

The combined committees decided to:

- 3.3 continue to work together, using the Principles and Guidelines to scrutinize and recommend suitable hymns.
- 3.4 be gracious, open and amenable to each other's point of view, remaining cognizant of each other's mandates while striving towards unanimity.
- 3.5 concentrate our efforts on the hymns.
- 3.6 use the divisions of the Apostles' Creed (cf. # 2.1. above) as a general guide to organizing the hymns.
- 3.7 maintain close contact between our committees, reporting to each other on our progress re: hymns every other month starting May 1, 2003.
- 3.8 hold our next combined meeting in Jenison, MI, in March 2004.

In addition to this our committee decided:

- 3.9 In our contact with the URC Psalter Hymnal Committee we will restrict our discussion to the Psalm and hymn sections of the proposed combined song book.

Respectfully Submitted;

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Rev. C. Bosch (secretary)

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Guidelines for Ecumenicity and Church Unity

United Reformed Churches in North America

Editorial Note: This appendix was intended for inclusion in the Acts of Synod Neerlandia 2001. Since it is an important document in regards to the relationship of our churches with the URCNA, it is now included in these Acts.

Phase One – Corresponding Relations

The first phase of ecumenicity is one of exploration, with the intent that by correspondence and dialogue, mutual understanding and appreciation may develop in the following areas of the two churches' lives:

- a. view and place of the Holy Scriptures
- b. creeds and confessions
- c. formula of subscription to the confessions
- d. significant factors in the two federations' history, theology and ecclesiology

- e. church order and polity
- f. liturgy and liturgical forms
- g. preaching, sacraments and discipline
- h. theological education for ministers

Ecumenical observers are to be invited to all broader assemblies with a regular exchange of the minutes of these assemblies and of other publications that may facilitate ecumenical relations.

Phase Two – Ecclesiastical Fellowship

The second phase of ecumenicity is one of recognition and is entered into only when the broadest assemblies of both federations agree this is desirable. The intent of this phase is to recognize and accept each other as true and faithful churches of the Lord Jesus, and in preparation for and commitment to eventual integrated federative church unity, by establishing ecclesiastical fellowship entailing the following:

- a. the churches shall assist each other as much as possible in the maintenance, defense, and promotion of Reformed doctrine, liturgy, church polity and discipline
- b. the churches shall consult each other when entering into ecumenical relations with other federations
- c. the churches shall accept each other's certificates of membership, admitting such members to the Lord's table
- d. the churches shall open the pulpits to each other's ministers, observing the rules of the respective churches
- e. the churches shall consult each other before major changes to the confessions, church government or liturgy are adopted
- f. the churches shall invite and receive each other's ecclesiastical delegates who shall participate in the broader assemblies as much as regulations permit

Entering this phrase requires ratification by a majority of the consistories as required in the Church Order, Art. 36

Phase Three – Church Union

The third phase of ecumenicity is one of integration with the intent that the two federations, *being united in true faith*, and where contiguous geography permits, shall proceed to complete church unity, that is, ecclesiastical union. This final phase shall only be embarked upon when the broadest assemblies of both federations give their endorsement and approval to a plan of union which shall outline the timing, coordination, and/or integration of the following:

- a. the broader assemblies
- b. the liturgies and liturgical forms
- c. the translations of the Bible and the confessions
- d. the songbooks for worship
- e. the church polity and order
- f. the missions abroad