.3. The SCBP (1.5.6) also notes that some churches asked for the reinstatement of breath marks, but upon advice from musical experts, the SCBP decided it was opposed to these requests because breath marks can be interpreted in varying ways. It also notes that modern North American hymnals do not have breath marks.
- 2.5. Concerning capitalization of pronouns referring to God:
    - 2.5.1. The matter of employing capitalization for all pronouns referring to God has had the attention of the churches for many years. Bible translations have mixed policies. The NIV, ESV, KJV, among others, do not capitalize pronoun references to God; the NKJV and NASB do.
    - 2.5.2. The 1984 *Book of Praise* made use of the RSV when quoting the Bible and despite the fact that the RSV does not have this practice, the *Book of Praise* capitalized pronouns referring to God.

- 2.5.3. When Synod Fergus 1998 mandated the SCBP to change references from the RSV to the newly adopted NIV, it noted that keeping the capital pronouns (e.g., You and Your, etc) would be consistent with past practice, as well as in line with the sentiments expressed in sister churches in Australia.
- 2.5.4. Synod Chatham 2004 directed the SCBP to review the request of the church at Chatham to keep the pronouns capitalized.
- 2.5.5. The SCBP studied the matter and subsequently proposed to Synod Smithers 2007 that pronouns be capitalized; two churches objected, saying that the NIV does not use capitals referring to pronoun references to God, the original languages do not support this practice and there are no clear biblical grounds.
- 2.5.6. Synod Smithers 2007 supported the SCBP proposal, noting in its considerations (*Acts*, Article 166, Considerations 3.3, 3.4), “While the points [raised by the two churches] have merit, to capitalize is consistent with how the pronouns have been capitalized in our forms in the past.”
- 2.5.7. Synod Burlington 2010 upheld an appeal from the church at Surrey and overturned the previous synods’ decisions, listing their considerations as follows (*Acts*, Article 109, Consideration 3):
- [3.1.] “...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.
- [3.3.] Surrey is correct when it 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 arguments 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.”

- 2.5.8. Synod Armadale 2012 of the FRCA decided to study the matter of capitalization of pronoun references to God, as “a number of churches had questioned these changes in the APV.”
- 2.5.9. A number of churches have reacted to this matter as follows:
- 2.5.9.1. Grassie is concerned that the Lord’s pronouns are not capitalized. They posit that while we have no control over the rules that various Bible translations employ in terms of capitalization, we do have control over the *Book of Praise*. Out of respect for the Lord’s name we ought to capitalize his pronouns.
- 2.5.9.2. Lincoln speaks in favour of capitalizing the Lord’s pronouns.
- 2.5.9.3. Burlington-Rehoboth argues in favour of capitalizing the Lord’s pronouns.
- 2.5.10. The SCBP notes in its report to Synod Carman 2013 (1.1) that in “the entire text of the APV... all pronouns for God are in conformity with the NIV...”
- 2.6. Concerning difficult melodies:
- 2.6.1. A number of churches expressed concern that too many melodies (primarily psalm tunes) are too difficult to sing:
- 2.6.1.1. Cloverdale supports having a complete collection of all Genevan tunes for the 150 psalms, but would like to see additional, alternative melodies and rhyming for the more difficult psalms;
- 2.6.1.2. Burlington-Rehoboth and Spring Creek both assert that supplying alternative tunes to “more difficult” psalms is unnecessary, especially as the term “difficult” is subjective;
- 2.6.1.3. Langley notes that some tunes “have fallen into disuse among the churches,” due to their “unsingability.” It asks that churches be polled and that other (perhaps Genevan) tunes could be sought;
- 2.6.1.4. Grassie expresses concern that the changes are too broad and too late to give congregations sufficient time to deal with the myriad of alterations;
- 2.6.2. The SCBP notes (1.9) that Synod Burlington 2010 did not give the SCBP a specific mandate in regard to solving the matter of the difficult tunes. The SCBP feels that more study

and discussion is warranted, i.e., what constitutes “difficult” and would new melodies result in new rhymings, etc.

- 2.7. Concerning use of archaisms (i.e., thee, thou, etc.):
- 2.7.1. Grand Rapids expressed the view that eliminating terms such as *thee* and *thou* “makes the new versions of those psalms less than ideal for congregational use.”
- 3. Considerations:**
- 3.1. The SCBP has done a great deal of work to fulfil its mandate to present a fully-prepared *Book of Praise* for publication. The number of letters/comments/appeals from churches, however, would imply that the proposed *Book of Praise* will need a number of corrections prior to its approval for publication. Moreover, the synodically recommended Bible translation (ESV) would undoubtedly need to be incorporated.
- 3.2. The SCBP has expended much energy in its mandate, notably in the areas of psalm texts and hymn texts and melodies. The SCBP was correct in noting that its mandate did not include the psalm melodies.
- 3.3. The number and extent of responses from churches clearly demonstrates that they are deeply interested in the *Book of Praise* and its contents. These responses offer sufficiently compelling evidence to determine that the majority of the SCBP recommendations could be implemented; other SCBP recommendations needed to be challenged.
- 3.4. The matter of rests and breath stops is challenging. Many churches felt very strongly that the lack of rests/breath stops added to the frustration. The SCBP was correct in going away from breath marks, due to the varying interpretations of rests. Moreover, it is unnecessary to insist that every accompanist in the federation interpret rests in the same way. Rather, it is more important that each congregation develops its own consistency and thereby enable the congregation to focus more on the words of praise to God.
- 3.5. The matter of capitalization of pronouns referring to God has a long history in our federation of churches. This matter has been reviewed by various synods and Synod Burlington 2010 decided to follow the practice of employing the recommended Bible version’s rules re: capitalizing pronouns referring to God (See also *Acts of Synod Carman 2013*, Article 178).
- 3.6. It is difficult, if not impossible, to assess the various churches’ claims that a number of melodies are too difficult. The SCBP is correct in asking the question “What is difficult?” Some of the perceived

difficulties are due to a lack of practice; some due to a lack of skill; some due to technical elements contained in the melodies. Again, the SCBP is right to note that the matter of difficult psalm melodies is outside its mandate. If any churches are troubled by this they should follow the ecclesiastical way (consistory-classis-regional synod-general synod) of raising these concerns.

- 3.7. The SCBP correctly followed the instructions of Synod Smithers 2007 to update the language by eliminating archaisms (e.g., thee, thou). There are no scriptural or confessional reasons justifying the retention of these archaisms. Thus the reasons offered by the church at Grand Rapids (“less than ideal”) are not sufficient to conclude that these archaisms need to be reinstated.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To thank the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise* (SCBP) for its efforts in pursuit of a final edition of the *Book of Praise*;
- 4.2. To send the preceding considerations as a response to these churches;
- 4.3. To direct the churches seeking changes other than minor corrections to follow the ecclesiastical way (*Acts of Synod Carman 2013*, Article 125, Recommendation 4.5).

### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 185 – *Book of Praise* – Bible Translation in Prose Section**

##### **1. Material:**

Letters from the churches at Barrhead (8.3.4.9), Carman West (8.3.4.12b and 8.3.7.7), Glanbrook (8.3.4.19), Grand Rapids (8.3.4.20), Lincoln (8.3.4.26), Smithville (8.3.4.31), Smithers (8.3.4.3), Grand Valley (8.3.4.1) and Abbotsford (8.3.7.3)

##### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Synod Carman 2013 decided to recommend to the churches the use of the ESV and leave it in the freedom of the churches to use the NKJV, NASB and the NIV1984 (*Acts*, Article 97, Recommendation 4.3).
- 2.2. Several churches mention in their letters that the Bible translation recommended to the churches should also be the translation which is used in the *Book of Praise*.

### 3. Consideration

The ESV is now the recommended Bible translation in the churches. Synod Fergus 1998 considered “the NIV has been recommended to the churches, so it would be consistent to change the RSV quotations to the NIV in the confessions and prose section of the *Book of Praise*.” In line with this it would be consistent now to change the NIV quotations to the ESV in the confessions and prose section of the *Book of Praise*.

### 4. Recommendation:

Synod decide to mandate the SCBP to change the NIV quotations in the confessions and prose section of the *Book of Praise* to the ESV before publishing the final version.

## ADOPTED

### Article 186 – *Book of Praise* – Publication and Fostering Awareness

Committee 2 presented its second draft. With a few minor changes, this was the result:

#### 1. Material:

- 1.1. Report from the SCBP, Section 1.7, 1.8, 3.0, 12.3 (8.2.4)
- 1.2. Letters from the churches at Cloverdale (8.3.4.14), Abbotsford (8.3.4.6), London (8.3.4.27), Carman West (8.3.4.12b), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.4.16) and Flamborough (8.3.4.18)

#### 2. Observations:

- 2.1. The SCBP informs Synod that an *Authorized Provisional Version* of the *Book of Praise* was published reflecting all the changes in the psalm, hymn and prose sections adopted by Synod Burlington 2010 and that these revised psalms and hymns (except for APV Hymns 38, 50, 66 and 79 because of copyright issues) were published on the Committee’s website at [www.bookofpraise.ca](http://www.bookofpraise.ca). The Committee recommends that Synod adopt the APV for use in the worship services (with the proposed changes to both the 150 Psalms and 85 hymns in its Report), together with the prose section as already adopted (with the exception of any changes approved by Synod 2013), authorize it to publish the new edition and direct the churches that the 2013 edition of the *Book of Praise* is the Authorized Version for use by the churches.

- 2.2. The SCBP informs Synod 2013 that it has considered the matter of including four-part harmonisations for the psalms and hymns in the *Book of Praise* as instructed by Synod Burlington 2010 (*Acts*, Article 145) and requests Synod to confirm that the *Book of Praise* is to be published in a melody-only format.
- 2.3. The SCBP informs Synod 2013 that it has developed and promoted materials for the musical accompaniment in the worship services as mandated by Synod Burlington 2010 (*Acts*, Article 114). The committee made use of *Clarion*, workshops, the SCBP website and the publication of a collection of preludes and harmonisations for the 85 hymns by br. F. Ezinga.
- 2.4. The SCBP promoted awareness of the *Book of Praise* in the English-speaking world as mandated by Synod Burlington 2010 by responding to requests for information from outside our federation, by having an entire issue of *Clarion* dedicated to the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Genevan Psalter and the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the *Book of Praise*, and by responding to letters.
- 2.5. The church at Carman West suggests that available versions of accompaniment be placed on the website in PDF format for musicians and congregation members to use.
- 2.6. The church at Cloverdale proposes that the SCBP continue to offer an edition of the *Book of Praise* with harmonisations, especially of the hymns. The electronic, technological possibilities of our age should make this option less daunting.
- 2.7. The church at Flamborough is in favour of having a *Book of Praise* in four-part harmony since it would make it more accessible, provide more opportunities for singing from it outside the worship services and would inspire young musicians in training.
- 2.8. The church at Burlington-Ebenezer asks General Synod to direct the committee not to include four-part harmonisation in the *Book of Praise* since it is primarily for congregational singing which is not done in four-part harmony.
- 2.9. The church at London recommends that the definitive edition of the *Book of Praise* be published in hardcover for the sake of longevity.
- 2.10. The church at Abbotsford suggests that, in addition to publishing the *Book of Praise* as one volume, the SCBP consider publishing the *Book of Praise* in two sections (songs and prose). Having a spiral-bound version of the prose section is relatively inexpensive to print and is handy for those churches that project the psalms to be sung during worship.

**3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. The SCBP has done much work resulting in the publication of an *Authorized Provisional Version* of the *Book of Praise*. Synod 2013 agrees with the SCBP recommendation to publish the finalized version of the *Book of Praise* incorporating all changes approved by this Synod.
- 3.2. The SCBP provides good reasons for not publishing four-part harmonisations of the psalms and hymns: it would be costly (since it would increase the size of the *Book of Praise*); it would necessitate dropping the musical overleaf-notation; it would be time consuming and highly subjective. Besides, the SCBP is convinced that there is no strong desire for this among the churches.
- 3.3. The development and promotion of materials for musical accompaniment in the worship services is helpful for organists, teachers and others.
- 3.4. The suggestion from Carman West that available versions of accompaniment be placed on the website in PDF format for musicians and congregation members to use has merit.
- 3.5. The suggestion from the church at Cloverdale of making especially the harmonization of the hymns available electronically is worthy of consideration.
- 3.6. The suggestion from the church at Flamborough about having a version of the *Book of Praise* in four-part harmonization has been considered by the committee. The implications of such an undertaking are too daunting to be practical.
- 3.7. Burlington-Ebenezer raises a valid argument against publishing the *Book of Praise* in four-part harmonization.
- 3.8. London's recommendation that the definitive edition of the *Book of Praise* be published in a hardcover has merit once a definitive edition is ready for publication.
- 3.9. Abbotsford's suggestion of publishing the *Book of Praise* in two sections (songs and prose) is worthy of consideration by the SCBP.

**4. Recommendations:**

- 4.1. That Synod decide:
  - 4.1.1. To thank the SCBP for its dedication and effort in publishing the APV in book form and on the website;
  - 4.1.2. To authorize the SCBP to publish the final edition of the *Book of Praise* as the Authorized Version for use by the churches and to make it available on the website in hyperlinked, indexed format;

- 4.2. That Synod decide to instruct the SCBP:
  - 4.2.1. To continue the present format of publishing the psalms and hymns in a *melody-only* format;
  - 4.2.2. To consider placing available versions of accompaniment and harmonization of the hymns on the website;
  - 4.2.3. To look into the feasibility of printing hardcover copies of the *Book of Praise*;
  - 4.2.4. To investigate whether or not the *Book of Praise* should also be published in two sections (songs and prose).

## **ADOPTED**

The chairman, on behalf of synod, expressed thankfulness to the Lord on account of this historic event of adopting a revised and finalized *Book of Praise*.

### **Article 187 – Motion to the Amend the Acts – Article 114**

Committee 5 put forward a proposal to strike out Article 114 (in order to replace it with a new decision). This was the result:

Synod decide to strike Art 114 from the *Acts* and in its place insert the following words: “This article has been deleted and replaced with Article 196.”

### **Grounds:**

1. Article 114 as originally adopted is formulated in such a way that the printing of the final version of the *Book of Praise* is seen to occur after the next general synod (2016). This timing was suggested so as to give the Australian sister churches (who also use our *Book of Praise*) further opportunity to give their input.
2. Upon further reflection it has become apparent that there are no other reasons to delay the publication of the final version. While it is regrettable that circumstances are such that the Australian churches have not been able to give all the input they might have liked, the Canadian Reformed Churches need to move forward with producing the finalized *Book of Praise* for their own use.

## **ADOPTED**

See also Article 144 in these *Acts* for background to this decision.

**Article 188 – *Book of Praise* – Consultation with Australia Regarding**

Committee 2 presented a proposal. After some discussion, it was taken back for further work.

**Article 189 – Appeal of Grand Valley re: Proceeding with the Revised Psalms**

Committee 2 presented a proposal. With a minor change, this was the result:

**1. Material:**

Letter of appeal from the church at Grand Valley (8.5.19)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Grand Valley appeals Article 121 of the *Acts of Synod Burlington 2010* and requests that General Synod 2013 decide that Synod 2010 erred when it decided to restrict further input from the churches to “errors” in the APV and that the SCBP should yet interact with the churches in much more detail, providing a “synopsis of the revisions for each Psalm including grounds for the specific revisions in each song in comparison to the 1984 adopted version. The churches should then be provided with further opportunity to comment before the SCBP prepares a final version for possible adoption by a future synod.”
- 2.2. The church at Grand Valley submitted its concern about a lack of interaction with the churches on the proposed revisions of the Psalms to Synod Burlington 2010 (letter dated March 3, 2010) and to the SCBP (letter dated April 30, 2012). The SCBP responded to Grand Valley’s letter in its Report by stating that such detailed interaction went beyond its mandate (Section 1.3.3) and that “objections to the mandate adopted by General Synod 2007, or the procedures proposed and followed by the Committee, should have been brought before General Synod 2010.” Grand Valley argues that this is exactly what they did, but since nothing in the Synod Smithers 2007 mandate to the SCBP indicated that Synod Burlington 2010 would actually proceed to provisionally adopt the APV and restrict input to “errors,” there was nothing for them to appeal. Since Article 148, Recommendation 4.1.6 of the *Acts of Synod Smithers 2007* anticipated that the SCBP would “report to General Synod 2010 on the progress of the work,” Grand Valley interpreted this as an indication to the churches that “the work to revise the *Book of Praise* would not be finished and adopted by General Synod 2010...” thus allowing more time for interaction.

- 2.3. Grand Valley argues that there is a contradiction in the decisions of Synod Burlington 2010. According to Grand Valley, “Consideration 3.3 of Article 143, *Acts of Synod Burlington 2010*, indicates the majority of churches wanted more time to **consider** the revisions. This contradicts Recommendation 4.1 of Article 121 which only allows ‘errors’ to be identified. ‘Consider’ is much broader in scope than the restriction of only identifying ‘errors.’ Synod has effectively limited any meaningful testing of the Psalms by the churches and interaction with the SCBP, by the very restrictive scope of the SCBP’s mandate in Article 121.”
- 2.4. Grand Valley points out that Synod Burlington 2010 was inaccurate when it observed that none of the churches which submitted letters about proceeding with the revised psalms were opposed to the notion of progressing (*Acts*, Article 171, Observation 2.4). It asserts that the inaccurate statement in Observation 2.4 “led to wrong decisions being made by Synod.”
- 2.5. In its Report (Section 1.3.3) to Synod Carman 2013, the SCBP notes the following: 1) how it interacted with feedback from the churches; and 2) how it understands its mandate re: revisions in light of past synod decisions.
- 2.5.1. The SCBP states, “It is not possible nor is it our mandate to list all the comments and suggestions received from the churches.”
- 2.5.1.1. Summarizing the feedback from the churches, the SCBP notes: “Many expressed appreciation,” with several churches reflecting the sentiment that “the text of many of the psalms [is] closer to the actual wording in Scripture.” However, the SCBP “received critical comments as well,” among which is “disappointment at the loss of well-known phrases and expressions in well-known Psalms.”
- 2.5.1.2. Among the submissions of critical feedback, the SCBP highlights that one church had submitted to the SCBP “a detailed review of several Psalms.” This church had requested the SCBP to provide much more interaction with the churches on the proposed revisions, with the SCBP demonstrating how various changes/revisions are necessary or are a significant improvement and conforming to the meaning of the

scriptural texts. The SCBP states, “The Committee judged that this request went beyond our current mandate.”

2.5.1.3. The SCBP reports that “In order to do justice to each submission... we reviewed each letter (and additional documentation when included) carefully.” And: “Many comments and questions submitted by the churches could be addressed by the Committee. On several matters that were raised by the churches, we sought the input of the expert advisors.” Finally, the SCBP states, “We cannot possibly begin to include all the details of this review and revision process.” In its Report, the SCBP gives some examples to illustrate the process.

2.5.2. The SCBP describes how it understands its mandate and the various critical comments regarding its execution of the mandate:

- [1.] “General Synod Smithers 2007 gave the Committee the mandate to initiate a thorough review of the Psalms, to involve the churches by soliciting input and to publish a revised and updated Psalm version.”
- [2.] “General Synod Burlington approved the way the Committee fulfilled its mandate.”
- [3.] “Objections to the mandate adopted by General Synod 2007, or to the procedures proposed and followed by the committee, should have been brought before General Synod 2010.”

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. In regard to Grand Valley’s concern that there was not enough time for the churches to interact with the psalms:
  - 3.1.1. Grand Valley mentions in its own appeal that draft revisions of the psalms were already being worked on as early as 2000, some of which were published in *Clarion*.
  - 3.1.2. Though there was some confusion between 2007 and 2010 as to *how* the revised Psalms should be tested (during the worship services or in other ways), there was ample opportunity to test them as they were being published on the SCBP’s website.

- 3.1.3. Synod Burlington 2010 took special note of the wish of the majority of the churches who wanted more time for testing and therefore authorized a provisional edition to “allow a further time of testing and refining” and made clear that this should be done “in the worship services...” (*Acts*, Article 143, Consideration 3.5)
- 3.2. In regard to Grand Valley’s claim that the SCBP should interact with the churches in much more detail, providing a synopsis of the revisions for each Psalm including grounds for the specific revisions in each song:
  - 3.2.1. Grand Valley does not provide any proof from *Acts* of previous synods for its demand instructing the SCBP to provide a detailed rationale to the churches for every change to the *Book of Praise*.
  - 3.2.2. The SCBP notes in its Report to Synod Carman 2013 that it sent letters to the churches in May 2011 and in April 2012 alerting the churches that their input regarding the *Book of Praise* was to be received by 1 May 2012 to allow the Committee time to review the materials for consideration in the report to Synod. It then goes on to state, “Many churches availed themselves of this opportunity: Several submissions included detailed recommendations...others even went beyond what Synod requested by providing suggestions for the improvement of the text. Although many submissions were received well after the requested date, the Committee was able to review all the material submitted” (emphasis added). From the Report it is clear that the SCBP did its utmost to deal with all the letters from the churches, not only those that highlighted errors, but also those that offered suggestions for the improvement of the text.
  - 3.2.3. Synod Burlington 2010 received letters from 13 churches (including Grand Valley) that provided input and suggestions for the improvement of the psalms, some of which were “very detailed.” Synod decided “to pass on the detailed material submitted by the churches to the SCBP for their consideration and review” (*Acts*, Article 122, Recommendation 4). Synod Burlington 2010 was not alarmed either by what it saw in the work of the SCBP or in the letters of concern from the churches on Synod’s table. Rather, Synod Burlington 2010—having examined

the work and the letters and making necessary changes and adjustments—saw good reason to make the bulk of the work of the SCBP its own and passed it on to the churches in the APV of the *Book of Praise*, recommending it for testing by the churches. When it comes to revision of the churches' songbook, it is understandable that disappointments will be felt and adjustments may be difficult in and among the churches. This cannot be avoided entirely. Nevertheless, generally speaking and in most specifics, the work of the SCBP did gain and receive the confidence of the churches gathered in their broadest assembly in 2010. Synod Carman 2013 has received the second phase of the revision work of the SCBP and can for the most part also endorse the further review and revision undertaken by the SCBP after the period of testing in the churches between 2010 and 2013.

3.2.4. The church at Grand Valley is not correct in its expectation that the SCBP must give an account to the churches for every change and revision to the *Book of Praise*. The SCBP is appointed and given a mandate by general synod and reports to general synod. This is due to the fact that the churches have together decided on a common songbook (Article 55 CO). The churches have given the task to their broadest assembly, which mandates a committee to do much of the work for synod (between synods), which in turn benefits the churches together. This does not exclude the involvement of the local churches in the work of the SCBP, but it does determine the direction of accountability. The opportunity for churches to give input to the SCBP's work on the way to a revision of the churches' *Book of Praise* does not mean the SCBP is obligated to enter into discussion directly with a local church to explain and defend its work.

3.3. In regard to Grand Valley's concern that the churches' input was arbitrarily and unexpectedly restricted to "errors":

3.3.1. Although Article 121 of the *Acts of Synod Burlington 2010* limited submissions to "errors", the SCBP was instructed in Article 143, Recommendation 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*" (emphasis added). Grand Valley did not give due consideration to the entire decision taken by Synod Burlington 2010.

- 3.4. Grand Valley is correct that Observation 2.4 (*Acts of Synod Burlington 2010*, Article 171) is inaccurate. In its letter to Synod Burlington 2010, Grand Valley explicitly stated, “The SCBP proposed to General Synod Burlington 2010 to adopt for use in the worship service the proposed revised text of the 150 Psalms... we are not in favour of this recommendation.” Grand Valley, however, does not demonstrate how the inaccurate statement in Observation 2.4 “led to wrong decisions being made by Synod.”

#### **4. Recommendations**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. That Synod Burlington 2010 erred in observing that “no church...is opposed to the notion of progressing...”;
- 4.2. To deny the appeal of the church at Grand Valley.

### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 190 – Reformed Churches in the Netherlands – Restored (RCR)**

Committee 3 presented its second draft. With some minor changes, this was the result:

##### **1. Material:**

- 1.1. Report of CRCA subcommittee for contact with the RCR (8.2.1.2)
- 1.2. Letters from the CRCA of the RCR (8.1.18), Liberated Reformed Church in Abbotsford (LRCA) (8.1.23), Gereformeerde Kerk in Dalfsen (8.1.32); letters from the churches at Abbotsford (8.3.1.5), Attercliffe (8.3.1.7), Elora (8.3.1.13), Fergus-North (8.3.1.16), Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.1.17) and Spring Creek (8.3.1.27)

##### **2. Observations and Considerations re: Admissibility**

- 2.1. The CRCA of the RCR wrote its letter as an elaboration of its recent discussions with our CRCA. The letter attempts to justify their ‘liberation’ as well as that of the LRCA. It also urges the CanRC to evaluate our ecclesiastical relations in the light of Article 28 of the Belgic Confession. While this letter may serve members of synod for personal reflection, it does not require a response.
- 2.2. The letter from the LRCA purports to “provide clarification regarding a number of serious inaccuracies and misconceptions” in the report of the subcommittee. Where it disputes the historical record of events that transpired, it should be consulted. Beyond that, it is inadmissible.
- 2.3. The letter of greeting from the Gereformeerde Kerk in Dalfsen (now

of the RCR) expresses the desire that the CanRC continue to have contact with their church federation. This letter may be received for information only.

### **3. Observations:**

- 3.1. Synod Burlington 2010 decided, with respect to the RCR (*Acts*, Article 155, Recommendation 4):
  - [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.
- 3.2. The subcommittee reports the following about how it worked out its mandate:
  - 3.2.1. The subcommittee met 14 times, maintained regular contact with the RCR via e-mail and official letters and also met with the CRCA of the RCR.
  - 3.2.2. The RCR came into being as a result of concerns with respect to developments in the RCN. At present they have 11 congregations and approximately 1200 members.
  - 3.2.3. Our subcommittee discussed with the RCR their “indirect declaration of the CanRC being false churches.” In response, the RCR stated that (a) they never called either the RCN or the CanRC false churches; and (b) “the correspondence between the CanRC deputies and (the RCR) has not always been flawless.”
  - 3.2.4. The RCR confronted our subcommittee with the pronouncement of Synod Smithers 2007 that the separation in the Netherlands which led to the formation of the RCR was an act of “schism.” The subcommittee responded that the pronouncement had been informed by a brochure from the RCN, while a response to that brochure prepared by

the RCR had been ignored because the subcommittee had not been mandated to study it. The subcommittee asserts that this RCR response, written and received by the CRCA before Synod Smithers 2007, was already highlighting issues which the subcommittee is now raising with the RCN. (In their letter to Synod Carman 2013 the RCR wrote that “the [CanRC] subcommittee also admitted to us that the extensive information about our Liberation which we had in the past provided, had not been fully studied by you in detail. We are pleased that the subcommittee now acknowledges this and has come to a more accurate assessment of the extremely sad developments within the RCNlib.”)

- 3.2.5. Synod Emmen 2009-2010 of the RCR decided to recognize the LRCA as a true church and enter into a sister church relationship. The grounds for this decision relate to the LRCA being a faithful church, the CanRC having entered into sister church relations with the OPC and the URC and the fact that CanRC synods have made it impossible for individual church members to appeal matters of ecclesiastical contact.
- 3.2.6. With respect to Point 4.2.2 of its mandate, the subcommittee expresses the view that the RCR are genuinely concerned about the direction that the RCN have taken and continue to maintain. The RCN believe that the RCR overstate the issues. They point out that no one in the RCN has been forced to adopt doctrines which they reject and no office bearer has been suspended or deposed. According to the subcommittee, though, recent synods of the RCR have attempted to show in detail where their concerns lie, but the RCN have not responded in any substantive way.
- 3.2.7. There has been regular contact between the subcommittee and the FRCA and the OPC regarding the RCN.
- 3.2.8. In 2009 a congregation in Kampen (Ichthus) was excluded from the RCN. In November 2009 two other congregations separated from the RCR and joined Ichthus to form a provisional church federation (RCNvv). Subsequently, some other churches and groups joined them.
- 3.2.9. The subcommittee recommends that:
  - [1.] Synod receive the committee report and thank the committee for the work done;

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- [2.] Synod ask the churches to pray that a true unity in the faith may develop within the fragmented ecclesiastical situation with the RCN and those who have left;
  - [3.] Synod note with regret that the RCR have entered into a sister relationship with the LRCA (June 10, 2010) and that the RCR do not recognize us as true churches;
  - [4.] Synod nevertheless charge the committee that is to be appointed to deal with our relationship with the RCN to continue the contact with the RCR and other groups that have left.
  - [5.] Synod charge the committee to maintain some form of contact with the GKNvv to see how they develop and how they reach out to others who love the Word and the Reformed faith.
  - [6.] Synod charge the committee to monitor further developments with the GKD.
  - [7.] Synod charge the committee to submit a comprehensive report of its activities to the churches six months prior to the next general synod.
- 3.3. Spring Creek believes that the CRCA subcommittee exceeded its mandate by establishing contact with other groups that left the RCN such as the GKNvv.
- 3.4. Spring Creek argues that the CanRC should discontinue contact with the RCR because the RCR recognized the legitimacy of the secession of the LRCA on the ground that the CanRC are false churches. According to Spring Creek the reasoning of the RCR regarding the LRCA proves that the “liberation” of the RCR was indeed schismatic, as Synod Smithers 2007 said.
- 3.5. Abbotsford, although “deeply disturbed” by the fact that the CRCA subcommittee dialogued with the RCR while the latter has EF with the LRCA, acknowledges that “there is a duty for us to communicate with those who claim to be the true continuation of the RCN [just like] we decided with regard to the FCS and the FCS(c).” Elora also mentions the RCR-LRCA sister church relationship and argues that the mandate for contact with the RCNvv should be “stronger” than the mandate for contact with the RCR because “the GKNvv (RCNvv) is more open-minded and therefore more akin to the Canadian Reformed Churches.” Attercliffe recommends that synod “note with regret” the RCR-LRCA sister church relationship but still mandate the CRCA to “continue the contact with the RCR and other groups that have left” the RCN.

- 3.6. Spring Creek expresses concern because it seems that “questions about the legitimacy of the secession of groups from the RCN are no longer considered relevant. This report appears to say: ‘If you leave in good conscience, as you may judge yourself, we will not judge you and will maintain contact with you because of our own unanswered concerns about the direction of the RCN.’” Spring Creek laments the absence of an assessment of the secession in Kampen which led to the formation of the GKNvv.
- 3.7. Spring Creek denies that the CanRC has a calling “to gather those in the Netherlands who cannot in good conscience remain with the RCN” and questions why the CanRC should seek out contact with the RCR or the GKNvv ahead of older church federations in the Netherlands. Attercliffe expresses a desire for the CRCA to have a greater form of relationship with both the RCR and the GKNvv.
- 3.8. Fergus-Marantha and Fergus-North both urge synod to rescind the statement of Synod Smithers 2007 that those who now belong to the RCR were schismatic when they left the RCN.
- 3.9. The Gereformeerde Kerk in Dalfsen wrote a letter to inform synod that they have joined the RCR.

#### **4. Considerations:**

- 4.1. It is true that Synod Burlington 2010 mandated the CRCA subcommittee to establish contact specifically with the RCR and not with the GKNvv or with other groups that left the RCN. But Consideration 3.3 of Article 155 indicates why the subcommittee was mandated to have contact with the RCR, namely, *given how the RCR has arisen in connection with developments in the RCN*. So because (a) the people in the RCR used to belong to our sister-churches and are important to us for that reason; or because (b) the people in the RCR had experiences that might help us to understand better what was happening in the RCN – or perhaps for both reasons – Synod decided that it would be good to have contact with them. These reasons apply to the GKNvv just as much as to the RCR. (The GKNvv only federated in November 2009 and their name was not mentioned in the CRCA reports to Synod Burlington 2010 or in Synod’s decisions [See Observation 3.3].)
- 4.2. Based on the report of the subcommittee (and Consideration 4.1), Synod should acknowledge that the subcommittee has carried out its mandate faithfully.

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- 4.3. Spring Creek (Observation 3.6) is correct in noting that the CRCA subcommittee is taking a new approach towards those who have seceded from the RCN. Synod Smithers 2007 mandated the CRCA “to admonish the GKH (now RCR) in a brotherly manner for its unlawful separation” from the RCN. Similarly, Synod Burlington 2010 mandated the subcommittee to “seek ways to facilitate reconciliation between the RCR and the RCN”. These synods were both striving to maintain the confessional norm that *no one ought to withdraw from the church*. In this context, Synod joins Spring Creek in regretting the fact that the subcommittee did not provide information on the events in Kampen which led to the formation of the GKNvv, because now Synod cannot develop a confessionally responsible approach to these churches.
- 4.4. Abbotsford uses the situation in Scotland, where we have EF with both the FCS and the FCC, as an historical precedent to justify engaging in dialogue with two (or more) church federations in one country. Synod Burlington 2010 noted in Article 155, Consideration 3.6, though, that this becomes problematic when one of those church federations regards the other one as false. This consideration of Synod Burlington 2010 was based on the assumption that Observation 3.2.3 (in this present article) is false. It should be noted that the CRCA report to Synod Smithers 2007 never quoted any RCR representatives stating that the RCN was a false church. Instead the CRCA itself made two statements, namely, “It is clear that the GKH considers the GKN a false church” (p.64) and – commenting on a quotation, “This reply shows that the GKH continue to see the GKN as false churches which have departed from the Scriptures, confession and Church Order.” (p. 66)
- 4.5. In 2007, the CanRC attitude towards those who seceded from the RCN was linked directly to our relationship with the RCN. Synod Smithers 2007 considered “that the GKN (now RCN) had remained faithful” (*Acts*, Article 144, Consideration 4.1) and subsequently decided, in the same article, “to admonish the GKH (now RCR) in a brotherly manner for its unlawful separation” (Recommendation 5.4.1). Synod Burlington 2010 gave the CRCA subcommittee a dual mandate to (a) express concerns about developments in the RCN (*Acts*, Article 86, Recommendation 4.4.1) and (b) have contact also with the RCR (*Acts*, Article 155, Consideration 3.3). To be consistent, our decision in 2013 regarding those who seceded from the RCN must also be informed by our decision regarding the RCN.

- 4.6. Our relationship with the RCN – as reflected in the *Acts* of various general synods – has changed in the last six years. Synod Smithers 2007 judged that “even though questions remain, it could be concluded that the GKN have not deviated from Scripture and the Confessions” (*Acts*, Article 133, Consideration 4.1). The decision of Synod Burlington 2010 to express concern about developments noted in the RCN (*Acts*, Article 86, Recommendation 4.4.1) was followed by a decision of Synod Carman 2013 that the relationship of EF with the RCN would be jeopardized if the RCN would stay on the present course in regard to the matters we have raised. To the extent that we share the concerns of the RCR and the GKNvv, we have greater understanding for their members having left the RCN.
- 4.7. In all our contact with the RCR or the GKNvv or any other churches or groups that have seceded from the RCN, we must be very clear that we have EF with the RCN. This CanRC synod is urging the RCN to reconsider a number of decisions which they have made and if they respond to that appeal they will continue to be our sister-churches. This is not a choice against the RCR or against the GKNvv; instead, this is the approach which the RCR urged us to follow in their letter to this synod.
- 4.8. Our understanding of the RCR has also changed since 2007. In its report to Synod Smithers 2007 the CRCA stated that “... the GKH (=RCR) continue to see the GKN (=RCN) as false churches which have departed from the Scriptures, confession and Church Order. The (CRCA) Committee again does not see the evidence that would lead to such a conclusion. In this regard, we are concerned that the GKH(=RCR) is in danger of not carefully examining what has actually been decided by GKN(=RCN) synods.” However, according to the subcommittee in 2013, (a) the RCR had already, before Synod Smithers 2007, outlined for the CRCA the concerns which the subcommittee addressed in its report to Synod Carman 2013 and (b) the CRCA did not study that RCR brochure before Synod Smithers 2007. The subcommittee has already admitted to the RCR that, in 2007, the RCR had a better understanding than we did of what was happening in the RCN, and we did not take their expressions of concern seriously enough. This should be acknowledged.
- 4.9. The fact that the RCR has established EF with the LRCA is legitimately flagged as a concern by Abbotsford, Attercliffe, Elora and Spring Creek. The LRCA speaks on their website of “federative corruption” in the CanRC and uses Belgic Confession Article

28 to justify their “liberation” from the CanRC. Through its EF relationship with the LRCA, the RCR has explicitly taken the side of the LRCA against the CanRC and therefore closer contact between the CanRC and the RCR will be impossible. Synod also agrees with Spring Creek that, as long as the RCR continue to have EF with the LRCA, the characterization “schismatic” will not be far from our minds. This should be synod’s response to Fergus- Maranatha and Fergus-North.

- 4.10. As long as the CanRC maintain the charge that the RCR are schismatic, it seems unreasonable for Synod to follow the recommendation of the subcommittee to express regret over the fact that the RCR does not recognize us as true churches.
- 4.11. The CanRC have no mandate to bring together those in the Netherlands who cannot in good conscience remain with the RCN. Nevertheless, the RCN are our sister-churches and this causes us to treat the RCR and the GKNvv differently than other church federations in the Netherlands. Furthermore, the GKNvv officially designates itself as *a temporary federation* (voorlopig verband) and we regard the whole situation in the Netherlands as fluid. To allay the fears of Spring Creek, it is appropriate that Synod mandate our subcommittee to exhort those who have left the RCN to maintain unity and inform them that we desire to have one sister-church in the Netherlands.
- 4.12. Since the Gereformeerde Kerk in Dalfsen has joined the RCR there is no need to refer to them in the subcommittee’s mandate.

## **5. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 5.1. To receive the committee report and thank the committee for the work done;
- 5.2. To ask the churches to pray that a true unity in the faith may develop within the fragmented ecclesiastical situation with the RCN and those who have left;
- 5.3. To note with regret that the RCR have entered into EF with the LRCA;
- 5.4. To acknowledge to the RCR that our understanding of the Dutch church situation has evolved with the passage of time since 2007;
- 5.5. To reappoint the subcommittee and mandate it:
  - 5.5.1. To monitor developments in the GKNvv and the RCR;
  - 5.5.2. To exhort all those who have left the RCN to reach out to others who love the Word and the Reformed faith;

- 5.5.3. To inform the RCR that as long as they maintain EF with the LRCA, closer contact between the CanRC and the RCR will be impossible;
- 5.5.4. To work in consultation with the FRCA;
- 5.5.5. To submit a comprehensive report of its activities to the churches six months prior to the next general synod.

## ADOPTED

### Article 191 – Reformed Churches in Korea (RCK)

Committee 3 presented its second draft. With a few minor changes, this was the result:

#### 1. Material:

Report from the CRCA (8.2.1)

#### 2. Observations:

- 2.1 Synod Burlington 2010 decided (*Acts*, Article 173, Recommendation 4):
  - [4.1.] Not to accept the offer of the RCK for EF but to wait until more information becomes available;
  - [4.2.] To mandate the CRCA to continue contact with the RCK with a view to making recommendations regarding EF to Synod 2013, keeping in mind especially Considerations 3.1.1 - 3.1.4.
- 2.2 An observer of the RCK, Rev. DongSup Song, was present at Synod Carman 2013 and passed on greetings.

#### 3. Considerations:

- 3.1. The CRCA delegate visited the RCK in September 2010 at which time he attended worship services, partook in Bible study sessions and met officially with three ministers and four other office bearers to exchange information. There has been limited contact since the visit. Two ministers of the RCK met with the CRCA in the summer of 2010.
- 3.2. The RCK has contact and discussions with several Presbyterian churches in the southern area of South Korea. These contacts include regular discussion on Reformed doctrine and polity. The RCK is currently a very small federation but this could change based on discussions with other groups.
- 3.3. The CRCA encouraged them to take up official contact with the KPCK, since they were informed of the commitment made by the KPCK to have discussions with the RCK. At this time these two

parties have not yet had official contact. There is also an outstanding disagreement between one of the ministers of the RCK and the Southern Presbytery of the KPCK.

#### **4. Recommendation:**

That Synod decide not to enter into EF with the RCK until the churches (via a future general synod) are satisfied with the results of meetings between the RCK and the KPCK. A clearer understanding of the current status of the federation, as well as its future intent for joining with other churches, is necessary.

### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 192 – Reformed Churches of New Zealand (RCNZ)**

Committee 3 presented its second draft. With a few minor changes, this was the result:

##### **1. Material:**

- 1.1. Report from the CRCA re: RCNZ (8.2.1)
- 1.2. Letter from the church at Abbotsford (8.3.1.4)

##### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. Synod Burlington 2010 decided (*Acts*, Article 154, Recommendation 4):
  - [4.1.] To continue the relation of EF with the RCNZ under the adopted rules;

To give the CRCA the following mandate:

- [4.2.] To continue to monitor the relation between the RCNZ and the CRCAustralia and encourage the RCNZ to seriously re-evaluate its relationship with the CRCAustralia 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.

- 2.2. The CRCA reports the following about the execution of its mandate:

- 2.2.1. The 2011 Synod of the RCNZ decided:

- [1.] To adopt the CanRC translation of the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort, with a few changes;
- [2.] Regarding the relationship with the CRCAustralia, to establish a new category of inter-church relation

- in addition to the existing sister-church relationship called Ecclesiastical Fellowship;
- [3.] To adopt provisionally proposed rules for EF as the rules for this new relationship;
  - [4.] To downgrade the relationship with the CRCAustralia from a sister-church relationship to EF;
  - [5.] To continue to offer sister-church relations with the FRCA.
- 2.2.2. The CRCA also draws attention to these decisions of the same synod:
- [1.] To continue the sister-church relationship with the CanRC;
  - [2.] To express its appreciation for the privilege of cooperating with the CanRC in the mission work in Papua New Guinea;
  - [3.] To inform the CanRC of the downgrade of the RCNZ's relationship with the CRCAustralia;
  - [4.] To send two delegates to the next synod of the CRCAustralia;
  - [5.] To increase the level of support given to the Reformed Theological College in Australia each year between 2012- 2014.
- 2.2.3. In a meeting of the CRCA and an RCNZ fraternal delegate it was noted that every church federation has its own categories for inter-church relationships. Therefore, that the RCNZ now has a relationship of EF with the CRCAustralia should not be equated with our understanding of EF.
- 2.2.4. The RCNZ continues to cooperate with the CRCAustralia with regards to theological education.
- 2.2.5. It is noted that CRTS is still not very well known among the RCNZ.
- 2.2.6. Abbotsford argues that we must form an opinion on the fact that the RCNZ is increasing its support for the Reformed Theological College in Australia.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. It is evident that the CRCA has been active in maintaining EF with the RCNZ.
- 3.2. It is evident that the RCNZ continue to be faithful churches of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- 3.3. Based on the information about the RCNZ's different relationship with the CRCAustralia, we can appreciate the direction that the RCNZ have taken. They have changed their relationship with the CRCAustralia. Nevertheless the provisional rules for EF need to be studied by the CRCA to determine whether the change is substantial. It is important for the CRCA to stay in contact with the Inter-church Relations Committee on this matter. It would be prudent for the CRCA to stay in contact with the deputies of the FRCA, since we have assured the FRCA of our continued attention to the relationship between the RCNZ and the CRCAustralia.
- 3.4. Synod can address Abbotsford's concern by maintaining Item 4.2.4 of the CRCA mandate.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To thank the CRCA for its effort in maintaining EF with the RCNZ.
- 4.2. To mandate the CRCA:
  - 4.2.1. To continue the relationship of EF with the RCNZ under the adopted rules;
  - 4.2.2. To try to get a better understanding of the practical changes entailed by the relationship of EF that was begun in 2007 and to encourage the RCNZ to be consequent in their relationship with the CRCAustralia as they develop and finalize the rules for EF;
  - 4.2.3. To encourage the RCNZ to keep seeking ways to grow closer towards the FRCA;
  - 4.2.4. To invite the RCNZ to become better acquainted with CRTS in Hamilton;
  - 4.2.5. To send a delegation to the next RCNZ synod in 2014, if feasible.

### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 193 – Letter from Synod Carman 2013 to General Synod 2014 of the RCN – Dutch Translation**

A motion was tabled to formulate a Dutch translation of the English letter to the RCN previously adopted by Synod Carman 2013 (see Article 165) in order to be also sent to the RCN. This will be done by a committee of brothers fluent in both the Dutch and English languages and will be placed in the Appendices of these *Acts*. [See *Appendix 21*].

**ADOPTED**

Synod adjourned for committee work.

**Day 12 – Evening Session  
Tuesday, May 21, 2013**

**Article 194 – Reopening**

The chairman re-convened Synod, had the assembly sing Psalm 118:1, 2 and noted that all members of synod were present.

**Article 195 – Adoption of the Acts**

Articles 180-193 of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

**Article 196 – *Book of Praise* – Consultation with Australia Regarding**

**Note:** What follows is a replacement for the decision once found in Article 114. See further Articles 144 and 187 in these *Acts* for an explanation.

Committee 2 presented a second draft. This was the result:

**1. Material:**

- 1.1. Report from the SCBP, Section 1.3.1, 4.0 (8.2.4)
- 1.2. Letters from the churches at Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.4.17) and Calgary (8.3.4.43)

**2. Observations:**

- 2.1. The SCBP informs Synod that it reviewed input on the *Book of Praise* provided via a report prepared by the Australian Deputies (for the *Book of Praise*) of Synod Armadale 2012 of the FRCA. The committee worked particularly with specific comments on Psalms 1-78.
- 2.2. In the matter of seeking input for the *Book of Praise* from the FRCA, the SCBP states, “In hindsight it is regrettable that General Synod 2010 was not more consistent in formulating the articles 115 and 121.”
- 2.3. The church at Fergus-Maranatha asks Synod Carman 2013 to decide whether the concerns raised by FRCA delegate br. Wayne Pleiter at Synod Burlington 2010 have been addressed – namely that changes in regard to the *Book of Praise* be made in light of Rule 6 for EF which states, “that as much consultation as possible can take place before a final decision is reached.”

- 2.4. The church at Calgary is disappointed with the interaction between the SCBP and our sister churches in Australia and writes, “While it is true that the *Book of Praise* is a publication of our churches and not a joint effort, it would be better if the update to the *Book of Praise* was accomplished with the cooperation of the brothers in Australia.” Calgary asks Synod Carman 2013 to “direct the committee to specifically dedicate the time and effort to reconciliation in this matter.”
- 2.5. The fraternal delegates from Australia addressed Synod Carman 2013, pointing out that they have been tasked to “monitor developments with the Canadian *Book of Praise*.” They further stated that, “what we would appreciate and encourage is a closer working together between our federations in relation to the *Book of Praise* – we are the only other federation of churches that exclusively uses the *Book of Praise* – so perhaps a cooperative committee could be struck between our churches....”

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. The SCBP did receive and review one significant document from the FRCA in connection with the revision of the *Book of Praise*. Thus, it appears that consultation with the FRCA on this matter has been limited. Both Fergus-Marannatha and Calgary are correct in noting that the degree of involvement has been inadequate.
- 3.2. It is regrettable that there is apparent inconsistency between Articles 115 and 121 of the *Acts of Synod Burlington 2010*. This resulted in some frustration on the part of the FRCA and disappointment on the part of the SCBP that the consultation was not as full as it could have been. Since Article 115 of Synod Burlington 2010 pertained specifically to cooperation with the FRCA, it might have been better for the SCBP to have applied Article 115 to the FRCA, rather than Article 121.
- 3.3. Australian fraternal delegates to Synod Carman 2013 noted, “Our deputies have been requested to do more work to determine the desirability of our churches having an Australian version of the *Book of Praise* – essentially it means adapting your *Book of Praise* to make it our *Book of Praise*.”
- 3.4. Whereas it is true that the contact with the Australian Deputies was minimal, the reality is that this project is near completion and ready for publication. Further, the process of receiving input from Canadian churches is complete and it would not be prudent to delay the publication.

#### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To express its regret to the FRCA that due to the circumstances listed above, the degree of cooperation and consultation re: the work on the *Book of Praise* was limited;
- 4.2. To instruct the SCBP to continue contact with the Australian Deputies for the *Book of Praise* in order to assist in the FRCA's pursuit of a possible Australian version of the *Book of Praise*;
- 4.3. To inform the FRCA that Synod Carman 2013 has instructed the SCBP to publish the final edition of the *Book of Praise* as the authorized version for use in the churches;
- 4.4. To instruct the SCBP to report on its contacts with the FRCA to General Synod 2016.

#### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 197 – Appeal of Dunnville re: Procedure of Testing New Hymn Melodies**

Committee 2 presented a proposal with this result:

##### **1. Material:**

Letter of appeal from the church at Dunnville (8.5.9)

##### **2. Observations:**

- 2.1. The church at Dunnville appeals the decision of “Synod Burlington 2010 to include the proposed melodies and ‘improvements’ to musical notation as recommended in Article 123, 4.2.”
- 2.2. Dunnville argues that although it is not in the province of general synod to decide on technical matters concerning musical notation, this does not negate the responsibility of general synod to decide on procedural matters.
- 2.3. Dunnville claims that the churches ought to have had an opportunity to test new melodies and changes to the musical notations prior to the publication of the *Book of Praise*, as was done with the revised psalms and the new hymns.
- 2.4. Dunnville recommends:
  - [1.] That the changed hymn melodies be restored to their previous state.
  - [2.] That in the future Synod allow the churches to test proposed new melodies and give feedback prior to publication for use in the worship services.

### **3. Considerations:**

- 3.1. Dunnville is correct to point out that new melodies and changes in musical notation were introduced to the churches for the first time via the APV *Book of Praise* approved by Synod Burlington 2010 and this meant that the churches could not test them prior to publication. This was an unexpected course of events for the churches which had seen a different course of action with the introduction of revised psalms and new hymns.
- 3.2. It should be pointed out that the APV *Book of Praise* was itself a vehicle for testing in the churches, much like the *Augment* before it and therefore the testing of new melodies and musical notations could still take place between 2010 and 2013. The publication of the APV was not a final decision, but a decision to *begin* another round of testing. Dunnville was not obligated to test the published changes in the worship services.
- 3.3. It would have been better, in hindsight, due to the extent of the changes and the disturbance they caused, for the SCBP to have included these matters in its Report to Synod Burlington 2010, so that the churches could have interacted with them before synod. Wherever there are changes which affect the singability of the Psalms or hymns, there should be transparency in reporting the proposed changes.

### **4. Recommendations:**

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. Regarding the request to restore the changed melodies to their previous state because of procedural matters: to deny the appeal of Dunnville;
- 4.2. Regarding the procedural matters: to agree with the church at Dunnville that a better course should have been followed.

## **ADOPTED**

### **Article 198 – Concluding Matters**

#### *Censure ad Article 34 CO*

Rev. Bouwman stated, with thankfulness to the Lord, that censure ad Article 34 of the CO was not needed. Instead, he gave thanks that a good spirit of cooperation was evidenced throughout Synod. Opportunity was given to the members of Synod to speak on this matter but no one availed themselves of the opportunity.

### *Publication of the Acts*

The first and second clerks are responsible for preparing the *Acts of Synod Carman 2013* 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 of the church at Dunnville as convening church for General Synod 2016 (to be convened in the month of May) 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 199 – Closing of Synod**

Rev. Louwse, the vice-chairman, took a moment to express, on behalf of the members of Synod Carman 2013, sincere thankfulness to Rev. Bouwman who served so capably as chairman.

Rev. Bouwman proceeded to speak some words of appreciation to members of the executive for their good team-work, to members of Synod for their good efforts and faithful production and for the general spirit of peace that could exist even through times of disagreement. Above all he gave thanks to our heavenly Father without whose blessing none of these things would have been possible. He also thanked the convening church of Carman West for its excellent work of preparing for and hosting of Synod and for the wonderful hospitality extended by many Carman church members toward the delegates. His speech can be found in *Appendix 12* of these *Acts*.

Rev. Bouwman then, on behalf of Synod, presented some gifts to the ladies who provided such scrumptious meals and snacks with impeccable

dedication throughout Synod. In turn, br. John Veldman (of Carman-West's Organizing Committee for Synod), presented Rev. Bouwman with a hand-crafted gavel as a token of appreciation for his work as chairman.

Rev. Bouwman read Ephesians 6:10-20, gave a brief meditation, had the assembly rise and sing Psalm 124:1-3 and led in prayer. The chairman declared Synod Carman 2013 closed.

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## **APPENDIX 1 – Opening Address by Rev. Dr. A.J. Pol**

Esteemed brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ,

On behalf of the Carman West Canadian Reformed Church, appointed to convene General Synod 2013, I extend a special welcome to all who are present for the opening of Synod, especially to the delegates from Regional Synods East and West, as well as fraternal delegates from within Canada and from abroad, as far away as Australia. We are thankful to the Lord for hearing prayers for your safe arrival.

Approaching Carman from Winnipeg, you may have seen a sign pointing to Homewood. Maybe you recognized the name. On November 4, 1954, the General Synod of Homewood-Carman was convened. This was followed by the second General Synod of Homewood-Carman beginning on March 13, 1958. It seems that in those days Carman was already considered a central location! We are indeed not far from the longitudinal centre of Canada, which is marked by a sign on Highway #1, east of Winnipeg.

The Lord has blessed our federation of Canadian Reformed Churches with considerable growth since those early days. The number of members living in the area of Carman has also increased to the point that there are now two vibrant Canadian Reformed churches here with a combined membership total of more than 800 people.

Now, after many years, another general synod is to take place. To set the tone for your work as delegates, I have chosen to read part of Romans 12. Many things could be said about this passage. Allow me to touch on a few highlights in connection with your activities in the days lying ahead of you.

“Worship” is a key word in what the apostle Paul is bringing forward. He makes it clear that worshiping God is something we should be doing all the time. It involves more than just praying and singing songs to God. Worshiping God means dedicating all of our lives to him. This is to be our response to the many ways in which God has shown his mercy to us. These “mercies of God” find their focal point in the ministry of Jesus Christ. By grace, through faith in him, God’s mercy is also channelled into our lives and through us into the lives of others.

Paul calls us to sacrifice our bodies to God as living sacrifices in response to what God has done. This sacrifice also involves our minds, which need to be renewed by God's Word and Spirit. Then we will be enabled to resist the pressures of worldly ways of doing things and able to do God's will. It will be important for you, brothers, who have been delegated to Synod, to remember this. You will need to depend on God's Word and Spirit in order to do your work in a way that conforms to his will instead of to the world around us.

The apostle Paul goes on to explain what a transformed life looks like. He begins with emphasizing the importance of humility. How important this will be as you interact with each other as members of Synod! Each one of you has different gifts. You will need to function together, reflecting on the materials submitted to you and listening carefully to each other as you work toward making decisions. Your basic attitude should be: "Here we are Lord. What do you want us to do? Show us how we can serve you according to the full measure of the gifts you have given us individually and together."

Jesus Christ is the source of our unity. By the power of his Spirit we have a bond with him but also a bond with each other. Unity in Christ should therefore motivate you to serve each other as members of Synod. Strive to maintain a serving attitude in the coming days. You have been entrusted with a very special task. Encourage each other as the days go by. Use your gifts together for promoting the honor of God's Name. Seek to further the well-being of the federation of churches to which we belong as well as the well-being of the churches with which we have contact and fellowship.

Let Christian love characterize your activities as members of synod. Don't put on a mask of politeness or friendliness. As Paul puts it, your love must be "sincere." This doesn't extend to whitewashing anything that goes contrary to God's will. That would not be loving. Persevere in doing what is right in the sight of God. But do this in a caring way.

The apostle Paul also speaks of being "devoted to one another in brotherly love." He is referring to the kind of affection that can exist between close family members. Then there is attention for each other, encouragement, and support. But also upbuilding criticism if needed! That's the way to love each other as children of one heavenly Father in the days ahead of you.

“Never be lacking in zeal,” writes Paul in verse 11. During your deliberations there may be challenges and even disappointments. That might tend to make you become hesitant and withdraw from intense discussions. But don’t give up! “Keep your spiritual fervour.” Remember that it’s not about you. It’s about serving the Lord. Staying focused on him can help you maintain balance and perspective in your discussions.

Paul continues: “Be joyful in hope.” Hope is focused on things we don’t see. Hold on to each other as people who are looking forward to being “with Christ,” one day (cf. Phil 1:23). Exercise patience and keep praying individually and together as a body for all that you need to work fruitfully.

In the context of your stay here, note that the apostle Paul stresses our calling as Christians to “practice hospitality.” Literally, this could be translated as a call to “*pursue*” hospitality. As you can see, the congregations of Carman East and Carman West have done this. We have opened our homes to you. You will also be receiving meals in this building that have been prepared with love for you and your work. Enjoy this and see in it something of the love of Jesus Christ that motivates us and binds us all together. We hope that you will feel very welcome and that when you leave you will cherish warm memories of your stay in this prairie town.

May God bless you in your work together and cause you to be a blessing through your deliberations and decisions.

**APPENDIX 2 – Address by Rev. B. Westerveld (ERQ)**

Dear brothers in 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 a second time, we address a synod of your churches as a full sister church. Synod Smithers (2007) 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 into the same relationship. We are grateful for your decision, since it reflects the missionary interest of your federation for the work of the Lord in the province of Quebec.

For those of you who are not familiar with us, permit me to give you a brief introduction to the ERQ. Officially begun in 1988 as the fruit of the collective mission works of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, the Presbyterian Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church of North America, the ERQ had a vision of forming a single French-speaking Reformed denomination to serve the province of Quebec, Canada. United by a common Reformed confession, namely the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Heidelberg Catechism, we preach Christ and the full counsel of God to the French-speaking people of the province.

In November 2013, we will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the founding of the ERQ. On the one hand, we recognize that our churches have not grown in numbers as was hoped and prayed for. On the other hand, we thank the Lord for having preserved a vibrant Reformed witness in the province of Quebec. In fact, thanks to our inter-church relations with federations such as yours, the ERQ has become more self-consciously Reformed in its doctrine and practice.

The ERQ is presently composed of five local congregations, totaling about 350 communicant and non-communicant members. While we do not keep exact statistical records, our congregations have experienced growth these past years through conversions, professions of faith and the baptisms of covenant children. We thank our Lord who continues to gather together his elect people through the faithful preaching and teaching of his Word.

With respect to ministers of the Word in the province of Quebec, the Lord has both given and taken away. In 2010, the Lord called to himself his servant Christian Adjemian who had succumbed to Lou Gehrig's disease one year after beginning to serve in Quebec. A second pastor, Jean-Guy Deblois, has taken an early retirement due to health concerns.

Our congregation in Repentigny called a young seminary graduate, Winston Bosch, as their next pastor. He was ordained in June 2011 in the presence of his father, the Rev. Chris Bosch. We praise the Lord for raising up another worker for his harvest in the province of Quebec.

In March 2012, Pastor Satoshi Kawachi, a PCA missionary, was installed as pastor of our congregation in Charny. The synod had considered closing this congregation because of declining membership. However, the willingness of a consistory from an existing church to shepherd the remaining members, the call of a new pastor, and the transfer of members from two sisters congregations has led its renewal.

Your federation is well informed about the missionary agreement between the congregations of Owen Sound and St-George, and in particular the work of Pastor Paulin Bédard. Besides regular preaching and catechetical instruction, Pastor Bédard is the editor of a quarterly magazine *Lumière sur mon Sentier* (*A light on my Path*). He has also recently published, in English, a work on creation, *In Six Days God Created*.

In obedience to our Lord and Saviour, we continue to make disciples of all the nations which the Lord sends to us in the province of Quebec. While the vast majority of our members are Quebecers "pure laine" (pure wool), we minister with thanksgiving to a growing population of French-speaking immigrants. The welcoming and integration of these "new Quebecers" presents particular challenges as we learn to appreciate cultural differences within the common bond of one faith in Christ Jesus. At the same time we're seeking to reach out to other immigrants who do not know Christ Jesus. For instance, PCA missionary Keith Kanavel has settled into the Montreal metropolitan area in order to work on Muslim outreach.

With respect to inter-church relations, we note with thanksgiving the following developments. In November 2010, the ERQ synod responded positively to an invitation for fraternal relations with the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA). In March 2011, our synod voted unanimously to receive

the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) into ecclesiastical fellowship. We now maintain full ecclesiastical fellowship with:

- a) Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC)
- b) Presbyterian Church in America (PCA).
- c) United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA)
- d) Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)

The ERQ is also an active member of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC), as well as the World Reformed Fellowship (WRF). We are thankful for your membership in NAPARC, and we would encourage greater involvement of the Canadian Reformed federation.

The Inter-Church Committee of the ERQ would like to express its thankfulness for the active involvement of the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America. The committee regularly corresponded with our committee and visited our synods, often taking the initiative to dialogue with our committee. Our meetings were truly of the nature of a sister-to-sister church relationship where our committee could question and give advice.

In that light, we would like to commend the work of brother Reimer Faber, whose term on the committee has come to an end, and who demonstrated a keen love for and understanding of the Reformed work in Quebec.

With respect to significant decisions made by the ERQ synod in the past three year, we would note the following:

1. The ERQ synod unanimously adopted a liturgy for the profession of faith and baptism of adults.
2. An *ad hoc* committee mandated to propose an official liturgy for the ordination of pastors and elders has been folded into our permanent Education Committee. The Education Committee has received the mandate to develop liturgies for the ERQ.
3. In 2011, the Ministerial Committee of the ERQ presented a draft proposal for the examination process of men for the pastoral ministry as well as the reception of pastors from sister churches. While our Church Order provides some broad guidelines, we have never defined the particular steps to be followed. In order to write their proposal, the committee examined the procedures followed by sister churches. Local councils and the synod have provided some comments for improving the proposal. We are still awaiting a final report.
4. The following motion was adopted by the synod in June 2012 concerning guest preachers: “Each local consistory is free to invite,

on an occasional basis, a preacher of its choice, while assuming all responsibility for the doctrinal and pastoral integrity of the teaching given.”

5. The synod adopted some revisions of our standing rules for synodical meetings, most notably the change from four annual synods of two days each to three annual meetings limited to one day.
6. An elder was removed from office because of a serious sin. He is manifesting signs of repentance, for which we give thanks to our Lord.
7. David Castonguay, a student from Farel Seminary, was received as a candidate for the ministry. When he completes his studies, David would like to serve as a chaplain in the Canadian army.
8. Questions have been raised about Genesis 1 and 2, in particularly the question of six day and framework interpretations. Our synod, which will meet this coming Saturday, May 10th, will discuss whether or not to engage in a debate about this issue.
9. The ERQ synod agreed to sponsor a translation committee, under the oversight of the consistory in Quebec City. The committee will be mandated to hire a member of our churches able to translate Reformed material into the French language.

Beyond the formal exchanges with the CCCNA, we are encouraged by the growing participation of members of Canadian Reformed Churches in the mission in Quebec. Over the years, several individuals as well as a few mission teams have come from your congregations to do outreach and evangelism. Friendships are developing. A few of your youth have moved to Quebec and joined our congregations. Such a development should only rejoice our hearts as ecclesiastical fellowship expresses itself in the communion of the saints.

We continue to give thanks to the Lord for the continued contribution of the Canadian Reformed Churches to the mission in Quebec. Your frequent prayers on our behalf are greatly appreciated, particularly as we see the Lord answering them by establishing his Church in the province of Quebec.

We also pray for the Reformed witness of your churches. As you meet to review, discuss and intercede for the work of the Lord in your midst, we pray that the Lord will guide you to preach the gospel of truth to all nations.

**APPENDIX 3 – Address by Rev. D. Kok (URCNA)**

Dear fathers and brothers in the Lord,

It is my privilege to bring you fraternal greetings from and address you today on behalf of the United Reformed Churches in North America. But it is my burden alone to be able to speak something of merit or worth to you in this time allotted to me.

I say ‘burden’ not because I am reluctant to speak to you or because I do not support our mutual efforts as brothers in the Lord to get to know one another and hopefully to be unified as one body in the future as God allows. No, my reluctance has more to do with my understanding of the power and influence of words in such assemblies.

Yes, speeches are important and they can galvanize people into action. But, more often than not, they may be looked upon as an exercise of rhetoric or something that has to be done even if one is unsure if anything will be done after the speech is given. The point is that nothing I say here is likely going to change hearts and minds, nor shift the balance in the favor of unification with you from our URC churches, even though the latter is for which you have expressed heartfelt longing and disappointment that we seem so reluctant to respond to your overtures of union (as Rev. Clarence VanderVelde expressed on your behalf to our URCNA Synod Nyack in 2012).

Rather I, with you, believe in the preached Word and the administered sacraments as the ordinary means by which God moves His people. I was reminded of this recently having come across a quotation from Thomas Manton. The eminent Puritan states:

The ordinances are weak to appearance; there is nothing but plain words, plain bread and wine in one ordinance, and only water in another... So some are apt to say, We had better read at home, than wait upon such plain preaching; but remember, it is God’s ordinance, and that puts a value upon it.

It is God’s ordinance and thus his value rests upon it. So, as much as I agree with the historic Reformed view of church government, this government is really only the shell that maintains (and more importantly) contains the vital nourishment within the church. This we confess together in our Three Forms of Unity.

Even our Canons of Dordrecht, that mighty and beautiful fivefold statement of God's free grace granted in Christ, reminds us time and time again of the value of these ordinances:

And as it has pleased God, by the preaching of the gospel, to begin this work of grace in us, so He preserves, continues and perfects it by the hearing and reading of his Word, by meditation thereon, and by the exhortations, threatenings, and promises thereof, and by the use of the sacraments. (Fifth Head, Article 14)

Thus our fathers concluded this great confession by pleading the assistance of Christ Himself:

May Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who, seated at the Father's right hand, gives gifts to men, sanctify us in the truth... endow[ing] the faithful ministers of his Word with the spirit of wisdom and discretion, that all their discourses may tend to the glory of God, and the edification of those who hear them. Amen.

May I then ask: do we see, in both the Canadian Reformed Churches and those of the United Reformed, that this is the great need of the day? The preaching of God's Word with prayer, which was the calling of the apostles, those original heralds of Christ (Acts 6:4).

When our ministers exchange, do we as leaders and the people themselves following our example, give thanks to the Lord for even this level of fellowship amongst us or is it just something that we must be 'exercised in' as our synods have agreed? When we welcome each other at the table of our Lord, or when our ministers baptize one another's covenant children, do we see it as confirmation that the Lord has promised His blessing there (Psalm 133:3)? "There" even if not "here" at the broader levels of our church government? Are we encouraging our people by exhortation and example to pray regularly about this matter or are we leaving it to the committees who have been appointed to find a "way" to make it happen? How many of us are praying for this individually and daily?

This is not to say that such things aren't happening. In fact, I believe they are. Therefore I do not say these things to reprove you (or myself) but to convict and encourage us together to continue in these things even if formal

unity does not occur in the near future. In fact, Rev. Clarence VanderVelde reminded us at our last synod that already we have a “spiritual unity;” the very kind that leads to “organic unity.”

Yet, regardless of any corporeal unity, you cannot have a unity that honours the Lord without the first. And so we should, at least, celebrate and enjoy the first and work towards the second. Above all, we must agree that if unity is worth it then it must be so because the Lord commands, blesses and grants it: nothing more and certainly nothing less than that. The point is, are we, in all of our unity discussions and deliberations, leaning *completely* on the Lord in all things? Indeed this is what Word, sacrament and prayer cause us to do: to trust in Him and His ways for us, and forsake all the things that tend to lead us away from Him. Quite happily I believe we can both say that *that* is the intention of our deliberations together but we must also constantly keep it in our hearts and minds.

So brothers, yes, do the work of committees and church government. Continue to discuss the goal of an integrated church body. For our part, we pray that all that is said and done in this meeting brings glory to God and is consistent with the instructions He has left for us in His Word. But let us all remember that the way forward is not, ultimately, through the committees and the labors of synods and classes but by Christ’s Spirit, as we seek God’s will, in humble petitions to our Triune God and labouring in our congregations, to bring about that union that will give Him the glory due His name (Psalm 29:2). Thank you.

**APPENDIX 4 – Address by Br. W. Pleiter (FRCA)**

Esteemed brothers in our Lord Jesus Christ!

It is always a pleasure to be with brothers, and so it is tonight, a pleasure to address you on behalf of the Free Reformed Churches in Australia. Together with Rev. Anderson, it is my distinct privilege to extend our greetings to you and it's our prayer that your Synod will be blessed in all its deliberations.

In the past year, the Free Reformed Churches in Australia could come together in their broadest assembly on two occasions – more about that later – and we could also welcome two visiting delegates from the CanRC, namely Rev. Wielenga and Rev. Souman. Not only was this visit well-received by the FRCA, it was also very beneficial for Synod Armadale 2012, for us deputies, and for our churches, to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for the work in the Canadian churches, particularly in matters of Church Unity and Church Relations – and we trust that the feeling is mutual. May we be so bold as to suggest that we look forward to hosting you again during Synod Baldivis in midyear 2015, the Lord willing!

In the response to Rev Wielenga's address to Synod Armadale 2012, the recurring refrain was the 'connected-ness' between our church federations. As I glance across the table of Synod Carman 2013, and consider our experiences during the times of fellowship, and in the warm hospitality shown to us during our stay here in Carman, we are truly amazed at how many connections there are between our bond of churches – personal and spiritual connections alike. It would be safe to say, at least from our vantage point, that despite the distance between us, we remain very close "sisters." Indeed – to paraphrase the words of your delegate to our synod – you are our favourite Canadian sister!

Perhaps it would be good to share at this time some of the changes within our bond of churches. So what has changed? Numerically, not a lot, but still there is a steady growth for which we give thanks to our covenant Lord. Over the past three years, since our last visit, our bond of churches has grown over 6% in membership (to a total of 4131). The Lord has added one new congregation, which is located some two hours south of Perth in the coastal community of Busselton – faithfully served by Rev. Ted VanSpronsen, a familiar name to you all. This brings our bond of churches to a total of 15 congregations, which are now spread over 3 distinct classical regions.

In addition to this, the church at Armadale continues to care for a home congregation in Cairns, Queensland on the north east coast of Australia. This home-congregation has 53 members and recently received locally-ordained office-bearers to care for the flock, which is a wonderful blessing for this group. The FRC at Southern River is currently our largest church with over 520 members. However, that is unlikely to continue due to new developments that will see it become two churches – with the new church planted in the area of Melville. This will make it the closest church group to the capital city, Perth, and the port city of Fremantle.

The subject of outreach and church planting seems to be rather topical at this time, and has also been addressed in your midst. It is also being discussed in our churches – and is consistent with us being lights in this world and salt of the earth. And it's that same passion that has driven the FRCA's work in missions. Currently our churches are active in three areas of mission, in Papua New Guinea, in Sumba and in the Orient. It is wonderful to see your involvement and support in these mission fields as well and it is encouraging to see that our sister-church relation includes this kind of working together in a real living and active way – and this becomes more tangible when we are able to receive Rev. E. Dethan, Rev. F. Dong, Rev. J. Visscher in our midst to discuss this work together.

In the ministerial ranks, we have recently received two new ministers from Canada, namely the Rev. H. Alkema and Rev. T. VanSpronsen in what we would say is a relatively fair trade since you have gained, or should we say *re-gained*, the services of Rev. Smith and Rev. Eikelboom. Thankfully, our churches were also blessed with two arrivals from the RCN – Rev. Anderson (the Dutchie with a Kiwi accent) and Rev. A. Hagg (another Dutchie with a distinct South-African accent) – and a last name that is extremely tough for us Aussies to pronounce. At this time the FRCA have three vacancies to fill, in Bunbury (where dolphins swim to your feet every morning at the beach), in Launceston (redolent in native forest), and in sizzling Southern River (a suburb close to the heart of the hubbub of the city of Perth). I hope your appetites have been whetted (hint, hint!).

In the next few years, there will be further ministerial vacancies, resulting from the retirements of two (more) ministers from active service – for a total of 4. Yet, we are not alarmed by this, for the Lord continues to show His love and faithfulness to our churches in Australia by providing faithful Ministers

of the Word so that His people may continue to be fed, to be cared for and be instructed in the doctrines of the Church. Not only do we thank God for the provision of Ministers of the Word, we also thank Him for the training for the Ministry of the Word.

### ***Theological Seminary***

With that in mind we rejoice with you in the appointment of the new professor, Rev. Dr. T.G. Van Raalte, as the fifth professor for the Seminary. This is also the fifth time that the church at Surrey is now the “Sorry” church – sorry to lose yet another minister to the Seminary!

The work of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary remains close to our hearts and also to our purses. Synod Armadale continued the tradition of financial support for the Seminary – and that, brothers, is support that you can count on. Synod Armadale also re-affirmed our desire to continue to benefit from the wisdom of the professors, by allotting funds for a guest-lecturer to visit down under once every two years. Synod Armadale again mandated our deputies to “continue to investigate the feasibility of the Freshman Year of Theological study to the churches in Australia.” Our churches are committed to pursuing this concept and it would be good for the Seminary and the Board of Governors to support it as well, as ultimately, its intent is to drive more students to the Seminary and that is a goal that will benefit both our federations.

### ***Book of Praise***

Both our federations also benefit from the *Book of Praise*. Synod Armadale 2012 provisionally adopted “the 150 Psalms as revised in the Provisional *Book of Praise* (2010) for use in [our] churches” (*Acts*, Art. 106, Decision 2). Great appreciation for this revision was expressed and we commend you brothers on this good work.

Synod Armadale also adopted the “Principles and Guidelines for the Selection of Music in the Church...as a starting point for the evaluation of proposed hymns” (Decision 7). The 19 additional Hymns adopted by Synod Burlington 2010, however were not adopted at this time, as Synod Armadale considered that “the FRCA should only be obliged to consider new hymns if and when put forward by the Australian churches” (*Acts*, Art 106, Grounds

4). Our deputies have been requested to do more work to determine the desirability of our churches for having an Australian version of the *Book of Praise* – essentially it would mean adapting your *Book of Praise* to make it our *Book of Praise*.

Perhaps of interest to you is that Synod Armadale asked deputies “to study the use of capitalization for personal pronouns referring to God.” Perhaps our churches are not the only ones questioning the lack of capitalization when referring to God and that this is a concern amongst your churches as well.

Deputies have also been asked to “monitor developments with the Canadian *Book of Praise*.” What we would appreciate and encourage is a closer working together between our federations in relation to the *Book of Praise*. We are the only other federation of churches that exclusively uses the *Book of Praise*, so perhaps a cooperative committee could be struck between our churches. In this digital age, surely this is a possibility!

### ***NAPARC***

Addressing our relationship with the CanRC, Synod Armadale has mandated that our deputies “stay informed of the sister-church developments in North America (URCNA, OPC, RCUS and ERQ)” on the grounds that “we need to foster mutual understanding and support regarding matters that our respective federations face, including their sister church relations in North America” (*Acts*, Art. 49.d.). Of course, this would include your involvement and participation in NAPARC – which seems to be a North American version of the ICRC. Yet, judging from the CCCNA’s supplementary report, the sensitivity surrounding membership comes to the fore once again - hence the informative report. Yet this time however, the membership issue appears to be different - now Synod Carman 2013 is requested to do something, to affirm the decisions of the delegates of NAPARC. This seems to be a new development, and one that we would like to chat about, to get an understanding how this works with your Church Order and amongst your churches.

### ***URCNA***

The mention of joint committees makes one think of all the work you have done with the URCNA over the years – particularly by the various

committees for the Church Order, Common Songbook and Theological College. Yet it appears from a distance that there is a bit of a stalemate in this relationship. Synod Armadale 2012 has mandated our deputies to “stay informed on the developments concerning the potential merger between the CanRC and the URCNA, including changes to the Church Order, Creeds, Confessions, Forms and Prayers Forms” (*Acts*, Art 49. Dec 2.b.) During our time here we hope to become more acquainted with this situation and learn about the latest developments.

In the meanwhile, we would urge Synod to note the recommendations of your Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) to ensure that the various synod committees keep the FRCA deputies informed on all the developments with the URCNA (as well as with other inter-church relationships). Not only is this consistent with the Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship, it will enable the FRCA to be informed and to be of assistance where required, and it will provide opportunities for us to learn from your work with your sister churches.

### ***RCNZ***

At this time, we have not yet been able to enter into an official sister church relation with the RCNZ. As you are aware, there remains one obstacle that hinders progress in this regard, and that is the sister relation that the RCNZ has with the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia. There has been a new development in this regard, with the proposed new relationship status between the RCNZ and the CRC of Australia. As explained to us by their fraternal delegate, from New Zealand’s perspective the relationship was downgraded to ecclesiastical fellowship. However, the deputies of the CRCA sold this to their synod more in terms of a renaming of the same relationship. In any case, the matter of the way this relationship is defined and conducted will be back on the table of the next RCNZ synod.

From our perspective, Synod Armadale has mandated our deputies to “determine how the nature and practical implications of the RCNZ’s new relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the CRC of Australia differs from their previous sister church relationship and evaluate how this impacts on the impediment identified by previous Synods” (*Acts*, Article 89, 5c). It is clear from your reports that your deputies have also picked up on this change and we appreciate their recommendations in this regard. Our churches thank

you for your understanding regarding our position with the RCNZ and again Synod Armadale requests that this support continues (*Acts*, Article 49.d.) until this last obstacle is removed and we can finally “remedy the present anomaly of recognising the RCNZ to be true and faithful without entering into a sister church relationship.” (*Acts of Synod Armadale 2012*, Art. 89 – Dec 1, Gr 8).

### ***Indonesia***

Regarding the churches in Indonesia, the FRCA recognize with thankfulness that the CanRC at Synod Burlington 2010 have established a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI-NTT. After your synod in 2010, we could notice a further development within the GGRI towards a closer unity between the churches located in the different provinces of Indonesia. This resulted in a combined general synod of the GGRI in Sentani, Papua 2012 with delegates from the provinces Papua, Kalimantan Barat and NTT. Given the progress of the church gathering work of our Lord Jesus Christ in Indonesia it would be a set-back if the Canadian Reformed Churches would decide to discontinue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI as proposed by your committee.

Synod Armadale 2012 decided “to thankfully acknowledge the developments in the GGRI with respect to the establishment of a larger federation consisting of the three regional synods and to acknowledge the new federation as our sister in Christ and to carry out that relationship in accord with the established rules.” Given the fact that the churches in Australia had no dealings with the churches in the provinces Papua and Kalimantan Barat previously, Synod Armadale 2012 mandated the deputies for contact with the GGRI to give a clearer picture of the federation of churches in Papua and Kalimantan Barat. It would be helpful that our deputies can do this in close contact with the Canadian deputies.

### ***RCN***

At the beginning of this address I mentioned that Synod Armadale had met twice over the past year. With one exception, all the items on Synod’s agenda could be completed when Synod convened in June last year. Just two weeks ago Synod Armadale reconvened to complete its work relating to our relationship with the RCN. Our Synod Legana 2009 decided 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...’” (*Acts of Synod Legana 2009*). Seeing that there was no response to this exhortation, Synod Armadale 2012 considered this matter serious enough to decide to send a letter of admonition. It appointed an advisory committee to formulate it so that Synod could reconvene in April of 2013 to complete its work.

The official admonition mentions how the RCN “tolerates an approach to hermeneutics that does not uphold the authority and plain meaning of Scripture for exegesis.” Various examples are given with attention to upholding “the sufficiency of Scripture for ethics” with references as to how the decisions of the RCN “about marriage and divorce leave room for a subjective approach in understanding and applying the Biblical norms.” Sister church relations with the RCN are continued, yet there was an “expressed sadness at the lack of progress to resolve our concerns to date, so that our relationship is strained.” In view of all this, Synod also decided “to advise local consistories to exercise due care with respect to their responsibilities towards those coming from and going to the RCN, and to call the FRCA to frequently remember the RCN in their prayers, in view of the continuing struggle for the truth within these churches” (NB: all quotations are from the adopted Press Release of Synod Armadale 2012-13).

Brothers, you can imagine the difficulty in formulating and delivering such a Letter of Admonition to a dear sister – a sister whom we have received so very much from over the years. We do not claim to be without spot or sin – yet the letter had to be sent, in a spirit of humility, recognizing that we all are compelled to rely all the more on God’s grace in preserving His church and to be reaffirmed in our conviction to live godly and holy lives that glorify our Saviour.

Once again brothers, it is good to be here to share warm greetings from your sister down under. We thank the LORD our God for you, and for the unity we can express in our Sovereign Lord and King. Brothers, may the kingdom work that you do here at Synod Carman 2013 be blessed, and be a blessing to the Canadian Reformed Churches. May the LORD, our God of all grace, continue to gather, defend and preserve His churches here in Canada and throughout this world.

Thank-you.

**APPENDIX 5 – Address by Rev. J.M. Batteau (RCN)**

Dear brothers of the Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches,

Heartfelt greetings in Christ from your sister-churches in The Netherlands, the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (Liberated)!

It is an honor for my colleague, Prof. Klaas Wezeman, and me, to be present today to greet and address your Synod. For historical reasons, involving many family and personal relationships, we have had a warm church fellowship and cooperation for more than 60 years. We share a common commitment to the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, and we seek to be churches which honor these Three Glorious Persons in our church life.

My name is John Michael (Kim) Batteau. I am an American by birth and by upbringing. I came to saving faith in Christ as a first-year student at Harvard University. After graduating, I then attended and graduated from Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, and later travelled to The Netherlands, where I met my wife, Margreet, and continued my studies, eventually at the Theological University in Kampen of the Liberated Reformed Churches. After receiving my degree, the Dutch churches sent me and Rev. Niek Gootjes, well known to you, to Korea, where we taught at Korea Seminary in Busan, the seminary of the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Kosin) in the 1980's. Niek then came to teach in Hamilton, and I went back to The Netherlands to be a pastor of successively three congregations, retiring two years ago. My wife and I are remembering Niek and his wife Dinie regularly in prayer, now that he is so tragically ill with Alzheimer's disease.

Prof. Klaas Wezeman is well known to a number of you, having served our churches many years as the chairman of our Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad (BBK in Dutch), a position which he still holds. He is a life-long, active member of various Liberated Reformed congregations, has served many years as an elder, and knows our churches very well. He has travelled extensively for our churches, for example, representing us just a few weeks ago at the Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia. He was for many years Professor of Business and Accounting at the University of Groningen, and is now involved as a member of various boards in the area of finance and accountancy. Brother Wezeman has experience in the church

world, the university world, and the business world, and this experience has been fruitful internationally over the years.

We as sister-churches share, as I mentioned at the beginning of this address, a commitment to the Triune God. We share a faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Savior, crucified and risen, now reigning at the right hand of the Father, whose precious blood cleanses us from all sin. We share a faith in the Bible, the Holy Scriptures, uniquely inspired by the Holy Spirit, the infallible Word of God, trustworthy on all matters it touches. We share a confessional commitment to the Three Forms of Unity, the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort, and more broadly to the three ancient ecumenical creeds, the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed. Further, we have been richly blessed by the reformational movements in The Netherlands, the *Afscheiding* and the *Doleantie* in the 19th century, and the *Vrijmaking* in the 20th century. Klaas Schilder's writings on salvation-historical preaching, the covenant, and the visible church, remain for us together a heritage we wish to cherish and honour.

We are here at an important moment in our mutual relations with each other. Your sub-committee was given the task by your General Synod of examining certain developments in our churches in The Netherlands, and reporting about their finds. This report has been made public, with recommendations, and will be dealt with at this General Synod. Questions have been raised about our churches. Are we going liberal? Are we following in the footsteps of the Synodical Reformed churches, as they gradually left orthodoxy for liberalism in the 1960's and '70's? Is the Bible's authority safe in our circles? Is the door being opened to women in ecclesiastical offices? Are the contacts with the Netherlands Reformed Churches at the local level leading to being influenced by these churches in a wrong direction? Are liturgical practices being tolerated which are more man-centered than God-centered? Your subcommittee has now submitted its report, which calls for the continuation of our sister-church relation, but also expresses grave concerns and, at points, very severe criticism of our churches in the areas mentioned.

Our Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad (BBK) has written several letters in response to the criticism we received from the subcommittee, and these letters have been published in their report. Last year, 2012, subcommittee members visited us in The Netherlands, and we had the chance to have some intensive talks with each other, including with a

delegation from the Theological University in Kampen. However, these talks have not led to a change in the conclusions your subcommittee had drawn. We were quite surprised by this, since we had gotten the impression that some progress in understanding had been made.

We feel that the article which was published in *Clarion* by the subcommittee, reporting on their visit to our last General Synod, used language which was damaging to our reputation in the world. We would like to ask you as a General Synod, if you agree that certain things were said which were more negative, subjective feelings of some subcommittee members, than a balanced, objective description of their visit, that a public correction is called for.

Further, we would ask you as a General Synod to consider whether the general conclusions about our churches, as formulated by the subcommittee's report, does justice to us. Could it be that certain incidents and individuals have been negatively highlighted, at the cost of the still very Biblical and Reformed character of our congregations and federation, and the clearly Biblical and Reformed, official pronouncements of our General Synods over the last years? That is our conviction on this issue.

As we have repeatedly tried to make clear, we as the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad have mainly a communicating and supporting function. We want to maintain sister-church and contact-church relationships in the world, help understand each other better, and clarify developments, so that we can assist each better in being Biblical, Reformed churches in the world. However, if one of our sister-churches, at the level of a General Synod, officially expresses severe criticism of decisions made by one of our General Synods, then we as a committee do not have the mandate or competency to directly answer such criticism in detail. We ask our sister-church General Synod, in that case, to express its grave concerns and criticism directly to the next General Synod of our churches, for only that body has the authority, that is, the mandate and the competency, to deal with such concerns and criticism in a thorough and satisfactory way. We know that this can be frustrating to a subcommittee which would prefer full responses and action in contact with us as BBK, but that is the agreed-on limited function of our committee.

It is certainly possible, in the setting of your General Synod's work, where Synod advisory committees have been appointed to deal with

recommendations from continuing committees, that we as delegates from the Reformed Churches (Liberated) speak freely and in more depth to such an advisory committee about issues raised. We look forward to that here. But even then, everyone should realize what our limitations are.

I do personally hope, and in this I represent the feelings of our committee, that our relationship can continue to be one of fellowship, mutual support, and, where necessary, mutual correction. Satan, our common enemy, is seeking to undermine the work of the Lord in the world, and he does this by trying to undermine the authority of God's Word. We need to help each other in the spiritual fight we are fighting on all continents. We appreciate all the help you can give us to be true to the Lord, to His Word, to the Confessions which we hold as our doctrinal standards, and to great tradition of the Reformation of the 16th century: *Sola Scriptura, Sola Gratia, Sola Fide*. If your General Synod can help us in this direction, then we will be very grateful.

May the Lord bless your General Synod with fruitful decisions and actions which will build up the Body of Christ, in Canada and North America, and in the whole world, and glorify our Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

Thank you very much.

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**APPENDIX 6 – Response to the RCN address by Rev. J. Moesker (CanRC)**

Thank you for your words on behalf of our sister churches who are also our mother churches in the Netherlands, brother Batteau. It was good to hear your words about the commitment of your churches to the divinely inspired words of Holy Scripture and to the Three Forms of Unity as well as the three ecumenical creeds. I hope you and your churches understand that the serious concerns in report of the subcommittee for relations with your churches and the discussions of this synod stand in the context of our common commitment to the Bible and the confessions. It's about holding one another to that commitment.

The concerns of Synod 2010, given to, studied by and reported on by the subcommittee admittedly give that report a very critical smell, if I can say it that way. We acknowledge positive things are happening in your churches, such as the publication of the Commentary on the New Testament series you mentioned earlier on and some other publications, as well as numerous social services offered in the churches. We don't wish to take anything away from the positive things happening in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. However, the mandate of the subcommittee was about the grave concerns the churches brought to Synod Burlington 2010, and that is what the subcommittee focused on in its report. Those concerns were researched, and the subcommittee found that those concerns were justified in the three main areas they were mandated to look:

1. Scripture interpretation as used by and accepted by the Theological University.
2. The progress of the study M/W (i.e. role of women) in the church.
3. The warming relationship between the RCN and the Netherlands Reformed Churches

As subcommittee convenor, I happened to be delegated to this synod and I'd like to remark that we were frustrated in our initial attempts after Synod Burlington 2010 to meet with the Committee for Contact with Churches Abroad (in Dutch, the BBK) of your churches. We were told by the BBK to bring the concerns of Synod Burlington 2010 directly to Synod Harderwijk 2011 if we wanted them discussed. That threw us off, brothers. We had matters to work on and to report on to next Synod, but no one to "bounce those matters off" in the Netherlands.

We went to work and drew up an interim report before your Synod Harderwijk 2011, hoping to possibly meet face to face as committees to hear your response to what we had done so far. That was not to be.

The synods of our sister churches in the Netherlands have what is called “Foreign Delegates Week” at their synods, when they invite representatives of churches in fellowship as well as contact churches to sit in some sessions and to speak on behalf of their churches. Having all those representatives there and engaging them with speeches and so on makes it difficult to have face to face discussions.

We understand that, but it did seem as if there was not much interest from you to meet for discussion. Thankfully, our two delegates to Synod Harderwijk 2011 were able to meet with part of the BBK and they tried to convey how serious our concerns were. It was surprising but also gratifying that by your hand our interim report did end up before Synod Harderwijk 2011. However, disappointingly, Synod did nothing official with it. Our interim report was published in shortened form in *Clarion* around Sept. 2011 along with a report of the impressions of our two delegates to Synod Harderwijk.

Brothers, we were thankful for the meeting of our subcommittee with most of the BBK and also with many of the Senate and Governors of the TUK in April of last year. Your response to our interim report was discussed in a frank and open way. However, after mulling over those meetings, we concluded that we had heard little that changed our minds about the main points of our report. The matter of whether church office is open to women according to the Bible has been handed to another committee with a specific mandate. But Synod Harderwijk 2011 also instructed them to make use of the materials already published, materials which have caused us concern in the past.

You dispute that the subcommittee report does justice to the RCN. However, what the report says about the three matters it focused on is not based on anecdotal evidence or the like, but on public documents. Synod here (Carman) will have to judge whether they have confidence in what our report says. But be assured, brothers from the Netherlands, that whatever the ultimate decision of Synod is, we decide in the context of true fellowship and mutual support of the brothers and sisters in the Netherlands. Our concerns are so strong because we love the Dutch churches, from which we stem, very dearly. The ties are so deep that it also hurts deeply not to be able to be positive every time, like we used to be at synods when we dealt with our

relationship as churches. But brothers, even though it hurts, we believe we have to say what we do in order to be true to the Lord of the church, our ascended Saviour.

Brothers, we see that your churches live in a society that is becoming ever more secularized, godless. The Netherlands has such a wonderful history. We recently saw the crowning of your new king of the House of Orange, a royal lineage which once included princes and kings with strong Reformed convictions. In the past there were also prime ministers with good Reformed principles. But that Reformed footprint in the Netherlands has shrunk and is still shrinking. Reformed churches such as the Protestantse Kerk in Nederland (PKN) have become so accommodating to the social mores of the time that they can even harbour ministers who openly declare themselves to be, in fact, atheists. And then there is also the growth of evangelicalism, which emphasizes religious experience and feeling, something many people today seek.

We realize that we are dealing with the same things, and there are very real dangers for us as Canadian Reformed Churches here too. Our society in general also wants to eliminate God from government and from life. And we are surrounded by evangelicalism too. At the next ministers' conference in Ontario we hope to discuss how to respond to people leaving the Canadian Reformed Churches for evangelical groups such as Harvest Church. And we also exist among churches which have years ago lost their way and which focus, as the United Church of Canada does, on a social gospel rather than the gospel of forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. Brothers, we need each other in these times and situations! We need to hold each other to the gospel of salvation once and for all delivered to the saints.

We hope that that is the spirit in which you receive our expressions of concern. Please convey our greetings to your churches. And be assured that we will continue to bring your churches to the Lord in prayer, and we hope that you will do the same for the Canadian Reformed Churches.

**APPENDIX 7 – Address by Rev. D.M. Boersma (FRCSA)**

Dear brothers,

I greet you warmly on behalf of your sister churches in South Africa. I am grateful for the opportunity to share in your fellowship and to enjoy your hospitality.

***Gratitude***

Two events that happened two thousand years ago have brought me here today.

First, the pivotal point of history: Jesus our Lord, died on the cross. The Creator and Owner of the universe emptied himself for creatures who rejected him. Not long after that, the young churches from the Gentiles collected money for the ‘mother’ church in Jerusalem that was suffering from famine (see 2 Corinthians 8 and 9). The first event caused the second one. Jesus’ Spirit changed the hearts of believers and his love created in them willingness to serve.

I am here today to thank the Canadian Reformed brothers and sisters for their willingness to serve and help our churches. Transformed and motivated by the sacrificial love of Jesus, your churches have decided to support our federation. This time it is not the daughter helping the mother, but the big sister helping the smaller one.

The generous support of the Canadian churches, as encouraged by Synod Smithers 2007 and Synod Burlington 2010, makes it possible for us to keep the pastors of our needy churches eating, preaching and visiting. Our federation has eight instituted churches, four of which are needy.

It also helps our mission work. We could not possibly have eight missionaries if it were not for our sister churches in Holland and Canada. The Dutch churches (in Groningen and Friesland) carry most of our mission budget, our own churches contribute, and the additional donations coming from Canada have helped us in the past years.

So I am here to express the gratitude of our churches. I would like to do this personally, as well. My family and I live in the house that doubles as a church center in Akasia, a suburb of Pretoria. It was bought with the money you sent us. When we were renting the house, it could have been sold at any time and

we would have to find not only a new place to stay but also a new meeting place for the church. We are very thankful that this uncertainty is over now. It helps us to be present in our neighborhood.

### *Praising God*

We are impressed with the way God works through this. He teaches us to depend on him for all our needs to do his will, and then to praise him when he provides for us. Paul described this dynamic in 2 Corinthians 9:12: “For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God.”

The Coaldale committee passed on the gratitude of our deputies for needy churches and our mission deputies in their report. You may be assured that we are praising God for your generosity.

Our Synod instructed our deputies for contact with churches abroad not only to visit your Synod but also to visit local CanRC churches. This is why I visited churches in Alberta and Manitoba during this trip to communicate our thanks and to give them a report of what God is doing in our midst.

### *Recent Synod decisions*

Related to this I would like to highlight decisions made by our most recent Synod. Last year an *ad hoc* Synod was held about the sustainability of our church federation. Synod 2011 appointed deputies for financial review, who reported at the 2012 Synod. In addition, deputies for needy churches, needy students, theological education and missions wrote reports.

Regarding *needy churches*, our federation struggles with the differences between churches in the first and third world. Ministers should be treated equally and should be able to serve without financial worries. This means they need the same basic building blocks in their stipend, but these building blocks may vary in cost depending on the place they live. In addition, churches in the poorer areas are not able to provide for their ministers sufficiently.

Synod decided that every church is expected to provide for the basic necessities of their minister. Support from deputies for needy churches will only be given for allowances that relate to the work of the pastor, such as a car, books, etc.

This way, the members of the young churches can learn to provide for their ministers and be good stewards of the income God gives them.

In addition, mission points are encouraged to take up collections for the cost of the federation. The expected amounts will be adapted to the standard of living for the area where each church is located.

Regarding *theological students*, Synod decided that deputies should only give support for tuition. For their daily living cost, they should rely first on their parents, then on the local church and only in the last resort on the federation.

Regarding *theological education*, Synod decided to cut the support in half since the plan to participate in a local initiative for Reformed training has not materialized yet. Curators are looking into cooperation with your CRTS and consider long-distance education during the first year of studies. Our curators and Synod deeply appreciate the cooperation with CRTS and hope that this can intensify. One of our students, Phineas Kgatle, spent time at CRTS in 2010 and we are very thankful for the training he received and the financial support that your churches provide for South African students.

### ***Attitude***

The direction of our churches is clearly one of financial sustainability through stewardship, beginning at the local level. We do not want to respond to generosity by allowing laziness in giving. This could happen if the churches in South Africa would just hold out their hands instead of putting their hands into their own pockets to support the work of God.

Our federation consists of older churches that are used to giving and new church plants that still need to learn this. Members in these young churches need to learn to be stewards of God's resources and become generous towards God's kingdom. Generosity is a lost virtue in South Africa, I am afraid. The new South Africa has developed a culture of grabbing and jumping on the gravy train. The people in high office are the worst examples of this. The emerging middle class has moved out of survival mode to become consumers, many with an attitude of entitlement. When people from the emerging middle class become members of the church, they need to learn to make sacrifices for Jesus.

In line with the Synod decisions, deputies for needy churches in the FRCSA are trying to call the needy churches to an attitude of giving and stewardship, to reduce dependency on money from overseas. This has also become a focus point in our mission strategy.

May the Lord bless your generosity and our growth in stewardship in such a way that in the future, our churches may stand out in South African society as examples that God's grace can change consumers into generous followers of Jesus.

### *Details about the FRCSA*

I'd like to tell you about a few other recent developments in our churches. Although we still suffer some brain drain because families move to Australia and Canada, the number of members mostly remains stable. We are thankful for two students who have finished their studies and are waiting to be called. Since one of our missionaries accepted a call back to Holland, the percentage of indigenous missionaries has increased from 75% to 87%.

Our contacts with the GKSA (*die Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika*: the Reformed Churches in South Africa) have not become much better on a Synod level, but the local contacts in Pretoria have grown a lot. They have acknowledged each other as churches of Jesus Christ and are trying to do more together.

### *Greetings*

When reading old speeches made by other delegates, I noticed that they often address differences or issues under consideration by Synod. We do not have any difference in opinion with you. But we do follow the challenges of your federation and the decisions of your Synods with interest. One feature that stands out for me is that our Canadian sisters hold fast to the truth of God's Word and try to answer the challenges in society and church relations from that solid basis. We commend you for this and pray that you may continue to serve our Lord Jesus faithfully. May you grow deeper in your love for God and your understanding of his Word, so that you may preach and obey its relevance in your part of the world.

We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 1:2–3).

**APPENDIX 8 – Address by Rev. Dr. Peter J. Wallace (OPC)**

Mr. Chairman, fathers and brothers, and all who call upon the name of our Triune God, I bring greetings in the name of our glorious Lord, Jesus Christ, from your sister, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

We live in a day when the lines between male and female, masculine and feminine, are being blurred. Just in the last few days, the legislature of the state of Minnesota voted to approve same-sex marriage. I know that for nearly 10 years you have lived with this in Canada. We are just beginning to learn south of the border what this will mean for us.

As I listened to the debate on my drive through Minnesota, I reflected on how we really gave away the game when we redefined marriage to be *primarily* about, “the enrichment of the lives of those who enter this state.” Yes, we still believe that it is, “for the orderly propagation of the human race,” and “for the generation of a holy seed,” but it is strange that even in our suggested forms in the OPC, we have stripped away all of the older language about sex and babies, and we simply pray that, “their marriage be fruitful for this life and for the life to come.” Maybe we pray that, “if it be God’s will” that he would give them children, but that’s like praying, “if it be God’s will” that God would bless the preaching of the gospel!

It *is* God’s will that the preaching of the gospel would convert sinners. It *is* God’s will that marriage would produce babies. That’s not saying that everyone who hears believes! Nor is it saying that every marriage will produce babies! But marriage is the God-ordained means *for* producing babies.

Think of Eve. She was created as a “helper” suitable for Adam. What does Eve do to help? I’m sure you know, brothers, that of the 19 uses of the word “helper” in the OT, 16 of them refer to *God* as our helper. Those of you from “Ebenezer” church should know what this means! Thus far God has helped us. As Luther put it, “*Our Helper* he amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.” God is our helper – why? Because he does for us what we could not possibly do for ourselves. A helper is not a servant. A helper is not an inferior. A helper is one who does what we could not possibly do for ourselves!

In the same way, Eve is a helper. She does something that Adam could not possibly have done by himself. Adam can rule the animals – he names them all before she is formed! But he is *helpless* to be fruitful and multiply.

Our culture sees marriage as, “he has his life, and she has her life, and never the twain shall meet, except in the bedroom from time to time.” Christians increasingly seem to see marriage as focused on each other. But then there are some in the patriarchal movement who say that he is oriented towards the call, and she is oriented to him – they seem to prefer Milton’s adage “He for God, and she for God through him.” But there is a problem with all three of these. They all neglect what Adam said: “for this reason, a man shall leave his father and his mother, and the two shall become one flesh.” The problem with all three of these models is that they are all *two flesh* models! It is not that I have my call, and my wife comes along for the ride. It is that we as *one flesh* have one call that we share.

Now, why am I saying all this? Because Paul says that all this is about Christ and the church. Paul says that Jesus and his bride are *one flesh* – and that means that Christ and his bride are to be busy making babies. Jesus is faithful to her – and he will only make babies with her.

So yes, we call each other “sister churches” – just as Ezekiel spoke of Jerusalem and her sisters – but in another sense Christ has but one church, and he plants the seed of the word by his Holy Spirit in the womb of the church, fertilizing that lifeless egg and bringing new life. And we rejoice to *be* one church with you.

It has been six years since I was among you at Smithers, and I rejoice to be among you once again. I have served for the last twelve years as an evangelist of my presbytery, labouring as stated supply with full pastoral responsibilities at Michiana Covenant PCA in Granger, Indiana. I also serve as an adjunct professor of Church History at Mid-America Reformed Seminary in Dyer, Indiana.

My colleague, Dr. Tony Curto, serves as an associate professor of Practical Theology in Missions and Apologetics at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in South Carolina, and also serves as a part-time missionary of the OPC to Ethiopia. He formerly served for ten years as one of our missionaries in Uganda, and last summer served as moderator of the 79<sup>th</sup> OPC General Assembly.

The OPC consists of 30,000 members in more than 320 churches and mission works. We rejoice to work side by side with you in various ways: we thank

you for the labors of your brethren in Toronto alongside our brother Jorge Barros with the Portuguese mission. We greatly value your fellowship and encouragement in the ICRC and now in NAPARC. We rejoice to labor beside you in encouraging our brethren in the ERQ.

Over the last three years, since Synod Burlington, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has celebrated her 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. With the various celebrations at that 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary Assembly in 2011, there was less time than usual for ordinary business. The lack of controversy was deemed so unusual for the OPC that a humorous protest was filed, complaining, “that the Assembly has taken no action remotely worthy of being protested,” and wondered if Machen’s warrior children had given way to Machen’s flower children!

Your committee has kept you well-informed of our actions, so there is little that I can tell you in the way of news. But what I can do is comment briefly upon those matters that may touch nearest your hearts.

- 1) *Joint Song Project* - You know that the OPC has commissioned a new Psalter Hymnal that will include metrical versions of all 150 Psalms, as well as a selection of the best hymns from throughout the history of the church. You know that we are now working with the United Reformed Churches in this project. I serve on the Composition Subcommittee, and I can assure you that we lamented the fact that your joint work did not bear the desired fruit.
- 2) *RCN* - We have watched your interactions with the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands with interest – because at first, we wondered whether we were simply missing something in translation. As you know, we have corresponding relations with the RCN, and several years ago, they invited us into Ecclesiastical Fellowship, but because of our continued concerns and questions regarding their direction, they rescinded the invitation in 2011. We are continuing our corresponding relationship with them, and are seeking to address our concerns.

In other news,

- 3) *Diaconal Ministry*: the expression of the one family of God often comes through the ministry of mercy to those in need. The OPC has created a disaster response team that has assisted in relief efforts in Japan and Haiti, along with assisting with several

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disasters in North America. Twice, now, the OPC has sponsored a diaconal conference in Chicago to explore how we can be more effective in using diaconal ministry in the service of the kingdom of Christ. Last summer around 190 deacons attended.

- 4) *Missions*: We have six active foreign mission fields—Asia, Ethiopia, Haiti, Japan, Uganda, and Uruguay. We also have started more than twenty new home mission works since your last synod.

We give thanks to God for you, brothers. We rejoice to see God's work in your midst, and we look forward to continuing to labour together with you to bring the gospel of Christ to a crooked and perverse generation. May the blessing of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be upon your deliberations here in this body, and your labours throughout the world.

**APPENDIX 9 – Address by Rev. M. Kingswood (RPCNA)**

Mr. Chairman, esteemed brothers and dear guests,

Greetings in the name of the Lord Christ, on behalf of the RPCNA. Thank you for the gracious invitation of your synod for us to be in attendance, and for the warm hospitality we have enjoyed from the Carman congregation, as observers at your Synod meeting.

We are thankful for the interaction our denomination's Inter-church Relations Committee has had previously with your CCCNA. We have enjoyed good gospel friendship and, we trust, helpful and hopeful discussions. We have appreciated the careful and diligent work your men always exemplify to us. Here at Synod Carman, the seriousness with which you approach your synod work in general, and matters pertaining to church relations in particular, is noteworthy.

Our two denominations share much doctrinal agreement in our common Reformed heritage. There are also numerous personal and local connections that exist between us. We pray that mutually observing each other's synods will be blessed and used by the Lord for His glory and the blessing of His people.

In 1871, our denomination produced a statement called, in true Covenanter style, the Covenant of 1871. In part it reads:

...believing the Church to be *one*, and that all the saints have communion with God and with one another in the same Covenant; believing, moreover, that schism and sectarianism are sinful in themselves; and inimical to true religion, and trusting that divisions shall cease, and the people of God become one Catholic church over all the earth, we will pray and labor for the visible oneness of the Church of God in our own land and throughout the world, on the basis of truth and of Scriptural order. Considering it a principal duty of our profession to cultivate a holy brotherhood, we will strive to maintain Christian friendship with pious men of every name, and to feel and act as one with all in every land who pursue this grand end.

And, as a means of securing this great result, we will by dissemination and application of the principles of truth herein professed, and by cultivating and exercising Christian charity, labor to remove stumbling-blocks, and to gather into one the scattered and divided friends of truth and righteousness.

We trust this resonates with Belgic Confession Article 27:

We believe and profess one catholic or universal church, which is a holy congregation and assembly of the true Christian believers, who expect their entire salvation in Jesus Christ, are washed by His blood, and are sanctified and sealed by the Holy Spirit...

Moreover, this holy church is not confined or limited to one particular place or to certain persons, but is spread and dispersed throughout the entire world. Yet, it is joined and united with heart and will, in one and the same Spirit, by the power of faith.

It is our hope in the RPCNA that the one and the same Holy Spirit will continue to be at work in both our denominations according to Paul's words in Ephesians 4:3- "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

The areas of difference and even concern between us that have been raised among your churches are very reasonable and understandable, though we hope not insuperable toward closer fellowship.

For your information and prayer regarding us, let me give some details of our situation. The first Reformed Presbyterian congregation in North America was established in 1738, the first presbytery met in 1774, and the first Synod was called in 1809. Presently we have 93 congregations in our North American Synod, with 6 located in Canada. We have sister Reformed Presbyterians in Northern Ireland, Japan, Scotland, Australia, Cyprus, and Sudan.

In 2010 the RP seminary in Pittsburgh celebrated, by God's grace, the 200th anniversary of its founding in 1810, the same year that Beethoven wrote *Fur Elise*, and Napoleon annexed the kingdom of Holland into the French Empire.

Our denomination has a strong commitment to Church planting. We have adopted what has been called the "2020 Vision" of having 100 combined congregations and missions churches by the year 2020. The Lord has blessed us in this desire with modest growth over several years. It is our earnest prayer that God would continue to build his Kingdom through the establishment of confessional Reformed churches.

In recent years our Inter-church Relations Committee has received increased interest from global Reformed bodies including SE Asia and South America.

Our new revision of the Psalter, *The Book of Psalms for Worship*, seems to be well received. Many resources are available at *Crown and Covenant* including Psalm CDs and downloads.

Two recent publications may be of particular interest. *Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert* and *The Gospel and Sexual Orientation*. The first is the personal testimony of Rosaria Butterfield, a former feminist professor whose life was claimed graciously and powerfully by Jesus Christ. The second is the fruit of a synod study committee appointed in 2010. The Synod saw the need to provide guidance for congregations on the subject of homosexual orientation, not simply about the scriptural, scientific and moral issues, but also guidance for care and counsel to someone who believes their identity is homosexual.

It is our hope as well, that in spending time here at Synod Carman, we would be able more intelligently and specifically to pray for your federation of churches.

Again, thank you for hospitality and for the opportunity to address you today. Let me close with this quote from God's Word,

Psalm 133:1, "A song of ascents. Of David. How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!"

**APPENDIX 10 – Address by Rev. Dr. T.G. Van Raalte**

Esteemed brothers assembled in Synod,

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who continues to establish, preserve, and guide his churches, specifically the Canadian Reformed Churches! I thank him for all the strength and wisdom with which he has endowed all of you to make decisions that regard the churches in common.

Last week Tuesday evening, the chairman of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary, Rev. Richard Aasman, telephoned me with the news that General Synod had adopted the recommendation of the Board of Governors to create a fifth professorship at our seminary, and that, further, the Synod had given the Board of Governors leave to appoint me to fill that position.

I am deeply humbled by this new calling. Serving the churches in the training of their ministers is a weighty responsibility and a great honour which no one should undertake lightly.

Having prayerfully considered this appointment, having discussed this with my family, and having heard from the council and congregation of the Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church, I have decided that I must accept this appointment. By God's grace, I love the bride of the Lord Jesus Christ and desire to be of service to Christ and his church. I pray that by the same grace he will give me abundant wisdom, good health and sufficient strength to carry out this calling and trust which he has extended to me through his church. It will particularly be an honour to return to the institution from which I graduated in 1999, which did so much to form me as a pastor and scholar.

Perhaps a few words of reflection would be permitted.

In 2001, Dr. Nicolaas Gootjes was visiting the churches in Manitoba on behalf of the seminary and staying at our house. After several long and in-depth theological conversations over a couple of days, he asked me if I had considered continuing my studies. I had not. In fact, I had plainly told my wife at the end of the MDiv degree that I was "finished" with formal education. Dr. Gootjes' stimulation soon changed this, and I have not looked back since.

Now, Dr. Gootjes never said this was needed so that the churches might have another minister available to serve at the Seminary, nor did I allow myself to speak of such a possibility. I simply liked studying and could see that it had immediate benefits for my ongoing ministry and would, God willing, have long term benefits for the churches in writing and leadership. But as the academic work took hold, several teachers, all at different universities in Manitoba, urged me to continue to PhD work. I did not think I was cut out for this, but again it was Dr. Gootjes who urged me to find a way to follow the full academic route. In my research I kept coming across a certain Dr. Richard Muller from Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids. A visit to the seminary during summer vacation convinced me to apply, but first I needed the approval of my church council.

To my great surprise they gave their unanimous support in spite of the fact that it would mean that in two years their pastor would be leaving for a three year residency requirement, if accepted by the school. Such a leave of absence was not unprecedented, but such a *length* of leave was. Yet the church considered that I could not pursue this work and maintain a pastoral workload together. As things turned out, my application was accepted and the three years of residency, from 2006 to 2009, came to be some very happy years in our family's life. The work I thought I could not do was richly blessed by the Lord. He has allowed a number of academic publications and just yesterday morning he gave me the strength to defend my doctoral dissertation on Antoine de Chandieu (1534-1591), under Dr. Richard Muller. My father read part of Psalm 115 with the Calvin Seminary faculty and guests at a lunch that day – to Yahweh our God be the glory, because of his love and faithfulness. After my God, I give thanks to my dear wife Christine for all her love and encouragement.

This is also the moment, I think, to acknowledge with gratitude the special places of the Redeemer Canadian Reformed Church of Winnipeg and the Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church of Surrey in my and my family's life. Both of these churches, with their consistories, considered my continued academic studies to be good for the churches. Both encouraged me and were willing to make sacrifices for this. No one did so knowing that I would be appointed by leave of the present Synod. We simply did what the Lord put before us and prayed for his blessing. Herewith my and my family's heartfelt thanks to these churches of Christ!

I thank God that our little federation of churches has been blessed with faithful men to teach at our Seminary. At this stage in the life of our federation we will be even better served by having created five teaching positions instead of four. There is much work to do.

It should also be said that the churches currently are blessed with more ministers who are academically qualified to teach others at a high level. Let us praise the Lord for this and not take it for granted. These men often make significant financial sacrifices to continue their studies. Certainly they work very hard and by God's grace, bring many blessings to the churches. May God richly bless their labours, and indeed the labours of all faithful pastors and teachers.

The position that the Synod has created – Professor of Ecclesiology – and the particular courses in view surprisingly fit the strengths the Lord has given me more than any of us could have planned. Church history is, of course, my concentration. Not only is history critical to knowing ourselves, but one also can see that the Lord has led his church to answer many difficult doctrinal questions – many of which deserve their place in our study of church history. Church polity, it turns out, became a significant part of my dissertation because of the importance of Antoine de Chandieu for the very synodical polity that our churches are practising – specifically the idea that the churches federate together and that no church dominates another, nor does any office bearer. Apologetics particularly fits not only some courses I have taken but also the particular part of Chandieu's works that I studied – prolegomena. Philosophy, which is also being assigned to me for teaching, was also central to my dissertation and the courses for my degree. The intersection of theology and philosophy – for they do intersect in significant ways – interests me much and needs to be articulated precisely for the sake of our theological students.

The search process followed by the Board of Governors in collecting *curriculum vitae*s from various ordained men, sending out questionnaires, and conducting interviews was, from my perspective, both professional and thorough. The churches should be highly appreciative of these men who give many hours to the well-being of our seminary, and, indirectly, the well-being of our churches.

I look forward to working together with the current professors at our seminary. They are hard-working and highly-knowledgeable men who are faithfully serving Christ. It is an honour to be asked to join them. I ask all of you to continue interceding before the Lord for our Seminary and its students, and, if you will, also for me as I make the transition into this task. By God's grace I will pray and work for the good of the churches of Jesus Christ here where he has placed me. May he richly bless all of you as you continue with your agenda at Synod.

I remain yours in the service of Christ and his church...

**APPENDIX 11 – Address by Rev. M. Koerner (RCUS)**

Mr. Chairman,

Thank-you so much for your warm hospitality and for the opportunity to sit in on committee meetings as well as participate in the discussion. We appreciate it when your delegates are able to come to our Synod. It is good to become acquainted with each other in this way.

I was grateful to hear your report on the RCUS last evening. Let me state again that we do desire our relationship to become real in ways which are possible. It has been a delight to have some of your young people participate in our Youth Camp. I trust that the exchange of articles in our publications will soon become a reality. We also seek to have pulpit exchanges when possible.

I have become acquainted with a number of you in various meetings. However, this is my first time at your Synod. I thought that I would review briefly our history so that you might be a bit more aware of whom we are. I will attempt to be brief.

The German Reformed Church (RCUS) goes way back to the early 1700's when the first German immigrants began to organize congregations in Pennsylvania. Next week, we will have, the Lord willing, our 268th annual meeting of the broadest court of the church – our first Synod having met in 1744.

During the early years of our church, we existed under the oversight of Classis Amsterdam. Now I will go ahead 100 years. Around the 1850's - 1860's, a highly liturgical theology known as Mercersburg Theology became influential. This was also greatly influenced by dialectical philosophy with the teaching of Phillip Schaff.

This led to a doctrine of church union which was unbiblical. By this time, the RCUS was a fairly large church across the United States. In 1934, a merger took place between the RCUS and a German Evangelical Lutheran group which then became the Evangelical & Reformed Church. The basis for union was that congregations could hold either to the Heidelberg Catechism or to the Lutheran Confession.

At this time, I need to mention another important historical development. Many Germans who had settled in Russia, migrated to the US and homesteaded in the Dakotas and Nebraska. As they became a part of the German Reformed Church, they were yet quite removed from its unbiblical development. They had concerns which, in time, led to the organization of a German-speaking Classis in the Dakotas, called the Eureka Classis. When the merger took place in 1934, this one Classis refused to go along and so alone continued the RCUS. In the 1950's there were 10 churches and 2 pastors.

As you may well know, they had many struggles. Eventually, some churches outside of the Dakotas, who had gone independent, came back in. There was also a movement to plant churches in cities. Also at this time, Westminster seminary was looked to for training pastors. Thus there is an influence from such men as Cornelius Van Til and John Murray.

In the 36 years that I have been in the ministry, we have essentially doubled the number of churches and pastors and yet the total number of members has remained the same. We have sought to move from a rural church to an urban church.

I believe this history shows that, by the grace of God, we have interacted with the Reformed tradition from a variety of perspectives. There are probably more congregations which have no connection to German background than those which do.

To bring you a bit up-to-date on what is happening, let me tell you a bit of what we are doing. For example, about 15 years ago we planted a church in Minneapolis with a few families. Two years ago that church daughtered another church. Now both are well-established. This past year we have begun a church in Omaha, NE and in Casper, WY.

We work with a church in the Congo, in Kenya, and in the Philippines. Last year the Synod adopted a paper on biblical sexuality. We are putting the final touches on it at this year's Synod when it should become public. I commend it to you.

An issue we still deal with is the training of men for the ministry. Some are convinced that the church must train its own men. Heidelberg Theological Seminary (HTS) located in Sioux Falls, SD is an attempt to move in this

direction. I currently am the one full time professor at HTS. We also use a number of adjunct professors who remain active in the ministry.

I would like to conclude by reading from Heb. 8:1-2:

The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.

I gave a lecture last week in Christology on the intercessory work of Christ. As you do the work of the church and as we will be doing so next week, it is our Lord who sanctifies the work that it is the work of Christ.

Mr. Chairman, thank you so much again for the privilege of addressing you.

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**APPENDIX 12 – Closing Address by Synod Chairman – Rev. C. Bouwman**

Esteemed brothers in the Lord,

We've spent the last number of days focused together on the dozens of committee reports and the 275 or so items of correspondence received from the churches. It's been a marathon; it cost (some of) us very short nights, but all in all the experience was enjoyable and the atmosphere very encouraging. Lest we go home focused on all those pages, or the decisions we treasure (or don't), allow me to invite you to look with me into the hazy past – hazy not because it was all that long ago but because we've learned that prairie dust can well and truly reduce visibility.

The first synod in Carman, officially known as, “the National Synod of Homewood at Carman,” was held in the Shamrock Tea Gardens (now The Breakaway) back in 1954, and the second, known as the Synod of Homewood-Carman, occurred at the same location in 1958. The first synod lasted half as long as ours did; the second lasted nearly twice as long. And here's what's interesting: despite the passage of years (and the much-improved venue!), so much of what was on our agenda was on theirs also!

We grappled with the matter of Bible translation, and so did the fathers nearly 60 years ago when they settled on the King James Version. We rejoiced at the abundance of interchurch relations we could enjoy on our continent – but the fathers had to be satisfied with speaking only about the Protestant Reformed Churches (and it ended up going nowhere). We wondered what to do with the GGRI –that's the Reformed Churches of Indonesia– and would you know: the fathers back in 1954 decided to offer a sister church relation to those very same Reformed Churches of Indonesia!

We had to come to a painful decision in relation to our sister churches in the Netherlands – the same churches our fathers leaned on so heavily back in the '50's for support and encouragement, and whose telegram of greeting they received with such gratitude. Back in 1954, the fathers settled on recognizing the training offered in Kampen, the Netherlands, while in '58 they gave voice to a vision that ultimately saw the founding of the Theological College in Hamilton in 1969. And we?? We could at our Synod appoint a fifth professor to the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary, and rejoice that he could

accept his appointment. And to tighten the link further still: we had at our Synod in 2013 a son as well as a grandson of delegates to the 1958 Synod. In a word, it all speaks of *continuity*.

But let me then hook in on a word found in the chairman's closing address to the first Synod. Rev. J.T. van Popta: "We came to Homewood-Carman with the question in mind: How will it go?" He explained why he asked his question:

In the last years, in our experiences at any rate, there was not much contact between the Churches in the East and the Churches in the West. And in the discussions of the provisional agenda of the Synod, the opinions of the brethren in the East and those of the brethren in the West, recorded in classical Acts, concerning some matters, proved to contradict each other.... More than one was afraid that this synod would be witness of the fact that East and West would differ one from another more than once. But how the Lord has made us feel ashamed of our expectations....

Disharmony, tension: it's the default position of fallen, sinful people. The Lord, however, gave the brothers of the first Synod grace to be united in faith and in love – and he's granted us the same privilege.

There was no East or West, no left or right, that dominated the atmosphere at this Synod, and for that fact I am ever so thankful; it speaks again of continuity – continuity of God's faithfulness and God's mercy to broken sinners. *He* has been faithful through the generations, so that the footprint of the Spirit remains obvious in our midst. That certainly gives me greater confidence in the result of our work. But then, how well the work was done is not for us to judge; it is the churches, and ultimately the Lord God, who will judge our labours.

It's necessary that I say a word of thanks to the men at my right and my left. To prepare the Acts every day anew, to stay on top of the outgoing correspondence, to prepare the Press Release and give needed assistance as required, and on top of all that, pulling on my jacket at the right time – thank you so very much for a job very well done. The committee convenors, too, have proven to be excellent in their tasks as they steered their committees through their particular mandates, and were very open with the executive;

thank you so much too. Indeed, brothers, each of you have contributed according to gifts received, and it's been uniquely a privilege to work with you and supply a measure of leadership.

A special word needs to be addressed to the hosting church of Carman West. You have done a sterling job in looking after our needs, second to none. The coffee, the meals, the cleanliness, the facilities, the care, you name it: very, very well done. We shall not quickly forget you – but fear that you may quickly forget us, and that's why we want to present you with a token of our appreciation for all you've done for us.... [whereupon the Chairman presented the organizing committee, appointed by Carman West, with a token of appreciation for all the service rendered. This concluded his address.]

## **Appendix 13 – CRCA Supplementary Report**

### **Re: Recent Developments in the churches in Indonesia and in Korea**

February 23, 2013

In this supplementary report the CRCA wants to report on some developments which took place since the publication of our report to Synod in October 2012. Although it is important that the delegates at synod as well as the churches are aware of this information, there is no need for a substantial change to our recommendations to synod.

#### **The Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRI-NTT)**

In the report of the CRCA in October 2012, the CRCA reported that the GGRI-NTT had merged with the GGRI in Kalimantan and the GGRI in Papua into a new federation, the GGRI. Until September 2012, the Canadian Reformed Churches had not received an official communication in which this fact was made known to us.

However, at the end of 2012, the CRCA received a letter from the committee on relations of the new federation of the Reformed Churches in Indonesia.

The committee apologizes for not inviting the Canadian Reformed Churches as sister churches of the GGRI-NTT to the first synod of the GGRI in February 2012 in Sentani, Papua, as well as for the fact that we were not kept informed about the development by the committee of the GGRI-NTT.

They express appreciation for the presence of Rev. Versteeg, although they realize that he was there on his own initiative and did not represent the Canadian Reformed Churches.

From the letter we received we quote:

1. The Reformed Churches in Indonesia are now spread over three provinces. The GGRI-NTT, with which the Canadian Reformed Churches have established a relationship are located in the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur. Previously, the GGRI-NTT held National Conferences of the Reformed churches in Indonesia that are located in the provinces of Kalimantan Barat and Papua. We decided to form an ecclesiastical organization at the national level at the first National Synod of the Reformed Churches in Indonesia. With the help of the Lord the first National Synod took place in Sentani, Papua from February 22-25, 2012 because the GGRI-Papua were appointed to convene this at our last National Conference.

2. The forum of a National Synod has taken the place of the forum of a National Conference which until now did not have the authority to make binding ecclesiastical decisions. The purpose of forming a National Synod of the Reformed Churches in Indonesia was to enable the Reformed Churches in their respective three provinces to work together more closely and to help each other. This confirms the unity of faith on the basis of Holy Scripture, as summarized in the Three Forms of Unity and with the Reformed Church Order in Indonesia as our norm in fulfilling our calling and service in a uniform way in order to testify of the Reformed faith in Indonesia more effectively as put into practice by you, our brothers in the federations of the Reformed churches in Canada and the Netherlands.
3. We ask you to remember and pay attention to the historical background of the GGRI in these three provinces. They resulted from mission work of our sister churches in the Netherlands (RCN). Also remember that the existence and history of the GGRI-Papua cannot be separated from the work of missionaries from the Canadian Reformed Churches and from the existence of the GGRI-NTT, which have already been accepted as sister churches by Synod Burlington 2010 of the Canadian Reformed Churches. Further we ask you as Committee on Relations Abroad of the Canadian Reformed Churches to consider reporting on the joyful developments regarding the unification of the Reformed Churches of Indonesia in these three provinces to the General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches next year, as has also been done by the Free Reformed Churches in Australia (FRCA).
4. On account of this, as Committee on Relations of the Reformed Churches of Indonesia, we would like to make use of this beautiful opportunity to propose that the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad of the Canadian Reformed Churches propose to the General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches that the bond of ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI-NTT may be broadened since we now form a national federation of Reformed Churches in Indonesia.
5. We are also looking further ahead to the strategic impact and prospect that this proposal may have in connection with the efforts of your CRCA to promote the unification of the Reformed Calvinist Churches (GGRC) with the GGRI, and also remembering the existence of churches which are the results of mission work of the church at Smithville in Timor and the College of the Reformed Christian Religion (Sekolah Tinggi Agama Kristen Reformed Indonesia / STAKRI) in Kupang.

From the attached documents, which are a brief summary of the Acts of the first National Synod of the Reformed Churches of Indonesia (GGRI) and the Regulations of the first National Synod, the CRCA does get a positive impression of this new federation. However, there are still several questions that remain.

In the first place: we do not know the other two federations (in Papua and in Kalimantan Barat) at all. What is their size, how do they put into practice what they confess in the Three Forms of Unity and what they agreed upon in the Church Order, how can a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the Canadian Reformed Churches be of mutual benefit?

In the second place: why was the GGRC not involved in this process of unification? They are sister churches of the GGRI-NTT and indicated that they would have liked to be involved in this process. Why did this not happen? Why were the church of Smithville and the mission churches in Timor not informed about what was happening?

In the third place: How important is for the GGRI a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the Canadian Reformed Churches? The Canadian Reformed Churches were not informed of the synod taking place in February 2012 and it took almost nine months before we received an official communication from the GGRI. Other sister churches were invited and were present.

The CRCA has not had the opportunity to investigate in order to get answers to these questions and therefore the CRCA maintains its first recommendation (see page 31 of the report) regarding the GGRI-NTT. The CRCA has the hope that the Canadian Reformed Churches will be able to receive this new federation as sister churches, but realizes that we must tread carefully and follow proper procedure.

Since we did receive a request from the new federation GGRI for a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship, the second part of the first recommendation needs to be rephrased.

Here follows our amended recommendation 1:

*“to suspend the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI(NTT), to take up contact with the Committee on Relations of the Reformed Churches in Indonesia to gain more information about this new federation and to come with a recommendation to the general synod of 2016 regarding a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI.”*

### **The Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRC)**

In its report of October 2012, the CRCA reported that the synod of the GGRC in July 2011 was adjourned and was supposed to convene again in November 2011, but that this did not happen. Now we can report that in November 2012, this synod reconvened to finish its business. The CRCA sent a letter to the synod in which the GGRC was again encouraged to abide by the adopted Church Order, as well as to seek unity with the GGRI-NTT and cooperation with the Theological School in Kupang, which was established by the church in Smithville. We received a response from the synod in which they indicated their commitment to the Reformed Church Order, as well as to the process of seeking ecclesiastical unity with the GGRC-NTT and cooperation with the Theological School in Kupang. They did express their uncertainty about the GGRI since they were not properly informed about the new situation after the unification of the three GGRI federations.

The CRCA noticed that classis meetings do take place in the GGRC although not yet on a regular basis. We are thankful that the church of Edmonton (Immanuel) decided to continue to support the GGRC through seminars and financial support for the assemblies, so that an impediment for the assemblies to meet regularly is being taken away.

Rev. Yonson Dethan has moved to Malang, in Java, to teach at a Theological School there. He remains involved in the GGRC, but the contacts of the CRCA with the GGRC now mainly take place through Rev. Yawan Bunda and br. Soleman Dethan, who are resp. the vice chairman and secretary of the Deputy for Relations with Churches Abroad.

The CRCA is thankful for the progress in the GGRC, even though it is slow, but at this moment it doesn't have sufficient confidence to come with a different recommendation to synod.

### **Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea**

The PCK sent an executive summary of their General Assembly held on September 19-22, 2012. Our churches were represented by Rev. J.M. Batteau as arranged with our sister churches in the Netherlands.

We had expressed the need for more information about the Korean Conference of Churches. The PCK has suspended their membership for one year because of concern with the current board members.

The PCK is also in continuing unity discussions with the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Hapshin).

We were informed that the correct English name for their churches is: Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea (KPCK).

Respectfully submitted by your committee,

H. Leyenhorst

A. Souman (Convener) J. VanLaar

J. Vanderstoep

W.M. Wielenga

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## **Appendix 14 – CCU – Coordinators’ Supplementary Report**

The following is an addendum to the Report which we sent to Synod Carman West 2013 and outlines activities after the deadline by which material had to be in the hands of the churches. We thought that it would be wise to give this addendum to the delegates of Synod so that the delegates would have a complete picture up to the present time.

### **Activities**

1. On November 12 and 14, 2012 the Coordinators of the Committee for Church Unity (CCU) met with the Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity (CERCU) of the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA) in Dyer, Indiana in conjunction with the meeting of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC). Also one member of the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA) was present at the November 14 meeting. Our topics of discussion focussed on Synod Nyack 2012’s recommendation that each classis and consistory continue to create occasions leading to greater awareness of one another as federations with a view to eventual merger. We also discussed how the URCNA could engage their local churches and classes regarding the Proposed Joint Church Order (PJCO) and the matter of theological education. The highlight of our meetings with the CERCU is the following, as reported in the Press Release: “The United Reformed brothers are giving serious consideration to working toward a recommendation to URC Synod 2016 (the synod after the next) to enter into a Phase 3A relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches. This would entail a commitment to making preparation for eventual, integrated federative church unity.” Please see the attached Press Release for a fuller account of our discussions.

2. Upon the invitation of the churches in Classis Central US of the URCNA, Rev. W. den Hollander traveled there in April 2013. He preached in Lansing, IL in the morning of April 14 and spoke to the congregation after the service. He preached in Lynwood, IL in the evening of April 14. On April 15 and 16 he attended Classis Central US and at that occasion addressed Classis about the unity efforts and answered questions from the delegates. Rev. den Hollander had a luncheon meeting with the ministers of Classis Central US on April 17, at which the professors Mark Beach, Mark VanderHart, and Cornel Venema were present too. The URCNA brothers raised topics such as Federal

Vision, theological education, and unity and uniformity. The topic of unity and uniformity generated the most discussion from some of the URCNA brothers because they are concerned that merger with the CanRC will mean that uniformity of practice will be expected by the CanRC. The answers given by Rev. den Hollander at the luncheon were all received positively and with appreciation for their clarity and candour. At all these events Rev. den Hollander was received very hospitably.

3. Upon the invitation of the churches in Classis Eastern US of the URCNA, Rev. W. den Hollander traveled there in April 2013 en route from the visit to Classis Central US. He preached in Carbondale, PA twice on April 21 and also in Newton, NJ in the evening of April 21. The evening before Classis was convened there was an informal get-together of some of the delegates at the home of one of the ministers. A very open, informative, and informal discussion took place in which many of those present asked a lot of questions about the CanRC and about some matters pertaining to theological education and the Proposed Joint Church Order. On April 26 Rev. den Hollander attended Classis Eastern US, where he brought fraternal greetings and spoke about the reasons for establishing the CanRC and the history of our contacts with the Christian Reformed Church, Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches, and the URCNA. He highlighted the history of the CanRC pursuit of unity over the past sixty years, showing the urgency for the URCNA to take this pursuit of unity seriously and to show its will for ecumenicity. Rev. den Hollander also answered questions raised by the delegates. Also at all these events Rev. den Hollander was received very hospitably.

4. As far as other plans are concerned, in May 2013 Rev. W. den Hollander is scheduled to travel to Iowa, the LORD willing, and preach in five different URCNA churches over the course of Ascension Day and two Sundays. Moreover, Rev. den Hollander has also been invited to attend the October 2013 Classis Michigan as well as the Fall Classis of Classis Pacific Northwest, precise date to be determined yet. We thank the LORD for these opportunities of interaction with the URCNA as Coordinators for the Committee for Church Unity.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. William den Hollander

Rev. Clarence J. VanderVelde

Coordinators for the Committee for Church Unity (CCU)

**Attachement A.****Press Release CERCU/CCU November 2012**

Once again the meeting of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC), which was held on November 13-14, 2012, in Dyer, Indiana, provided the opportunity for a meeting of most of the members of the Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity (CERCU) of the URCNA and the Coordinators of the Committee for Church Unity (CCU) of the Can. Reformed Churches. Those present from the CanRC were Rev. William den Hollander and Rev. Clarence VanderVelde; from the URCNA Rev. Bill Boeckstein, Rev. John Bouwers, Rev. Casey Freswick, Rev. Todd Joling, Rev. Adam Kaloostian, Rev. Bill Pols, Rev. Ralph Pontier, Rev. William Van Hal, Rev. Peter Vellenga, and Elder Al Vermeer were present.

The focus of the meetings that were held on Monday evening, November 12, and Wednesday afternoon, November 14, 2012, was Synod Nyack's decision (without dissent) regarding the Canadian Reformed Churches; particularly the recommendation that "each classis and consistory continue to engage the issue of an eventual merger between the CanRC and the URCNA by inviting Canadian Reformed ministers to fill their pulpits, inviting Canadian Reformed representatives to our classis meetings, seeking open dialogue with Canadian Reformed brothers regarding any outstanding areas of concern, organizing joint events with Canadian Reformed congregations, attending joint conferences, and writing columns to foster our mutual understanding and affection."

Regarding invitations to meetings of classes, Rev. den Hollander could report with thankfulness on his invitation to Classis Pacific SW US, September 18, 2012, and his related engagements with groups of ministers in Ontario CA and San Diego CA, as well as the opportunities to preach in the URC of Chino and Ontario CA, respectively, on Sunday, September 16<sup>th</sup>. Similar invitations are being prepared and organized to Classis Eastern US, Classis Central US, Classis Pacific NW US, and Classis Michigan, as well as to churches in Iowa, the Lord willing in April and May of 2013. The experiences and discussions that were had in Classis Southwest gave much helpful and fruitful insights and feedback with a view to some outstanding areas of concern.

We also spoke about the possibilities for United Reformed Churches to engage their local church and classis in discussions about the Proposed Joint Church Order (PJCO) and the matter of Theological Education in a united

federation of CanRC and URCNA. The members of the CERCU could report that there are churches that are seeking ways to engage the US churches with the PJCO and its benefits for the URCNA compared to its present Church Order. Also the discussion regarding Theological Education and the support for at least one seminary is ongoing, while following Synod Nyack the matter of federational standards for theological education and the approval of other seminaries with a mechanism for oversight and review are being discussed among United Reformed Churches as well. The brothers of the CanRC, while still convinced of the federational seminary model themselves, would like to see a URC classis wrestle with and propose a way forward.

In the context of a discussion about concerns among some URCNA men with regard to the position of the CanRC on Federal Vision, the Coordinators of the CCU drew the attention to their report to Synod Carman 2013, which can be found at [www.canrc.org](http://www.canrc.org). Of particular interest is their evaluation of URC statements against Federal Vision, especially concerning two points that aroused the most interest among CanRC people. The Coordinators report to Synod Carman 2013:

*These [15] points were adopted by Synod London 2010 with respect to the Federal Vision, a movement with particular views on covenant and baptism. Point 12 is of most interest to us. Contrary to the Federal Vision movement, we too believe that baptism does not bring about the believer's union with Christ or justification. One is united to Christ through faith, and one is justified through faith. It is good that we state this explicitly, since we are sometimes seen by some as being part of the Federal Vision movement.*

*Neither should we feel threatened by Point 6 of the Nine Points adopted by Synod Schererville 2007, which received much attention among us. In Point 6, Synod Schererville 2007 rejected the error of those "...who teach that all baptized persons are in the covenant of grace in precisely the same way such that there is no distinction between those who have only an outward relation to the covenant of grace by baptism and those who are united to Christ by grace alone through faith alone (HC Q&A 21, 60; BC 29)" (Acts Synod Schererville 2007, Art. 72). As Canadian Reformed Churches, we too believe that while all covenant children receive the promise of salvation, not all will receive the promised salvation. This is what Point 6 of Synod Schererville is trying to get across.*

In conclusion, the recommendation was made to seek inclusion of this Press Release of our meetings in local church bulletins and/or congregational newsletters, to ensure it be read as widely as possible. All representatives

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expressed their joy and thankfulness for the frank and fruitful discussions, which will be very helpful for their further efforts in order that progress toward union may be maintained and enhanced. The United Reformed brothers are giving serious consideration to working toward a recommendation to URC Synod 2016 (the synod after the next) to enter into a Phase 3A relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches. This would entail a commitment to making preparation for eventual, integrated federative church unity. Although much work yet needs to be done, all were motivated to move forward prayerfully with patience, perseverance, and faith, as together we make every effort to obey the ecumenical imperative of Scripture.

## **Appendix 15 – CCCNA Supplementary Report**

### **Re: Application of KPCA (Kosin) for membership in NAPARC**

#### **1. Introduction**

Synod Burlington 2010 gave the following mandate to the CCCNA concerning NAPARC (Acts, p.55):

4.2.1 To continue to represent the CanRC at NAPARC

This representation includes taking part in the regular business of NAPARC as outlined in its Constitution. Part of this business is to receive and analyze applications for membership in NAPARC itself. At the 2012 meeting of NAPARC, a request for membership from the Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) was approved by the required two-thirds of the ballots cast (based on one vote per delegation), including a favourable vote by the CCCNA delegation. According to NAPARC's constitution, it now falls to the major assemblies of the member churches to approve this application by a two-thirds majority. For this reason, we as CCCNA present this supplementary report to General Synod Carman 2013 to seek synod's approval.

#### **2. Membership Application Process - Background**

Since the reception of the Canadian Reformed Churches into NAPARC membership in 2008, this is the first occasion for our delegation as well as our church federation to deal with a membership application. Thus, it may be helpful to cite relevant parts of NAPARC's constitution to contextualize this request, to make clear both what NAPARC itself is and also what the criteria for membership are:

#### **II. BASIS OF THE COUNCIL**

Confessing Jesus Christ as only Savior and Sovereign Lord over all of life, we affirm the basis of the fellowship of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches to be full commitment to the Bible in its entirety as the Word of God written, without error in all its parts and to its teaching as set forth in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms. That the adopted basis of fellowship be regarded as warrant for the establishment of a formal relationship of the nature of a council, that is, a fellowship that enables the constituent churches to advise, counsel, and cooperate in various matters with one

another and hold out before each other the desirability and need for organic union of churches that are of like faith and practice.

### **III. PURPOSE AND FUNCTION**

1. Facilitate discussion and consultation between member bodies on those issues and problems which divide them as well as on those which they face in common and by the sharing of insights “communicate advantages to one another” (Institutes IV, 2, 1).
2. Promote the appointment of joint committees to study matters of common interest and concern.
3. Exercise mutual concern in the perpetuation, retention, and propagation of the Reformed faith.
4. Promote co-operation wherever possible and feasible on the local and denominational level in such areas as missions, relief efforts, Christian schools, and church education.

### **IV. NATURE AND EXTENT OF AUTHORITY**

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.

### **V. MEMBERSHIP**

2. Those churches shall be eligible for membership which profess and maintain the basis for fellowship expressed in II and that maintain the marks of the true church (pure preaching of the gospel, the Scriptural administration of the sacraments, the faithful exercise of discipline).
3. Admission to, suspension from, restoration to (after suspension), and termination of membership shall be proposed by the Council to the member churches by two thirds of the ballots cast; this proposal must then be approved within three years by two thirds of the major assemblies of the member churches. A proposal to suspend or terminate the membership of a member church may be initiated only by a major assembly of a member church. A suspended church may send delegates to meetings of the Council but they shall not vote nor may that church be represented on the Interim Committee.

From these quotations, at least two things become clear. In the first place, NAPARC is an advisory body, set up for discussion purposes, and not a body that makes decisions binding upon any member church or churches. Secondly, by applying for membership and/or becoming a member of NAPARC, a church does not *de facto* enter into formal Ecclesiastical Fellowship with all the other member churches. In case there is any doubt on this point, we may also quote from the Minutes of NAPARC 1977 which state:

That we mutually recognize that the decision to enter into or withdraw from Ecclesiastical Fellowship with another Reformed church shall be decided by each church on an individual basis. (*Minutes of the 3rd (1977) Meeting of NAPARC*, Article 13, pages 8–9. All minutes are available at [www.naparc.org](http://www.naparc.org)).

### **3. Membership Application**

#### **3.1 Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) – Background**

The KPCA (Kosin) is a daughter church of the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Kosin) with whom the Canadian Reformed Churches have had Ecclesiastical Fellowship since 1992. Although there was much dialogue over several general synods (especially in the period 1980-1992) about entering into this relationship because of the practical challenge of the language barrier and geographical distance, the conclusion considering the PCK (Kosin) a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ was never disputed. This is summarized succinctly by General Synod Lincoln 1992:

According to the testimony of the PCK itself and the testimony of the RCN [Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated) and of the FRCA [Free Reformed Churches in Australia], as well as the CRCA [Committee for Contact with Churches Abroad], the PCK is faithful in its adherence to the Westminster Confession and the Presbyterian Form of Government. (Article 111, III. *Considerations E*).

This was among the key reasons Synod Lincoln decided to accept the offer of the PCK to enter into Ecclesiastical Fellowship (see further *Acts*, Article 111).

This information about the mother church is relevant because of the very close relationship she has had historically and continues to maintain with her daughter church in America. The KPCA (Kosin) was started in 1985 by the Kosin Korean immigrant community in the United States but in close cooperation with the PCK (Kosin). Just how closely they cooperate together is evident from their joint letter of declaration dated November 2, 2012 and appended to the KPCA's (Kosin) application to NAPARC:

It is (*sic.*) to certify that followings (*sic.*) are true. 1. Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea and Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) are sister denominations. 2 Both denominations send the (*sic.*) delegates to General Assembly meeting each year since KPCA was founded. 3. Both denominations cooperate in education and mission in the agreements.

This letter is signed by both the Moderator of the PCK (Kosin) as well as the Moderator of the KPCA (Kosin).

It is also of some relevance to note here that since 2005 the KPCA (Kosin) have often sent a delegation to attend NAPARC as observers. When we as CCCNA members have met them there, we have engaged in informal dialogue in light of the connection we both have with the PCK (Kosin). That informal dialogue has been pleasant and promising but to date has not transpired into formal dialogue, in large part it seems because of a significant language barrier at the leadership level. CCCNA has mentioned this dialogue in a favourable light in its report to General Synod Burlington 2010 (see *Report*, p.226).

Since 1985, it appears that the KPCA (Kosin) has grown significantly. It now includes several presbyteries within the United States and, since 1999, a Canadian presbytery as well. There are at least three congregations in Toronto alone. Membership numbers were not available but their annual General Assembly over the last 15 years has grown to 100 delegates or more on a regular basis. The decisions of those General Assemblies indicate a strong emphasis on mission work as several missionaries have been commissioned for over-seas work, a remarkable achievement in their relatively short history on this continent. They also appear to be consciously wrestling with the transition from predominantly Korean-speaking immigrant churches to second-generation English speaking churches.

### **3.2 KPCA (Kosin) and Requirements to Join NAPARC**

Given their close historical ties as well as on-going working relationship, it will come as no surprise to learn from their written and oral presentation to NAPARC that indeed the KPCA (Kosin) have formally adopted the Westminster Standards as their confession. It is even so that at every ordination of a pastor or elder, the brother is asked if he agrees with the Westminster Standards (i.e. the 'system of doctrine' therein, as is the normal Presbyterian practice). The same is asked of parents each time a child of theirs is baptized.

The KPCA (Kosin) also submitted a lengthy document containing: The Government of the Church; Constitutional Rules; Church Service Guidelines; The Book of Discipline; The Creed of the KPCA (Kosin). A review of all materials indicated nothing inconsistent with Reformed or Presbyterian confession or church polity. Since the Creed is something unfamiliar to us in the CanRC, we have attached it for your perusal.

One point that was singled out for question at NAPARC itself and which may of be interest to our churches as well is the mention of the “Kwonsa” in their Constitution. It was explained that these Kwonsa are non-ordained women (55 plus) who are appointed to do a deaconal task but who do not hold a special office in the church and who hold no authority over the congregation.

### **3.3 Evaluation and Recommendation**

After considering the documents presented to NAPARC as well as the oral explanation of certain points, the CCCNA delegation to NAPARC decided to vote in favour of admitting the KPCA (Kosin) to NAPARC. We did so for the following reasons:

1. The KPCA (Kosin) have a very close sister church relationship (even: mother-daughter relationship) with an existing sister church of ours, the PCK (Kosin).
2. The KPCA (Kosin) hold to the very same doctrinal basis and have the same church polity as the PCK (Kosin) which fully agrees with the basis for NAPARC.
3. Although we have not yet had the opportunity to investigate the KPCA (Kosin) for ourselves as CanRC, their close connection to our sister church the PCK (Kosin) is a testimony to their faithfulness.
4. Voting to admit a church to NAPARC welcomes them as a partner to discussion around the table on an agreed-upon confessional basis, but individual relationships and formal fellowships must be pursued on an individual basis.
5. Admitting the KPCA (Kosin) to NAPARC would open the door further to their involvement not only with ourselves as CanRC but also with other English-speaking, faithful churches of our Lord Jesus Christ on this continent, a desirable outcome in our calling to be one in Christ.

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Thus, for these same reasons, we recommend General Synod Carman 2013 approves the KPCA's (Kosin) application for membership in NAPARC.

Respectfully submitted by your Committee,

Subcommittee East:

R.A. Faber (convener)

E. Kampen

C. Poppe

D. Vandeburgt

Subcommittee West:

P.H. Holtvlüwer

J. Kuik

J. Poppe

H. Van Delden

## Appendix 16 – CNSF Report

- Section 1 - Synodical Mandate and Overview
- Section 2 - From Classical to Federal support
- Section 3 - Applying Synod's decision
- Section 4 - Our current situation
- Section 5 - Recommendations to Synod 2013
- Section 6 - Appendices

### Section 1      Synodical Mandate and Overview

General Synod Burlington (2010) decided to disband the Classical support of Needy Students of Theology and instead pass the responsibility over to a Federal body. It appointed the Covenant Canadian Reformed Church at Grassie to manage the fund for Needy Students of Theology, according to the Acts of Synod 2010, art. 91.4, as follows;

#### **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.*

The Council at Grassie appointed a Committee consisting of four members of the Grassie church and a Council member (liason) to administer the fund. The Committee commenced its work on June 30, 2010 and is privileged to participate and support the spreading of God's message of salvation. The committee is accountable to the Grassie Council through the Liason, who is a full member of the committee.

## **Section 2      From Classical to Federal support**

The committee members agreed to the following division of functions:

Br. Adrian Dieleman, Chairman

Br. Bart DeVries, Secretary

Br. Gerry VanWoudenberg, Vice-all

Br. Bert Wanders, Treasurer

Br. John Bosscher was appointed by Council as Liason.

A letter was issued to each Classis informing them of the mandate of Synod (Appendix 1) in July 2010. In this letter we requested that at their next Classis meeting they instruct their Committee for Needy Students to co-operate with the new Federal committee, share information, and transfer any funds to the Federal committee. To accommodate this, the committee opened an account with the Meridian Credit Union in Grimsby. Three officers have signing privileges and each cheque requires two signatures.

The response from the different classis varied greatly. One classis transferred their fund and the responsibility for support for a student right away to Grassie. Several classis transferred responsibilities by the end of the calendar year while others waited until the end of the academic year 2010-2011.

For the academic year 2010-2011, support was provided for nine students. While a total of \$113,275 was committed for support, \$107,275 was paid because one student dropped out in January 2011. Of this amount \$55,810 came from our committee with the balance from Classis. Also one student was completely supported by his classes until his graduation in the summer of 2011.

We received \$43,659 in Classical funds in 2010 and an additional \$18,411 in 2011. By September 2011 most of the Classical funds were transferred (\$433 was received in November 2011) and we had full responsibility for all the support for the 2011-2012 academic year.

Some Classical support arrangements had taken into account special circumstances of the student's family and the Classical committee wanted to make sure that we would honour the agreement before they transferred the funds, which were agreed to.

Feedback received from the different Classical committees highlighted variations in assessments, which ranged from an annual assessment of \$0 to \$25 per communicant member. Classis that were supporting students regularly would aim to have a balance of \$10,000 to \$25,000 at the end of December to carry them over. One classis which was not supporting any students aimed to build up a bank balance of \$10,000. Our fund has established a requirement to maintain a \$40,000 reserve when possible, for unexpected circumstances that arise between our annual assessments

### **Section 3      Applying Synod's decision**

A "mandate" defining our committee's structure was agreed on and finalized in 2010 (Appendix 3). The committee agreed to a term of four years with one member retiring each year for succession planning purposes, with a possible re-appointment by Council for another term.

A major and time-consuming undertaking was developing the Support Guidelines and the Financial Assistance Application Spreadsheet (Appendix 4a & 4b). After using these original Guidelines for two years, we felt the need to add partial repayment terms to them. We revised the Guidelines in October 2012 and effective September 2013, will require students to pay back 25% of the support they have received over \$1,000 a month, to a maximum payback of \$25,000. This payback is to begin after employment has started and will be done over a 5 year period. This will enhance accountability and good stewardship of the funds received and distributed.

In our communication with the different classical committees we also specifically asked them to share their mandate and guidelines with us. Having had the benefit of the experience and documentation of the classical committees has helped us a great deal in developing governance documents for the fund.

A few of the committees shared their concern with us in that we would be too lenient in giving out the money since it was funded through a Federal assessment. We have ensured that a full budget is received by the committee and discussed, with any questions or clarifications being brought back to the

requestor. Visits are made of all new applicants to better gauge their need and situation; visits to returning applicants are also normally made. The committee can compare budgets to determine areas where students may be asking for too much support (e.g. groceries, rent) and then these matters can be discussed with the applicant to come to a suitable level of support.

The 2011 assessment of \$16 per communicant member was based on the requests for assistance, historical support levels of previous years, and the desire to have a reserve of approximately \$40,000 at the end of December 2011. The amount required from each congregation is based on the number of communicant members as shown in the preceding year's yearbook as per Synod's recommendation. A letter was sent to each church explaining the assessment amount and how we arrived at this value (Appendix 2). By April 2012 all assessments for 2011 were paid with one exception, which was resolved shortly thereafter. The number of students supported during the period of October 2010 to December 2012 varied from 5 to 8 students, and the total financial support provided ranged from \$6,900/month to \$14,800/month (Appendix 5). For the year 2011 the churches were not assessed for any support (Appendix 2), as sufficient funds and reserves were in place to address the support requested that year.

#### **Section 4      Our current situation (as of November 13, 2012)**

In December 2011 we invested our money in GIC's to earn interest. These are short term GIC's to allow us access to the funds when required. In March 2012 we sent a letter to the churches, as per Synod's Mandate, with the 2010 and 2011 Audited Financial Statements (Appendix 6).

To ensure adequate funds for the support of students throughout 2013, we assessed the churches \$12 per communicant member, which was conveyed to each church via a letter dated October 23, 2012 (Appendix 2).

Organizationally we have had few changes since we started. The current Council Liason is Br. Klaas Harink. Br. Gerry VanWoudenberg finished his term in June 2012 and did not wish to be re-appointed for personal reasons. On October 20, 2012 Br. VanWoudenberg was taken home to be with His Lord. Br. John Bosscher (previous Council liason, no longer in Council) replaced Br. VanWoudenberg.

## **Section 5      Recommendation**

Our recommendation to Synod is to approve the Support Guidelines (Appendix 4A), which were approved at the Covenant Canadian Reformed Church Council meeting on November 13, 2012. These Guidelines have been used in a slightly altered format since the inception of the Committee in June 2010 for the purposes of governing the administration of support to students enrolled at the Seminary.

## **Section 6      Appendices**

- 1      – Letter to Classis, July 2010
- 2      – Letters to Churches re: Assessments 2011 – 2013
- 3      – Committee structure (Mandate)
- 4A     – Support Guidelines
- 4B     – Application Spreadsheet
- 5      – Support Summary from October 2010 – May 2013
- 6      – Audited Financial Statement October 2010 – December 2011.

### **CNSF Report – Appendix 1 – Sample Letter to Classis re: New Centralized Fund**

July 12, 2010

To the Churches in Classis Ontario West

Dear brothers in the Lord,

Synod Burlington 2010 has appointed Covenant Canadian Reformed Church of Grassie as the church to manage the Needy Students Fund (See Art. 91 of the Acts).

The decision of Synod in regard to this “Fund” was made because too many differences in financial support occur between the classis’. Also, the classis’ in close vicinity to the theological college end up supporting a disproportionate number of student who reside in the local area. Other classis’ then have equal availability to these graduating students even though they have not contributed to their financial needs. Synod concluded that having one general fund would eliminate these differences. Please see enclosed the “Recommendation” of Synod’s decision, for your perusal.

We kindly request your cooperation and input therefore in the following matters:

1. To share with the newly appointed Committee the mandate you currently utilize as classis for the financial assistance of needy students of theology, and the process by which students are to request assistance;
2. To assist us with additional input you can share as classis to help us develop guidelines for the support of theological students in need;
3. Any general recommendations or comments you may wish to share with us to assist us in the development of a federational fund for needy students;
4. Inform us if you presently have a student receiving financial assistance and what financial arrangements have been made;
5. In order to assist us with developing realistic assessments, we also solicit your information on the historical requests for assistance from these students in recent years (e.g. 2005 to present, on an annualized basis);
6. Your understanding of any other student(s) you know of in your classis, interested in studying theology, that may be in need of assistance in the near future.

In addition, we request the following:

1. Information on which churches in your classis have already paid their 2010 assessment in part or in full (please identify these churches and the period for which they have paid their dues), and
2. Kindly forward existing funds set-aside for needy students to the newly appointed committee, so that all funds can be pooled together into one general fund.

Please make cheque(s) payable to: Canadian Reformed Needy Student Fund  
Treasurer: A.M. Wanders  
10 Mountview Ave, Grimsby, ON L3M 1V5

Since we are presently working in a rather short time frame to get things up and running smoothly, we would greatly appreciate your willingness to help by giving this your attention as soon as you possibly can.

With brotherly greetings and in Christ, For the committee:

Adrian Dieleman, (Chairman)  
e-mail [ajdieleman@sympatico.ca](mailto:ajdieleman@sympatico.ca)

Bart DeVries (Secretary)  
110 Main Street East, Grimsby, ON L3M 1N8  
905.309.6779  
e-mail [bartanddaniella@gmail.com](mailto:bartanddaniella@gmail.com)

**CNSF Report – Appendix 2 – Letters to Churches re: Assessments**

RE: Needy Student Fund Assessments, 2011

Esteemed Brothers in Council,

The General Synod of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches (Burlington, 2010) appointed the Covenant Canadian Reformed Church (Grassie) as the church to manage the Needy Students Fund for the federation.

Previously, each individual classis administered funding to needy students of theology. Synod 2010 decided that due to several inherent deficiencies arising as a result of this model, one church should manage the extension of financial aid to qualified students.

The Covenant Canadian Reformed church has therefore instituted a committee for this purpose. This Committee has been in contact with each classis to provide information and assistance in setting up this fund, which is largely complete. One of the mandates of this Committee (as outlined in recommendation 4.1.5) is 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”. Given that this calendar year is drawing to a close, and 2011 budgeting exercises are commencing shortly, we wish to inform you of your assessments for the coming year.

The Committee has established the following principles guiding the assessments:

1. Assessments will be made in the fourth quarter of each calendar year, for the following calendar year (e.g. November 2010 assessments will represent assessments for the 2011 calendar year).

2. The assessment of communicant members in each congregation will be calculated on the basis of the figures released in the current copy of the Yearbook of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches (the Committee acknowledges that these are in fact figures as of Dec. 31 of the year previous to the assessment, but will stand as the calculated amounts for assessment purposes). Therefore, 2011 assessments are based on the census data noted in the 2010 yearbook.
3. The Committee has no reserves or line of credit at this time, and is supporting a high number of students in their studies. Therefore, the 2011 assessment is slightly above the current requirements needed to support students, in order to build up a small contingency fund for future years. The Committee wishes to avoid a situation where it must re-assess the churches mid-way through the calendar year, or facilitate a process whereby the assessments wildly fluctuate from year to year.

Based on the above principles, the Committee has requested an assessment of \$16.00 per communicant member. This may be significantly more or less than each church has provided for in the past, but is required to meet our current needs. A financial statement will be issued to the churches in the new year, D.V.

Accordingly, we would appreciate it if payment could be forwarded according to the calculation below:

Classis:	Pacific East
Church:	Abbotsford, BC
2010 Yearbook Communicant member amount:	323
2011 Assessment per communicant member:	16.00
2011 Assessment Total:	\$5168.00

Please make cheques payable to: Needy Students Fund

Please mail cheque to:

Covenant Canadian Reformed Church  
 Needy Students Fund  
 PO Box 641, Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

Payment is due January 31, 2011. In lieu of full payment on this date, 50% can be paid by January 31, along with a post dated cheque for the balance dated July 1, 2011.

If you have any questions or comments on this matter, please contact the undersigned at the address listed, or via email at needystudentsfund@gmail.com. Unless requested, we will not issue a hardcopy of this letter of assessment.

With Christian greetings,

Br. A. Dieleman

Br. B. DeVries

Chairman  
cc/Grassie Council

Secretary

### **CNSF Report – Appendix 3 – Committee Mandate**

#### Committee for the Needy Students of Theology Mandate

##### Introduction:

1. The Committee for the Needy Students Fund (Background):
  - a. The Covenant Canadian Reformed Church at Grassie, Ontario (“Grassie Church”) has been appointed by General Synod Burlington 2010 as the “Committee for Needy Students of Theology” (the “Committee”), responsible for extending financial aid to Canadian and American Reformed students of theology who are in need of financial support, and are enrolled at the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary (the “Seminary”).
  - b. The Consistory with the Deacons (the “Council”) of the Grassie Church has appointed a committee consisting of four members of the church plus a liaison to the Council. The Committee will tend to all the day-to-day affairs of the fund.
2. The Mandate of the Committee is as follows:
  - a. To propose to the Council a mandate for administering the Fund, and procedures for governing this Committee, within the mandate given by General Synod 2010 to the Grassie Church,

- b. To propose to Council guidelines for the support of needy students (refer to Synod's recommendations). These guidelines will be developed as we receive feedback from the different classes and will be published at a later date,
- c. To establish the need for the support of students prior to each school year. Eligible students are to contact the Committee by August 1 outlining the specifics of their request,
- d. To annually (each Fall) assess the churches in the Canadian and American Reformed Church federation (the "Federation") , based on the number of communicant members in the current yearbook, in order to anticipate funding required for the upcoming calendar year,
- e. To report all activities on an ongoing basis to the Council via the Council liaison, and
- f. To report annually to each church in the Federation of the activities of the Committee. The report to the churches will be completed in the Spring, and will include an audited financial statement. In addition, the Committee will report tri-annually to the General Synod its activities and situation.

### 3. Committee Structure

- a. The structure of the Committee shall consist of a Chairman, a Vice-all, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and a Council member as liaison.

### 4. Duties of Committee Members:

- a. The Chairman is responsible for directing the activities of the committee in fulfilling its mandate. The chairman will call a meeting at regular intervals and as required.
- b. The Vice-All acts as Chairman and Secretary in their absence, and assists the Committee with carrying out its mandate.
- c. The Treasurer is responsible for managing the receipts and disbursements of funds, and, together with the Chairman and Vice-All, is a signing officer on the bank account. In addition, the Treasurer
  - i. Will be responsible for managing supporting documentation for all expenditures
  - ii. Is to submit a bi-monthly statement of receipts and expenditures to the committee

- iii. Sets the annual assessment to be submitted to the churches in the Federation, with the Committee
  - iv. Prepares the annual statement in January of each year, and presents it to the Committee for approval, and
  - v. Assists the church appointed auditors in their task.
- d. The Secretary is to keep minutes of all meetings and to distribute them electronically shortly after the meeting. The secretary shall manage and retain all incoming and outgoing communications. Out-going communications shall be approved by the committee; urgent matters of communication must be reviewed and approved by the Chairman or Vice-All. The approval of out- going communication does not apply to the matter of miscellaneous correspondence.
- e. The Liason is to keep Council informed of the activities of the Committee, to relay requests by the Committee for appointments and other matters, and to inform the Committee of decisions of Council that apply to the Committee.

5. Appointments:

Committee members are appointed by the Council, and will generally serve a four year term, with the option of one additional term at the discretion of Council. Members will generally retire in rotation.

6. Auditors:

Council shall appoint two auditors to examine the books of the Treasurer at the end of each fiscal year.

7. Report to General Synod:

The Committee shall tri-annually submit a report to the Council (eight months prior to the next scheduled General Synod of the Federation), detailing its activities and outcomes, for Council review and submission to Synod in the appropriate timeframe.

November 15, 2010

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## **CNSF Report – Appendix 4A – Support Guidelines**

### **Preamble**

The primary purpose of financial aid for theological students is to assist in their educational preparation for ministry, by providing aid to those students who demonstrate financial need.

In light of our human nature and that we all need God’s Grace and Spirit to guide us, the giving and receiving should be done in a spirit of humility and brotherly love.

Financial aid is administered by the Committee for the Needy Students Fund (the “Committee” and “the Fund”, respectively), a committee appointed by the Council of the Covenant Canadian Reformed Church of Grassie. Synod 2010 appointed the Grassie church to administer the Fund.

### **Section 1 Principles**

The following principles are basic to the administration of the Needy Student Fund of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches:

1.1. Financial aid shall be restricted to theological students of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches who are enrolled at the Theological Seminary of the Canadian Reformed Churches and who desire the office of minister in these churches.

1.2. The student has the primary responsibility for his educational and living expenses. The Fund will augment the student’s resources where requested by the student, and approved by the Committee. The Fund is to be used as a last resort. Students are expected to utilize existing personal assets (RRSP’s, equity, other savings) and family support, either prior to or in concert with any assistance from the Fund.

1.3. The Fund will not support requests, either as a whole or for additions to a particular budget line item, where the request is deemed to be excessive and/or unnecessary. Students receiving support are expected to show good Christian stewardship of the funds provided to them, and organize their lifestyle and purchase choices accordingly, in a self-sacrificing manner.

1.4. Financial aid will be administered in such a way as to affirm financial responsibility and integrity of both students and fund administration.

1.5. The administration of financial aid shall be individual, personal, pastoral, and confidential.

1.6. Applicants may request assistance on an annual basis. All requests must reflect all costs associated with realistic and anticipated living expenses. Requests for additional funds after September 1 of the current calendar year may not be accepted and alternate sources of funds required to cover any shortfall would be the students responsibility.

1.7. Students who are supported by the Fund should keep comprehensive records of expenses in each of the categories noted in the application form. In cases of subsequent years of support, these records will validate and support the requested amounts in the student's applications.

1.8. Vehicle maintenance will be supported at a monthly rate of \$25, as applicable. Any expenses above and beyond this amount may be reimbursed upon receipt of statement of invoices. Applicants are encouraged to use the most economical means of car repairs wherever possible.

1.9. Applicants are expected to take ownership for the cost of their studies. Applicants must recognize that the support for the students is from assessments to communicant members of our churches, many of which themselves struggle at times financially. In addition, all students of post-secondary education relying on conventional means of financial assistance (typically government) do assume the vast majority of the cost for their education. As such, while the Fund is charged with assisting the living needs of the students of the Seminary, it also has a responsibility to the membership. Therefore, the following commitment is made by students receiving support from the Fund:

1.9.1 Students relying on assistance from the Fund exceeding \$1000 per month while enrolled in the Seminary, will be responsible for the repayment of the full 100% of the amount exceeding \$1000 per month, to an amount of 25% of the amount exceeding \$1000 per month, or \$25,000, whichever is less.

1.9.2 This repayment shall be made in five annual equal installments. This amount will be calculated as the exceeded amount outlined in 1.8.1 divided by 5. It shall be interest free, and payable on the anniversary of each of the first 5 years of their employment. In the case of a lapse in employment or in a situation of underemployment, terms may be negotiated with the administrators of the Fund.

## **Section 2      Application Process**

- 2.1. A student must apply to the Committee substantiating their request for support. The submission shall include a letter of request, as well as a completed Appendix 1.
- 2.2. Students are to submit a request (using the enclosed form) before the first day of August prior to the school year, and provide any other information requested by the committee.
- 2.3. If a student is dismissed from the Seminary, he is under obligation to repay the Fund the full amount of aid received with interest at a rate set by the Committee starting at the date of dismissal. In the case of withdrawal from the Seminary, aid received must be repaid according to the terms in SCENARIO 2.
- 2.4. In cases for which this mandate does not apply, the Committee shall ask the advice of the Grassie Council.
- 2.5. This document may be reviewed and changed as needed.
- 2.6. Normal terms of support are for 9 months of the recognized school year (September – May).

## **Section 3      Acknowledgement**

To the Applicant:

- 3.1. Have you read and are you willing to abide by the guidelines for application to the Needy Students Fund as outlined in this document and adopted by the Council of the Covenant Canadian Reformed Church of Grassie on November 13, 2012 and,
- 3.2. Do you allow the Committee to contact the Council of your home congregation for other personal information, where applicable, and,
- 3.3. Do you understand that you are receiving aid from your fellow church members for support and growth of the church, and that therefore you should endeavour to live economically, remembering your own responsibility in the stewardship of gifts received by the grace of God, and,
- 3.4. Do you agree to the terms and conditions outlined in this document, for the repayment to the Fund of the applicable portion of assistance which may be provided to you, as outlined in Sec. 1.9?

The undersigned hereby declares that the information herein given is correct, and accurately describes his financial position.

Signature of Applicant  
 Committee Chairman  
 Committee Clerk

Date Signature of  
 Date Signature of  
 Date

**CNSF Report – Appendix 4B – Application Spreadsheet**

Needy Students Fund  
 Appendix 1  
 Application/Information Form



<b>Section A - Biographical Data</b>	
	<i>Information</i>
Name of Student	
Name(s) of dependents and age	
Street Name and Number	
City/Town	
Province	
Postal Code	
Phone Number	
Name of church where applicant is a member	
Name of church where applicant was a member prior to entering Seminary (if applicable)	
Has applicant been officially accepted by the Seminary?	
Which study year will applicant enter in the coming year at the Seminary?	
<b>Section B - Calculating Your Requested Need</b>	
<b>Monthly Expenses:</b>	
Church/Charitable Donations	

Needy Students Fund  
 Appendix 1  
 Application/Information Form

Christian School Tuition	
Mortgage or Rent	
House/Property Maintenance	
Heat/Hydro/Water	
Telephone/Internet	
Property Taxes	
Furnishings/Appliances	
Groceries	
Personal and Health Care expenses	
Clothing and Footwear	
Vehicle payments	
Vehicle maintenance	
Gas	
Insurance (vehicle)	
Insurance (home)	
Insurance (personal)	
Children's supplies	
Vacation/Entertainment	
Misc.	
Other expenses (list):	
<b>Fixed / Annual Expenses:</b>	
Curriculum Costs (Tuition, books, supplies, etc.)	
Other Fixed / Annual Expenses (list):	
<b>*Pre-Study Period Earnings:</b>	
<i>*Earnings for 3 month period prior to entering new school year (June/July/August)</i>	
Number of Months Employed	
Total Net Income (post-government deductions) for the Pre-Study Period	
Unemployment Insurance or Other Benefits	
Other net Income/Earnings	



**CNSF Report – Appendix 5 – Support Summary from October 2010 – May 2013**

Appendix 5 of the Needy Student Report to Synod 2013									
Federal Support from October 2010 until May 2013									
Calendar year Semester			2010 Sep	2011 Jan	2011 Sep	2012 Jan	2012 Sep	2013 Jan *	Total for both
Student I.D.	Year	Month							
1	10/11	1,835	5,505	9,175					14,680
2	10/11	1,875		1,875					1,875
3	10/11	500		2,500					2,500
4	10/11	600		3,000					3,000
5	10/11	1,500		9,000					9,000
6	10/11	1,000		4,000					4,000
7	10/11	2,251		11,255					11,255
8	10/11	1,900		9,500					9,500
		<b>11,461</b>	<b>5,505</b>	<b>50,305</b>					<b>55,810</b>
3	11/12	570			1,140	1,140			2,280
9	11/12	842			3,368	4,210			7,578
1	11/12	1,966			7,864	9,830			17,694
10	11/12	1,670	see note		1,670	10,750			12,420
8	11/12	1,851			7,404	9,255			16,659
		<b>6,899</b>			<b>21,446</b>	<b>35,185</b>			<b>56,631</b>
9	12/13	1,072					4,288	5,360	9,648
11	12/13	647					2,588	3,235	5,823
12	12/13	1,148			\$2,790 for tuition paid up front		7,382	5,750	13,132
13	12/13	1,550					6,200	7,750	13,950
14	12/13	2,100					8,400	10,500	18,900
15	12/13	3,900					15,600	19,500	35,100
10	12/13	2,299					9,996	11,495	21,491
8	12/13	2,063					8,252	10,315	18,567
		<b>14,779</b>					<b>62,706</b>	<b>73,905</b>	<b>136,611</b>
Total Cost/Semester			5,505	50,305	21,446	35,185	62,706	73,905	
Total Students			1	8	5	5	8	8	
Total Months			3	36	18	22	32	40	
Average/Student/Month			1,835	1,397	1,191	1,599	1,960	1,848	
Low /Student/Month			1,835	500	570	570	647	647	
High/Student/Month			1,835	2,251	1,966	2,150	3,900	3,900	
Note: for January to May \$2,150/month									
* The amounts for the January semester of 2013 is assuming that all students stay for 5 months.									

## CNSF Report – Appendix 6 – Audited Financial Statement October 2010 – December 2011

<b>Appendix 6 of the Needy Student Report to Synod 2013</b>				
<b>Needy Student Fund Committee (in CAD)</b>				
<b>Statement of Receipts &amp; Disbursements for 2011 &amp; 2010</b>				
		Notes	2011	2010
<b>Receipts</b>				
	Annual assessments		158,624	0
	Classical Fund Transfers to the Committee		18,411	43,659
	Investment Income		0	0
	Refunds to churches of overpayments		(144)	0
	<b>Total Receipts</b>		<b>176,891</b>	<b>43,659</b>
<b>Disbursements</b>				
	Student Support		71,751	5,505
	Bank service charges		23	82
	Committee administration		0	0
	<b>Total Disbursements</b>		<b>71,774</b>	<b>5,587</b>
	Surplus / (deficit)		105,117	38,072
<b>Needy Student Fund Committee (in CAD)</b>				
<b>Statement of Financial Position as at December 31</b>				
			2011	2010
<b>Assets</b>				
	GIC 1 yr		30,000	0
	GIC 3 yr		60,000	0
	Accounts receivable		21,556	0
	Cash, see note 1	1	31,633	38,072
	<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>143,189</b>	<b>38,072</b>
<b>Liabilities and Surplus</b>				
	Accounts payable		0	0
	Accumulated Surplus		143,189	38,072
	<b>Total Liabilities and Accumulated Surplus</b>		<b>143,189</b>	<b>38,072</b>
Note 1: The "Cash" for 2011 consist of the following:				
	Bank balance December 31, 2011			19,945
	Pre-paid support for 2012			11,816
	Rebate cheques not cashed			-
	Cash			31,633

**Appendix 17 – Audit of the Needy Student Fund**

February 8, 2013

To the council of the Grassie Canadian Reformed Church.

As per council instruction, we the undersigned have gone over the books and bank statements of the needy student fund for the theological seminary students.

We found everything in good order, all deposits and payments were recorded and verified with the bank statements.

Yours in His service:

G.Schuller.



H. VanIperen



## Appendix 18 – Finances for Synod Burlington 2010

General Synod Carman West 2013  
 Canadian Reformed Churches  
 Box 2009  
 Carman, MB, R0G 0J0

February 23, 2012

Dear Brothers

General Synod Burlington Ebenezer 2010 appointed the undersigned brothers to the finance committee of this synod (Acts GS art. 158). The Committee has completed its mandate and the report of receipts and expenses is shown below.

The church at Burlington-South has audited the finances and will report their findings directly to synod.

Income:

Regional Synod East	\$11,785.36	
Regional Synod West	<u>\$11,785.36</u>	
Total Receipts		\$23,570.72

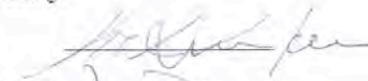
Expenses:

Travel – East	\$ 2,337.23	
Travel – West	\$ 7,542.22	
Office Supplies	\$ 2,967.02	
Postage	\$ 1,387.77	
Rentals	\$ 613.48	
Food	\$ 5,035.21	
Misc	\$ 1,064.27	
Network	<u>\$ 2,623.52</u>	
Total Expenses		<u>\$23,570.72</u>

Net Balance		\$ 0.00
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With brotherly greetings

M. Kampen



G.J. Nordeman



H.J. Sloots



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**Appendix 19 – Audit of the Financial Statement for Synod Burlington  
2010**

Nov 25, 2011

To Whom it May Concern:

After having reviewed the financial records as provided by the Financial Committee for the 2011 [sic; reference should be to 2010] Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches, we have found the records to be complete and in good order. The examination revealed no irregularities and all transactions were well documented.

Yours in Christ,

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Mr. Rick Smeding  
904 Park Ave W Burlington, ON 905 633-9260

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Mrs. Sandra Smeding  
Oriole Crescent Burlington, On 905 635-2513

## Appendix 20 – General Fund of the CanRC - Report

### *Carman East Canadian Reformed Church*

P.O. Box 164, Carman, MB, R0G 0J0

February 20, 2013.

### **Re: Financial Report for General Fund from January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2012**

#### **Esteemed Brothers**

The church of Carman East was appointed by Synod to administer the General Fund and to collect funds as required from the churches. The council of Carman East had appointed br. G. Vandersluis as treasurer for this fund and he continues in this capacity. Two office bearers audited these books on February 19, 2013 and they were found to be in good order. To administer this fund, the churches were assessed the following amounts since the last General Synod: \$5.00 per confessing member in 2010, \$4.00 per confessing member in 2011 and \$4.00 per confessing member in 2012.

#### **Income:**

Balance January 2010	-5945.84
Assessment from the churches	<u>139,401.05</u>
Total	133,455.21

#### **Disbursements**

##### *Committees*

<i>Book of Praise</i>	36,447.37
Contact with Churches Abroad (CRCA)	30,793.96
Contact Churches America (CCCNA)	20,130.43
Ecclesiastical Unity (CCU)	10,636.16
Church Order (CCU subcommittee)	968.73
Website (CWEB)	791.84
Premier Printing (print reports for Synod 2013)	11,542.80
Bank Charges	<u>48.00</u>
Total Expenses	111,359.29

**Balance January 1, 2013** **22,095.92**

With brotherly greetings, on behalf of council,

T. Bergsma (chairman) and C. Lodder (corresponding clerk)

**Appendix 21 – Letter to the RCN – Dutch Translation**

(**Note:** See Article 165 of the *Acts* for the official English version)

**Synod Carman 2013 of the  
Canadian Reformed Churches****Aan de Generale Synode 2014 van de Gereformeerde Kerken in  
Nederland:**

21 mei 2013

Geachte broeders in Christus:

Synode Carman 2013 van de Canadian Reformed Churches groet de Synode van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (GKN). We prijzen onze trouwe God voor zijn doorgaande genadewerk in uw kerken. Als toeschouwers uit de verte zijn we dankbaar voor de belijdenis, eredienst en het getuigenis van de GKN. We herkennen in uw midden de trouwe prediking van het evangelie van het heil. Dat vervult ons met vreugde. Tussen u in Nederland en ons in Noord-Amerika bestaat al meer dan 60 jaar een band. Veel van onze leden zijn van afkomst Nederlanders. Samen met u zijn we geworteld in de Reformatie van de zestiende eeuw en zijn we met u verbonden in onze gemeenschappelijke belijdenis van het geloof. Zelfs al is de huidige generatie van Canadese gereformeerde gelovigen veel minder verbonden met Europa dan vroeger het geval was, toch bestaat er in onze kerken over het algemeen een warme belangstelling voor de GKN. Predikanten en andere leden van onze kerken profiteren nog steeds van de wetenschappelijke werken van leden van onze zusterkerken in Nederland. We denken, bijvoorbeeld, aan de reeks *Commentaar op het Nieuwe Testament* (Derde Serie), die goed ontvangen is in Canada onder hen die de Nederlandse taal nog kunnen lezen.

Ook al zien we veel trouw in de GKN, de apostolische vermaning om de waarheid in liefde te spreken (Efeziërs 4:15) dwingt ons om een aantal ernstige zorgen tot uitdrukking te brengen. We brengen ze naar voren in nederigheid en met de oprechte begeerte dat u gehoor wilt geven aan de zaken die we aan u voorleggen. Onze regels voor kerkelijke gemeenschap bepalen dat “de kerken elkaar zullen helpen bij het in stand houden, verdedigen en bevorderen van de gereformeerde leer, kerkrecht, kerkelijke tucht en eredienst”, en ze zullen “letten op afwijkingen”. Binnen deze kontekst van kerkelijke verantwoording willen wij onze oproepen aan u richten.

Wij maken ons voornamelijk zorgen om de Theologische Universiteit in Kampen (TUK). Al enige tijd hebben we de invloed opgemerkt van kritische wetenschap op de methodologie en konklusies van sommige publicaties die verband houden met de TUK. Deze zorgen zijn verschillende keren doorgegeven aan de Deputaten BBK en zijn ook geuit door onze afgevaardigden op Synode Harderwijk 2011. De Synode in Harderwijk ontving een “Tussentijds Rapport” van onze Commissie voor Betrekkingen met de GKN. In dit Rapport legden wij gedetailleerd onze zorg aan u voor. In een recente brief aan onze Synode Carman 2013, verzekeren de Deputaten BBK ons dat de TUK haar karakter als een orthodoxe gereformeerde instelling behoudt. Deze brief ging echter niet in op onze specifieke zorgen. Omdat we geen aanwijzing hebben gezien dat onze zorgen zijn herkend en een serieus antwoord hebben ontvangen, voelen we op dit moment de behoefte om onze oproep aan u te intensiveren. In feite doen we een beroep op u als zusterkerken om terug te keren naar het rechte pad van geloof inzake de uitleg van de Heilige Schrift.

Specifiek vragen we u als zusterkerken om duidelijk aan te geven dat de opvattingen van dr. Stefan Paas, uitgedrukt in zijn dissertatie, *Schepping en Oordeel*, niet in overeenstemming zijn met het Woord van God en de *Drie Formulieren van Eenheid* die wij als Gereformeerde Kerken onderschrijven. Wanneer Paas het idee naar voren brengt dat het volk van Israel ontstaan is uit rondtrekkende en Kanaänitische volken en wanneer hij de historiciteit van de uittocht in twijfel trekt, dan komt dit neer op een aanval op de betrouwbaarheid van het Woord van God. Het is voor ons onvoorstelbaar dat iemand die zulke meningen erop na houdt benoemd zou kunnen worden als docent aan de TUK. Het feit dat Paas niet doceert op het gebied van de studie van het Oude Testament stelt ons niet gerust. Het introduceren van twijfel ten aanzien van de historische geloofwaardigheid van het Woord van God kan niet ingeperkt worden. Uiteindelijk zal het in alle gebieden van de bestudering van de theologie doordringen. Naar onze mening had de Raad van Toezicht van de TUK deze zaak zo moeten afhandelen dat Paas niet aan de TUK zou mogen doceren zolang hij de opvattingen erop na houdt die in zijn dissertatie naar voren gebracht zijn. Omdat dit niet is gebeurd, is er nu ruimte aan de TUK gemaakt voor methoden en konklusies van een wetenschap die geen ernst maakt met de speciale aard van de Schrift als het geïnspireerde en daarom onfeilbare Woord van God.

Op gelijke wijze maken we ons zorgen om de methodologie en konklusies die naar voren gebracht zijn in de dissertatie van dr. Koert van Bekkum, die

de titel draagt *From Conquest to Coexistence: Ideology and Antiquarian Intent in the Historiography of Israel's Settlement in Canaan* (2001). Voor wat zijn methodologie aangaat, gelooft Van Bekkum dat de feitelijkheid van historische gebeurtenissen in de Heilige Schrift niet zonder meer kan worden aangenomen. Volgens hem moet de wetenschap gegevens uit de archeologie en de bevindingen van de literaire kritiek overwegen bij de evaluatie van de waarheid van uitspraken in de bijbel over historische gebeurtenissen. Alleen op deze wijze kan een wetenschapper nagaan wat de “waarheid” van een tekst waard is. Het eindresultaat van zijn methodologie is dat bepaalde gegevens uit de bijbel niet zonder meer kunnen worden aanvaard. Bijvoorbeeld, volgens Van Bekkum, kunnen de bijbelse gegevens in Jozua 10:12-14 niet betekenen dat de zon en maan werkelijk stil hebben gestaan. Op gelijke wijze wordt de duidelijk historische uitspraak van 1 Koningen 6:1 terzijde gesteld door Van Bekkum. Wat we waarnemen bij zulke wetenschap is een verminderde waardering van het gezag en de nauwkeurigheid van het Woord van God. Het feit dat het hier ging om een dissertatie geschreven onder auspiciën van de TUK en dat het een *cum laude* toekenning ontving doet onze zorgen toenemen.

Dat Van Bekkum vervolgens benoemd werd aan de faculteit van de TUK maakt ons ernstig bezorgd voor de toekomstige opleiding van dienaars van het Woord van de GKN. Het feit dat zulke opvattingen gepresenteerd en verdedigd kunnen worden ondermijnt het orthodoxe gereformeerde karakter van de TUK en brengt de opleiding van toekomstige dienaars van het Woord in gevaar. Ter wille van de bescherming van de GKN dringen wij er bij u op aan om alsnog deze zaak in behandeling te nemen op een wijze die getuigt van respect voor de Heilige Geest die het levende en blijvende Woord van God voor ons heeft uitgedemd.

Om kort te gaan, we geloven dat wij de aanvaarding zien van schriftkritische wetenschap aan de TUK, die onder het bestuur staat van de GKN. In onze eigen Noord-Amerikaanse kontekst hebben we de rampzalige geestelijke neergang en het kwijnende ledental van verschillende kerkverbanden gezien die veroorzaakt werden door het binnendringen van de historisch kritische benadering van de bijbel. Uit liefde voor u smeken wij u om onze zorgen serieus te nemen en om resoluut te zijn in het weerleggen van meningen en een wetenschapsbeoefening die geen respect tonen voor de onfeilbaarheid, duidelijkheid en genoegzaamheid van de Heilige Schriften (Artikel 7, Nederlandse Geloofsbelijdenis).

We willen ook onze ontsteltenis doorgeven over de ontwikkelingen in uw kerkverband betreffende de zaak van vrouw in het ambt. We zijn dankbaar dat uw synodes geen besluit hebben genomen om vrouwelijke ambtsdragers toe te staan. We zijn echter bezorgd over het proces dat op gang is gebracht. Toen een commissie benoemd door de Synode Amersfoort-Centrum 2005 een handleiding ontwikkelde tot bezinning op de rol van vrouwen in de kerk, liet het na om de kerkleden te wijzen op wat de Heilige Schrift hierover zegt. In plaats daarvan werd wat de Schriften duidelijk openbaren met betrekking tot deze zaak alleen maar als één optie naast anderen ter overweging gegeven. Synode Harderwijk 2011 heeft deputaten benoemd met de opdracht de vraag te beantwoorden of de Schrift de benoeming van vrouwen in de ambten van diaken, ouderling of predikant toelaat. Naar onze mening getuigt dit van een verminderd respect voor de duidelijke leer van de Bijbel dat deze ambten moeten worden bekleed door trouwe mannen die worden verkozen overeenkomstig de aanwijzingen gegeven door de Heilige Geest door middel van de apostel Paulus (1 Tim 2:11-14; 1 Kor 14:33-35). In de GKN, net zoals in elke trouwe kerk van de Here Jezus Christus, behoort de zaak van de vrouw in het ambt niet aan de orde gesteld te worden alsof het een open vraag is. Wanneer de ondubbelzinnige leer van het Woord van God over mannelijk leiderschap in de kerk omstreden wordt, dan vrezen we dat de invloed van een nieuwe en gevaarlijke hermeneutische benadering zich kenbaar maakt. We dringen er bij u op aan in de Here om de bijbelse waarheid te verdedigen dat God mannen roept om leiding te geven in de kerken en we vragen u om uw kerken aan te moedigen weerstand te bieden aan het binnendringen van gelijkheidsdenken met betrekking tot de ambten in de kerk.

Tenslotte uiten wij onze zorgen over de voortgaande verhouding tussen uw kerken en de Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken (NGK). Zoals u weet, staan de NGK de bevestiging van vrouwen in de ambten van predikant, ouderling en diaken toe. Onlangs hebben ze ook de opdracht gegeven voor de bestudering van de vraag of praktiserende homoseksuelen het ambt van ouderling of diaken mogen bekleden. Een verdere reden voor alarm is dat ambtsdragers in de NGK niet worden verplicht om de belijdenisgeschriften volledig te onderschrijven. Wanneer er sprake is van zulke afwijking van de Schrift en de gereformeerde belijdenis in de NGK, lijkt het ons onmogelijk dat de kerken in uw kerkverband zich met hen kunnen verenigen, zelfs niet wanneer dat plaatselijke kerken zijn waar vrouwen geen kerkelijk ambt bekleden. Uiteindelijk zijn kerken in een landelijk verband medeverantwoordelijk voor de richting van het hele verband. We roepen u op in de Here om terug te keren van oecumenische verhoudingen die niet ten volle gebouwd worden op de waarheid van het Woord van God zoals beleden in de Drie Formulieren van Eenheid.

Broeders, wanneer wij u zo aanspreken verbeelden we ons voor geen moment dat wij boven kritiek verheven zijn of dat onze kerken niet ook voor veel problemen staan. Zowel uw kerken als de onze zijn gewikkeld in een diepe geestelijke strijd om de waarheid van het Woord van God te bewaren. In deze strijd hebben we elkaar nodig. We waarderen alle hulp die u ons kunt geven om trouw te blijven aan het Woord van God zoals we dat allemaal samen belijden in de oecumenische belijdenissen en de Drie Formulieren van Eenheid, en we danken de Here voor deze hulp. Op dezelfde wijze hopen en bidden wij dat u zult luisteren naar onze bedenkingen en onze vermaningen zult overwegen en terugkeren van het verkeerde pad waarop u zich in de laatste jaren hebt begeven. Blijft u op uw huidige koers inzake de onderwerpen die we in deze brief hebben benoemd, dan vrezen we dat de relatie van kerkelijke gemeenschap die we met u hebben in gevaar wordt gebracht. We dringen er daarom bij uw Synode en uw kerken op aan om standvastig te blijven bij het belijden van de volle waarheid van het Woord van God en om deze waarheid doortastend en krachtig te verdedigen, al wordt het bespot en gehaat door de wereld. Wij hopen en bidden dat de tijd komt dat onze zorgen zullen worden weggenomen en dat zowel uw kerken als de onze trouw mogen blijven tot de komst van de Here Jezus Christus in heerlijkheid, majesteit en kracht.

We zien uit naar uw antwoord aan onze volgende Generale Synode via onze Subcommissie voor Contact met de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland.”

Met Christelijke groet, namens de Generale Synode Carman 2013.

C. Bouwman  
Voorzitter  
R. Schouten  
Tweede scriba

## Appendix 22 – Guidelines for General Synod (Updated)

### GUIDELINES FOR GENERAL SYNOD

#### I Convening and Constitution of Synod<sup>1</sup>

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 digital format, and five paper copies)<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

B. Correspondence from the convening church, including the notice of convocation, agendas, reports, and proposals may be sent to the churches and/or delegates as digital files. However, in order to maintain the confidentiality of potentially sensitive material, personal appeals as well as other documents which contain personal information (e.g., letters of appointment) must be sent from the convening church as password-protected digital files.<sup>4</sup>

C. The convening Church shall send the first Provisional Agenda to all the Churches at least six months prior to convocation.

D. 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.<sup>5</sup> All material submitted to Synod, including Reports, Appeals, and 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.<sup>6</sup>

E. All material for Synod should be received by the convening Church (in digital format, and five paper copies)<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Synod Cloverdale 1983, Article 45.

<sup>2</sup> Synod Carman 2013, Article 173.

<sup>3</sup> Synod Abbotsford 1995, Article 111; Synod Chatham 2004, Article 118.

<sup>4</sup> Synod Carman 2013, Article 173.

<sup>5</sup> Synod Burlington 1986, Article 76; Synod Abbotsford 1995, Article 111.

<sup>6</sup> Synod Winnipeg 1989, Article 131.

<sup>7</sup> Synod Carman 2013, Article 173.

<sup>8</sup> Synod Burlington 1986, Article 162; Synod Abbotsford 1995, Article 110.

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.<sup>9</sup>

G. The minister of the convening Church or its counselor 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.<sup>10</sup>

I. Although advice can be requested in particular matters, advisory members shall not be appointed.

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.<sup>11</sup>

## **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 and 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, 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.

<sup>9</sup> Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010, Articles 35 and 174.

<sup>10</sup> Synod Smithers 2007, Article 147.

<sup>11</sup> Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010, Article 174.

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 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 a copy of their report in digital format to each of the local churches.<sup>12</sup>

### **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.

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<sup>12</sup> Synod Abbotsford 1995, Article 110; Synod Carman 2013, Article 173.

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.<sup>13</sup>
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.

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<sup>13</sup> Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010, Article 174.

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**Appendix 23 – Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship<sup>14</sup>**

1. The churches shall assist each other in the maintenance, defence and promotion of the Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline, and liturgy, and be watchful for deviations.
2. The churches shall inform each other of the decisions taken by their broadest assemblies, if possible by sending each other their Acts or Minutes and otherwise, at least by sending the decisions relevant to the respective churches (if possible, in translation).
3. The churches shall consult each other when entering into relations with third parties.
4. The churches shall accept one another's attestations or certificates of good standing, which also means admitting members of the respective churches to the sacraments upon presentation of that attestation or certificate.
5. The churches shall in principle open their pulpits for each other's ministers in agreement with the rules adopted in the respective churches.

In exercising these relations, the churches shall strive to implement also the following:

6. When major changes or additions are being considered to the confessions, church government or liturgy, the churches shall be informed in order that as much consultation can take place as possible before a final decision is taken.
7. The churches shall receive each other's delegates at their broadest assemblies and invite them to participate as much as local regulations permit.

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<sup>14</sup> Adopted by General Synod Lincoln 1992 (See *Acts of Synod Lincoln*, Article 50, p.33)

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