

1989

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**Report to
General Synod
Winnipeg
1989**

from the

**Committee on Relations
with Churches Abroad**

of the

Canadian Reformed Churches

1989
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**COMMITTEE ON RELATIONS WITH CHURCHES ABROAD
OF
THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES**

REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD WINNIPEG 1989

Esteemed Brethren,

We hereby submit to you a report on the activities of the Committee on Relations With Churches Abroad, appointed by General Synod 1986.

I. MANDATE

General Synod Burlington-West 1986 gave our Committee the following mandate:

A. General

1. "To continue the Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, and Die Vrije Gerformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika in accordance with the adopted rules.
2. "To charge the committee to send an invitation to sister churches abroad at least one year prior to the date the next general synod is to convene and to have our churches represented by a delegate to general synods of such churches abroad if invited and when feasible." (Acts 1986, Art.145, D, 1,2)

B. Name Change

3. "to change the name of this committee to 'The Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad;'" (Acts 1986, Art. 177, D, 1)

C. Church Relations

4. "to continue to address the sister-churches on the matter of church-relations, setting forth the decisions and concerns of the Canadian Reformed Churches, as outlined by the General Synods of Smithville (Acts, Art.154, D,1,2) and Cloverdale (Acts, Art. 110, D,1).
5. "to evaluate the reactions of the sister-churches in these matters with respect to a possible common approach;
6. "to report to the next general synod with suitable recommendations." (Acts 1986, Art.177, D, 2)

D. Korea

7. "to explain to the PCK this decision of the General Synod of Burlington West of 1986;
8. "to respond to any reaction, inquiries, and information the PCK may direct to our churches;
9. "to be diligent in the endeavour to improve communications with the PCK so that the 'entering into and the maintaining of a correspondence-relationship' becomes possible;
10. "to report to the next general synod." (Acts 1986, Art.150, D, 3)

E. Scotland

11. "to charge the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad to open contacts with the FCS to investigate and evaluate their history, background, doctrinal standards and their maintenance, church government, and their practices in order to ascertain whether we should recognize them as a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ and should enter into a sister-church relation with them;

12. "to instruct the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad to continue to inform the churches about the history, background, doctrinal standards and their maintenance, church government, and practices of the other churches which participate in the ICRC and with whom we have no sister-church relationship;
13. "to keep the current sister churches informed of all progress made in this regard and to work in cooperation with them;
14. "to submit its findings and recommendations to the next general synod;
15. "to keep the churches informed of progress made." (Acts 1986, Art.178, E, 2, 3, 4, 5)

F. The International Conference of Reformed Churches

16. "to instruct the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad to prepare the next meeting of the ICRC as they have outlined in their report by:
 - a. requesting the Canadian Reformed Church at Cloverdale to organize a prayer service before the commencement of the 1989 meeting of the International Conference of Reformed Churches;
 - b. consulting the sister churches on suitable topics for the 1989 meeting of the ICRC;
 - c. by assuming all reasonable cost related to their role as host on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches;
 - d. depending on the nature of the matters to be discussed to invite either one or both of the professors of the Theological College recommended by the committee as advisors to the conference;
 - e. designating two members of the committee as delegates.
17. "To advise the executive of the ICRC that the amendments as proposed by the General Synod of Burlington West 1986 be placed on the agenda instead of those proposed by Synod Cloverdale 1983, to wit:
 - a. that a stipulation be included in the 'Basis' of the ICRC that the delegates subscribe only to the standards of the churches of which they are a member;
 - b. that membership of the RES is an impediment to membership of the ICRC;
 - c. that 'CONSTITUTION Art.V - Authority' be amended to read: 'The conclusions of the conference shall be advisory in character. Member churches are to be informed of these conclusions and are recommended to work towards their implementation.' " (Acts 1986, Art.175, D, 1, 2)

II. RULES FOR CORRESPONDENCE

The rules for correspondence referred to in our mandate are:

- a. "To take mutual that the corresponding Churches do not deviate from the Reformed Confession in doctrine, liturgy, Church government and discipline.
- b. "To forward to each other the agenda and decisions of the broader Assemblies and to admit each other's delegates to these Assemblies as advisors.
- c. "To inform each other concerning changes of, or additions to, the Confession, Church Order and Liturgical Forms, while the corresponding Churches pledge to express themselves on the question whether such changes or additions are considered acceptable. Regarding proposals for changes in the Three Forms of Unity, the sister Churches abroad shall receive ample opportunity (at least three years) to forward their judgment before binding decisions will be made.
- d. "To accept each other's attestations and to permit each other's ministers to preach the Word and to administer the sacraments.

- e. "To give account to each other regarding correspondence with third parties."
(Acts 1962, Art.139; Acts 1968, Art.79, 6, b)

III. GENERAL ACTIVITIES

1. Declarations

- a. The following ministers and professors of the Canadian Reformed Churches, planning to travel abroad, requested and received a declaration that they are ministers in good standing in the Churches:
The Revs. D.G.J. Agema, B.J. Berends, C. Bosch, C. Bouwman, D. DeJong, K. Deddens, J. Faber, J. Geertsema, R.N. Gleason, W. Huizinga, P.K. Meijer, J. Moesker, L. Selles, D. VanderBoom, G. Wieske.
- b. The following ministers of the Free Reformed Churches in Australia and the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands visited Canada:
The Revs. Tj. Boersema, K. Bruning, A.J. Pol, K. Jonker.
From the Deputies of these Churches your Committee received a declaration stating that they were ministers in good standing.

2. Acts - Yearbooks

- a. When the Acts of General Synod Burlington West 1986 were received a sufficient number of copies were sent to the sister Churches.
- b. The Yearbook of our Churches, although not an official publication, was sent to all the sister Churches. It keeps them informed about pertinent addresses and statistics as regards our churches.

3. Notifications and Invitations

Letters of notification and invitation were sent to the sister Churches regarding the convening of General Synod Winnipeg 1989. Copies of the Provisional Agenda were sent. It should be noted that according to our mandate (Acts 1986, Art. 145, D, 2) we are to send out invitations regarding the next General Synod to our sister Churches at least one year ahead of time. In most cases we are unable to comply with this instruction because the date of General Synod is rarely known that far in advance. Hence our policy has been to inform the sister Churches of the next Synod as soon as we learn about the date.

4. Interim Reports

No interim reports were published by the Committee, although we did receive and pass on to *Clarion* (vol.36, no.22, Nov.6, 1987) a report of a visit made to the Free Church of Scotland by Prof. Dr. K. Deddens. This visit was made at the request of your Committee.

IV. THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA

1. Correspondence

- a. After General Synod Burlington West 1986 met, the Free Reformed Churches of Australia were informed about the decisions that pertained to them, as well as other matters that had to do with inter-church relations. Copies of the *Acts 1986* were sent as soon as they were received.
- b. On Oct.28, 1986, we wrote to the FRC urging them to submit topics to the next meeting of the ICRC in order to make it as meaningful as possible.
- c. In August, 1987, we received a provisional agenda for the General Synod of Albany which would meet the following month. Greetings and best wishes were sent by telegram.
- d. In January, 1988, we received three copies of the Acts of Synod Albany. Some months earlier we received several copies of the report submitted to

- this Synod by the Deputies for Relations with Churches Abroad and Deputies for Contact with the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia. This very extensive report dealt with the relations with sister churches in Canada, the Netherlands, Korea, East Sumba/Savu and South Africa, as well as the contacts that the FRC has with churches in North Ireland, Scotland, Taiwan, Japan, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Singapore. A section on the ICRC was also included, as was a report of the contact with the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia. (Pertinent parts of this report will be appended)
- e. On April 20, 1988, we received a letter from the Deputies of the FRC informing us of the fact that two Deputies had made a trip to Ireland and Scotland, as well as a side trip to the Netherlands. We received a copy of the minutes of their meeting with the Deputies of the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands (GKN).
 - f. On July 1, 1988, the FRC was informed about the General Synod of Winnipeg which would meet D.V. in April, 1989. Their greetings, either in person or by mail, were requested.

2. Acts of Synod Albany 1987

The 1987 Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia met from Sept.5-17, 1987 in Albany, Western Australia. A study of the *Acts* reveals the following highlights:

- a. Synod was informed that the Revs. W. Huizinga and C. Bouwman, who both accepted calls to churches in Australia, underwent colloquium doctums. The results were favourable and both former Canadian Reformed ministers are now employed in the service of the Australian churches.
- b. Synod decided to appoint deputies to scrutinize and improve on the language found in the Church Order. The deputies are to take the Canadian text into account in so far as that is possible.
- c. Synod renewed the mandate of its Committee with Churches Abroad to draft revised rules for relations with churches abroad. It was also charged to draft rules for temporary contact with foreign churches.
- d. Synod decided to continue its sister church relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches, and the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands. It decided to do the same with the Presbyterian Church in Korea but expressed disappointment that relations with these churches have been frustrated by "a lack of information and by language barriers." It urged the deputies to do whatever possible to make these relations more fruitful. As for relations with the Vrije Gereformeerde Kerken in Suid-Afrika, they were deemed fruitful and were also continued. With respect to the Reformed Churches of Indonesia, East Sumba/Savu, Synod decided to continue the sister church relationship and charged deputies to make it more fruitful.
- e. Synod took note of the fact that a new congregation would soon be started in the Kelmscott area. This would increase the total number of churches to six.
- f. Synod decided to reconfirm the decision of Synod 1983 to the effect that the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland (EPCI) is a faithful church of the Lord. It decided to offer to the EPCI the relation of temporary contact which includes inviting delegates to each other's Assemblies/Synods, exchanging Acts and Minutes, and to strive toward full correspondence. Two delegates are to be sent to the EPCI.
- g. Regarding the Free Church of Scotland (FCS), Synod reaffirmed its previous statement to the effect that the FCS is a faithful church of the Lord. It instructed deputies to move in the direction of sister church status, but not to implement such until mutually acceptable rules can be agreed to. In the interim, a relationship of temporary ecclesiastical contact is to be maintained with the FCS. Delegates are also to visit these churches.

- h. Synod made various decisions regarding the training for the ministry. It decided to assess the churches \$30.00 per communicant member per annum for the support of the Theological College in Hamilton. It encouraged the churches to continue to hold regular collections for the support of the Theological University in Kampen, the Netherlands. Deputies were also instructed to investigate the possibilities of working toward their own theological training.
- i. Synod decided to instruct its deputies to carry out a more detailed investigation of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Taiwan (RPCT), to improve communications and to evaluate the divisions between the various presbyteries there.
- j. Synod decided to end its attempts to make contact with the Dutch Reformed Church of Sri Lanka, but it decided to continue to investigate and to pursue contacts with the Reformed Church of Japan, the Presbyterian Church in Uganda.
- k. Synod decided not to adopt a proposal from its deputies to add an Article 26 on the subject of Evangelism to the Church Order.
- l. Synod agreed with the appeal of the Rev.W. Huizinga to introduce the probationary use of the deleted hymns until the next synod. In the meantime the deputies are charged with evaluating the submissions received and to maintain contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches regarding revisions and changes to the *Book of Praise*.
- m. Synod decided to adopt the text of the Three Forms of Unity and of the Liturgical Forms as found in the *Book of Praise*. The text of the Ecumenical Creeds is adopted with the exception of the word "Christian" in Art.IX of the Apostles' Creed, Lord's Day 7 of the Heidelberg Catechism, and wherever the text of the Creed is found in the Forms and Prayers. The words "only-begotten Son" will be reinserted.
- n. Synod decided to continue the contact with the Reformed Churches of New Zealand (RCNZ), as well as to convey its thanks that the RCNZ has terminated all ties with the GKN (Synodical) and to withdraw from the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (RES) if the GKN (Syn.) is not expelled.
- o. Synod decided to instruct deputies to investigate the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore (ERCS) to discern whether this church is a true church according to Art.29 of the Belgic Confession, to study the influence of the Protestant Reformed Churches on the ERCS and to send delegates to visit this church.
- p. Synod decided to continue to recommend the use of the RSV, to investigate the New KJV, the NIV and NASB, and to enquire whether the matter of Bible translations can be tabled at the ICRC.
- q. Synod decided instruct its deputies to propose a number of amendments to the Constitution of the ICRC. These amendments being the same as those originally proposed by Synod Cloverdale 1983. It also wanted constitutional matters to receive priority at future meetings and to place the matter of inter-church relations on the agenda again. It desired further clarity on the position of observers and advisors. It proposes that the ICRC reconsider its decision regarding travel expenses and have those expenses come out of Conference revenue. It further decided to send two delegates to the next Conference to be held in BC, Canada.
- r. Synod decided to express its joy that between the FRCA and the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia there is a mutual desire to serve the Lord according to His Word, to instruct deputies to work towards sister church relations with the PCEA, to continue to discuss areas of concern such as fencing of the Lord's table, pulpit exchanges, children in the covenant, the problem of adherents.

3. Conclusion

From the correspondence received add from the Acts of 1987 we may conclude with gratitude that the Free Reformed Churches of Australia continue to be faithful to the Word of the Lord, to the Confessions and to the Church Order. It may also be noted with thankfulness that there is a growing bond between these Churches and the Canadian Reformed Churches.

4. Recommendation

Your Committee recommends to Synod that the correspondence which we have with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia be continued in accordance with the adopted rules.

V. DE GEREFORMEERDE KERKEN IN NEDERLAND

1. Correspondence

- a. After General Synod Burlington West 1986 we informed the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (GKN) about the decisions of Synod which had a bearing on them either directly or indirectly. Once the Acts became available we sent them a sufficient number of copies.
- b. In August of 1986 we received an invitation to attend the next General Synod of the GKN which would meet as of April 22, 1987 in Spakenburg. In light of the fact that one of our Committee members, br. H.A. Berends, along with Prof. Dr. K. Deddens, would be in the Netherlands at that time, we asked them to represent the Canadian Reformed Churches. A brief report of their visit can be found in the appendix.
- c. On Oct. 28, 1986, we wrote to the Dutch deputies suggesting various speakers and topics for the next meeting of the ICRC. We also reminded them of our mandate to continue the discussion on the rules for inter-church relations.
- d. In January of 1987 we received the Report of the deputies to General Synod Spakenburg, along with their latest proposals on inter-church relations. They requested our reaction and we sent them a lengthy reply with comments and criticism. They also inquired about whether we had any contact with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA). We informed them of the discussions that took place at Synod Cloverdale 1983 and stated that there is no contact between the CRC and the RPCNA.
- e. In March of 1987 we received a letter from the Dutch Deputies regarding a meeting that they had had with Rev. Robert Grossmann of the Reformed Church in the USA (RCUSA). They supplied us with copies of the pertinent correspondence, as well as a copy of the minutes of the meeting held. We, for our part, learned that the Canadian Reformed Church at Carman, MB, was about to initiate some contact with the RCUSA and asked if there was any objection to our passing the material on to Carman. Since no objections were received this was done. In the meantime we have heard nothing official from the Church at Carman, although we understand that also the Rev. P. Kingma has had quite some contact with this Church.
- f. In February of 1988 we received a letter from the Deputies of the GKN in which they informed us that Synod Spakenburg had decided to continue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the Canadian reformed Churches. Synod congratulated the CRC on the appointment of Prof. J. Geertsema, and expressed appreciation for the delegates sent. We were also informed that the contact with the Presbyterian Church in America and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church would not be pursued further at this time.

- g. In May of 1988 we received a letter from the Dutch Deputies in which they informed us that Synod Spakenburg could not agree with the proposal of Synod Burlington West 1986 regarding a further stipulation in the Basis of the ICRC. They assert that in the case of differences each delegate is bound to his own confession. Furthermore, they point to the reaction of the FCS who speak about "a mistaken interpretation of the 'subscription' involved" and to their meeting with the Australian deputies in which this matter was viewed as a "linguistic problem".
In our response to the Dutch Deputies we have pointed out that we have no authority to change our mandate.
- h. In September of 1988 we received a further communication from the Dutch Deputies dealing once again with proposals regarding the rules of inter-church relations. As Committee we are thankful for some of the changes made. At the same time we addressed them further on related aspects of this matter.

2. Acts of the General Synod Spakenburg-Noord 1987

- a. As in the Netherlands the word "universiteit" has become the indication of the level of instruction, Synod decided to change the name of the *Theologische Hogeschool* into *Theologische Universiteit*.
- b. Due to the retirement of the professors D. Deddens, J. Kamphuis and J.P. Lettinga four new professors were appointed for the theological instruction, namely, B. Kamphuis for Dogmatics, J.A. Meyer for New Testament Greek, M. te Velde for church history and Dr. K. Veling for philosophy. Six new docents were added to the faculty.
- c. Regarding financial aid to theological students it was decided that requests for such aid will no longer be dealt with by regional deputies but by deputies appointed by General Synod.
- d. The decision of General Synod Heemse to reject the teaching of Rev. Joh. Hoorn was upheld.
- e. Contact with representatives of the *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken* will be continued, not, however, exclusively through written communications as had been the case since 1967 but by means of verbal discussions.
- f. The *international relations* in which our Netherlands sister churches are involved received considerable attention.
 - I The Ecclesiastical Fellowship was continued with the *Canadian Reformed Churches, Free Reformed Churches of Australia, Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika, Reformed Churches of Indonesia on Sumba, Savu and Timor, Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland, and Presbyterian Church in Korea (Kosin)*.
 - II The Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad received the mandate to investigate the feasibility to appoint new Missionary-professors at the Korea Theological Seminary when Rev. J.M. Batteau and Dr. N.H. Gootjes would return to the Netherlands.
 - III With the *Free Church of Scotland* and the *Reformed Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, Second Presbytery* the provisional relation of Ecclesiastical Contact was continued.
 - IV The offer of provisional Ecclesiastical Contact extended to the *Dutch Reformed Church of Sri-Lanka* and the *Reformed Church of Japan* was maintained.
 - V Contacts with the following Churches were initiated or continued: *Orthodox Presbyterian Church in U.S.A., Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, Reformed Churches of New Zealand, Die Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika, Die Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika, Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia,*

Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore, Iglesia Reformada Presbiteriana in Spain, Reformed Presbyterian Church in Korea (Hapdong), Reformed Church in the United States.

VI Possibilities for contact with Churches in *France, Germany, Greece* and *Nigeria* will be further investigated. In some cases financial assistance will be given.

VII Regarding the *International Conference of Reformed Churches* Synod decided that the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad appoint a delegation to the 1989 Conference and to instruct those delegates

1. to promote the adoption of the rule that at the beginning of the Conference delegates express their agreement with the Basis of the Conference.
2. to propose that issues not included in the pre-set agenda should be discussed if so requested by 75% of the member Churches.
3. not to support the proposal of the Canadian Reformed Churches that a stipulation be included in the Basis of the ICRC that the delegates subscribe only to the standards of the Churches of which they are members. "The difference between the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards have never prevented us from acknowledging that both confessions are of a truly Reformed character. In subscribing to the Basis of the Conference the delegates only acknowledge that there is nothing in any of the confessions that could prevent full cooperation in the work of the Conference."
4. not to support the proposal of the Canadian Reformed Churches that to Article IV of the Constitution be added that membership of the RES is an impediment to membership in the ICRC. At this point in time – now that the matter of new rules for correspondence is still being studied by deputies – no definite decision should be taken on the issue of RES membership.

VIII As an insufficient number of answers was received from the Churches involved in consultation, the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad had not been able to finalize proposals regarding new rules for Ecclesiastical Contact. The Committee received again the mandate to apply the existing rules in a flexible manner.

IX Concerning the *Canadian Reformed Churches* it was further decided

- a. to convey congratulations on the appointment of Rev. J. Geertsema as professor of New Testament and to thank the Churches for sending delegates to General Synod Spakenburg-Noord.
- b. to keep the Canadian Deputies informed on the contact of the *Orthodox Presbyterian Church* with the *Presbyterian Church in America* and the *Christian Reformed Church*.
- c. to inform the Canadian Deputies that the *Reformed Churches in the Netherlands* have discontinued the attempts to contact the *Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)* and that the contact with the *Orthodox Presbyterian Church* will not be intensified pending its discussion with the PCA.
- d. to keep the Canadian Deputies informed on the contact with the *Reformed Churches in the United States*.

g. The next General Synod is scheduled for April 18, 1990 and is to be held at Leeuwarden.

3. Evaluation

The completed revised text of the Canons of Dort, the Forms for Excommunication and Readmission and some prayers, which were not available to your Committee when reporting to our previous Synod, have been scrutinized by your Committee. The Committee declares that it considers those revisions to be in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and in harmony with Reformed Church polity.

4. Conclusion

From the correspondence and the Acts of General Synod Spakenburg-Noord 1987, the Committee may conclude with gratitude that De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland desire to be faithful to God's Word and to abide by the Reformed Creeds and Church Order.

5. Recommendation

Your Committee recommends to synod to continue the relationship with De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland in accordance with the adopted rules.

VI. DIE VRIJE GEREFORMEERDE KERKE IN SUID-AFRIKA

1. Correspondence

- a. As soon as your Committee was informed about the decisions made by the Synod of Burlington West 1986, Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika (DVGKSA) were informed about those that pertained to them. We also sent them copies of the Acts as soon as they were received by us.
- b. We also supplied DVGKSA with a copy of our translation of the changes made to the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church in Korea. At the same time we urged them to come forward with suggestions for topics and speakers for the next ICRC in order to make it as fruitful as possible.
- c. In August of 1986 we were informed that Synod Pretoria 1986 had decided to continue the sister church relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches. The Deputies informed us that copies of the Acts had been sent by separate mail but they arrived quite some time later. On another matter, we were requested to supply them with information on our policy as to the solemnization of marriages in connection with the old Dort Church Order Art.70. We supplied them with the address of the Rev. W.W.J. VanOene and recommended that they take up contact with him, which they subsequently did.
- d. In June of 1987 the South African Deputies informed us about two topics that they would like to see on the agenda of the next ICRC, namely, "Christian Marriage in the Breaker Zone" and "Our Christian Calling in Daily Life." We do not know whether they brought this matter to the attention of the Interim Committee and asked them to be placed on the agenda. As yet they do not appear on the ICRC information received.
- e. In July of 1987 we received notification that the Synod Johannesburg would meet from Oct.9-13, 1987. A provisional agenda was enclosed, along with the report of the Deputies for Correspondence. They also very cordially invited us to send delegates and stated that we could combine it with a trip to Australia to attend Synod Albany. Needless to say, your Committee was tempted but cost considerations, also in view of the upcoming ICRC, led us to send congratulations by mail instead.
- f. On July 1, 1988, we informed the South African Deputies about Synod Winnipeg, about the Canadian Reformed delegation to the ICRC, as well as our intention to recommend that further discussions be held at that time

on inter-church relations. We also informed them that as yet no Acts had arrived of Synod Johannesburg 1987.

2. Acts of Synod Pretoria 1986

The General Synod of Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Afrika met at Pretoria, South Africa from March 31 - April 4, 1986. All three churches, Capetown, Johannesburg and Pretoria were legally represented. Also welcomed were two delegates from the Dutch sister-churches Rev. M. Brandes and brother J. Van der Kolk; the missionary for Mamelodi, Rev. T. De Boer and also Rev. J. Meilof who is the "temporary guest minister" of the church at Pretoria. These guests are invited to serve the synod in an advisory capacity.

We may mention the following decisions and events because they are of interest to the Canadian Reformed Churches:

Synod decides to support all major recommendations in the report of deputies for correspondence with foreign churches as follows:

1. The correspondence will be continued "in accordance with the accepted rules" with:
 - a. The Free Reformed Churches of Australia.
 - b. The Canadian Reformed Churches.
 - c. The Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland.
2. Synod also supports deputies proposal to continue the fraternal relations with the Gereformeerde Kerk of Eastern Sumba/Savu. Deputies are instructed to do this in the following manner: "to exchange information regarding ecclesiastical activities, to regularly show signs of support and encouragement and to maintain this relationship, until possibly in the future the opportunity will present itself to commence correspondence."
3. Synod also accepts the recommendation of deputies regarding the Presbyterian Church in Korea and instructs them to continue the fraternal contacts with this church until possibly in the future there may be an opportunity to begin correspondence.
4. Deputies for correspondence had reported some problems because not all tasks regarding foreign churches were channeled through the deputies. Synod decides to solve the problem by directing the deputies to handle everything, including distribution of the Acts of Synod.
5. In accordance with a proposal from the deputies all activities and contacts regarding the ICRC will be incorporated in the mandate for the Deputies for Correspondence.
6. In the future sister-churches will be requested to supply just two (not three) copies of Acts of Synods.
7. The draft rules for sister-church relationships as proposed by the Dutch Deputies for correspondence with foreign churches to their own synod are informally discussed and deputies are instructed to give the matter further thought and to contact the Dutch deputies regarding this matter.
8. The deputies for correspondence have examined the Westminster Creeds and in spite of some differences between these Standards and the Three Forms of Unity, in particular regarding the confession regarding the church, the covenant of grace, the relationship with the government and the form of government of the church, the Synod decides:

"in the line of history, to recognize the Westminster Standards as a reformed confession and to instruct our deputies for correspondence with foreign churches, when contacts are made with foreign churches that subscribe to this confession, to raise these issues in all modesty, so that in the light of God's Word, together we may proceed in that confession of the truth."

The report by the observers to the International Conference of Reformed Churches, held in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1985 is extensively discussed. Upon recommendation of the deputies the following decisions are made by Synod:

1. Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke apply for membership in the ICRC with the understanding that the VGK interpret the basis in this manner that the VGK will cooperate within the framework of the ICRC with churches that have the Three Forms of Unity or the Westminster Standards as their confession and that take this seriously in their ecclesiastical life.
2. Further mandates in connection with the ICRC will be directed to the deputies for correspondence with foreign churches.
3. Deputies for correspondence are instructed to study the proposals for changes in the ICRC constitution as proposed by our sister-churches, to collect further information as regards to member churches of the ICRC and to report and make recommendations to the next synod.
4. Deputies for contact with South African "church formations" are instructed to seek contact with the Free Church in Southern Africa and to show their interest and sympathy.
5. The Synod establishes a fund to make provisions for one or more delegates to attend the next meeting of the ICRC, to be held in Canada and to report at the next synod.

The short form for the celebration of the Lord's Supper is discussed. The proposed form which is a translation of the form in use in the Dutch sister-churches is gratefully accepted and is released for use in the churches for a period of two years, comments are invited and must be addressed to the deputies for revision of the "Churchbook."

A number of forms recommended by the deputies for the revision of the Churchbook are discussed and released for use in the churches, among them the form for the excommunication, the official form for readmission, the form for the ordination of ministers of the Word and the form for discipline of non-communicant members.

The form for the solemnization of marriage is still giving difficulties, deputies have been unable to draft such a form, mainly because it is still not clear what is exactly the relationship between "the confirmation of a marriage as a civil ceremony and the ecclesiastical confirmation of a marriage. Deputies for correspondence with foreign churches are instructed to collect information from the Australian and Canadian sister-churches and to forward this information as soon as possible to deputies for revision of the Churchbook. These deputies are instructed to prepare a draft form for the solemnization of marriage.

Synod again appoints deputies for contact with South African church formations. The new deputies will endeavor to bring the discussions with the Gereformeerde Kerke in South Africa to a head after 35 years of contacts, to see one way or the other whether official contacts are possible.

3. Acts of Synod Johannesburg 1987

4. Conclusion

From the correspondence and the Acts received, we may conclude, with gratitude, that Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika desires to be faithful to the Word of God, the Reformed Confessions and the Church Order.

5. Recommendation

On the basis of the above, the Committee recommends to Synod to continue the relationship with Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika in accordance with the adopted rules.

VII. THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN KOREA (KORYU-PA or KOSIN)

With regard to the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK) your Committee can be brief. On Oct.28, 1986, we sent them a letter informing them of the decisions of Synod Burlington West 1986 that pertained to them. We also suggested that perhaps they might suggest to the ICRC that Prof. Dr. P.S. Oh address the next meeting of the ICRC on the topic of Shintoism. No reply was received.

In the meantime we were informed in November of 1988 that the PCK has appointed a new Committee of Fraternal Relations because of problems that the old Committee experienced with the English language. We have sent this Committee copies of past correspondence and asked them to respond as soon as possible. To date no reply has been received.

We have also been informed that the PCK will be represented at the next ICRC meeting and we shall once again underline the urgency of establishing a proper line of communications between the PCK and ourselves if a sister church relationship is ever to become a reality.

Recommendation: To charge the Committee to continue to be diligent regarding the matter of communication with the PCK and to report to the next General Synod.

VIII. THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

1. Correspondence

- a. On Oct. 28, 1986 we informed the Free Church of Scotland (FCS) about the decisions that the General Synod of Burlington West 1986 had made regarding their Church. When the Acts of General Synod Burlington West 1986 were received a number of copies were dispatched to the FCS.
- b. In December of 1986 we received quite a number of copies of the past Acts of the General Assembly of the FCS. They also expressed a willingness to supply us with whatever historical documents we might need.
- c. On Jan.28, 1987, the Committee on Ecumenical Relations of the FCS dealt with our letter of Oct.28, 1986, and expressed a willingness to establish relations with our Churches. They also informed us that Prof. C. Graham would be in Vancouver from March 14-23, 1987, and would be glad to meet with our Committee. A meeting was subsequently arranged in which members of our Committee received further insight into the FCS, its history, background, character, confessional standing, inter-church relations.
- d. In April of 1987 we learned that Prof. Dr. K. Deddens would be in the Netherlands for the summer of 1987. In light of the fact that he had been appointed to the Missions Committee of the ICRC and would need to meet with his Scottish counterpart, we asked him if he would be so kind as to do some fact finding for our Committee in Scotland and thereafter to supply us and our Churches with his impressions and recommendations.
- e. On April 29, 1987, we wrote to the FCS and informed them about the mandate that we had given to Prof. Dr. K. Deddens.
- f. In August of 1987 we received Dr. Deddens' report of the trip which he made to the FCS from June 10-18, 1987. We sent a copy of most of it to the offices of *Clarion* and it was published in the Nov.6, 1987 issue. What we neglected to publish in *Clarion* due to some misunderstanding was his conclusion which read as follows:
 - "a) According to my opinion the FCS shows the marks of the true church and is to be recognized indeed as a true church of Jesus Christ.
 - b) For this reason it is right to offer relationship to the FCS and

to discuss how to practice it, if this offer will be accepted. c) My advice is to start with sending the Acts of our General Synods, to ask for the Acts of their General Assemblies and to invite one or more delegates to Canada."

For your information we have appended the report of this visit.

- g. Seeing that the Deputies of the Australian Churches have recently made a visit to Scotland we append to our report their impressions, as well as what they have written about the FCS in their report to Synod Albany 1987. We also append Art.82 of the Acts of Synod Albany 1987 which was adopted unanimously. In it Synod affirms that the Free Church of Scotland is a faithful church of the Lord and instructs the deputies to move in the direction of becoming sister-churches with the FCS

2. Inter-church Relations with the Free Church of Scotland

- a. Synod Albany 1987 decided to offer the FCS a relationship called "Temporary Ecclesiastical Contact" and to use such a relationship as a framework or means to arrive at a full-fledged sister church relationship.
- b. Our Dutch sister churches at present also maintain a relationship of ecclesiastical contact with the FCS and are using it as a spring-board to what will hopefully be a full sister church relationship.
- c. The FCS for its part is not acquainted with our rules of correspondence and with the implications of sister church status and hence is responding carefully. They also have some questions about the practical workings of these rules and whether they infringe on the integrity and independence of the respective churches. At the same time, when your Committee met with Principal C. Graham we received the impression that the FCS is receptive to the matter of sister-church relations.

3. Preliminary Conclusions

From all that your Committee has read and learned about the FCS we can say that we are pleased with the progress made; however, there are areas of concern that need further discussion and consideration. We would like more information on how the General Assembly operates, about the relations that the FCS has with other churches, about the congregations that the FCS has in Toronto, Vancouver and how sister relations would affect our relationship with these local congregations. In order to obtain more insight, and hence come to a proper recommendation, it is our intention to have extensive discussions with delegates from the FCS when the ICRC meets in Vancouver in June of 1989.

As for sister church relations, we are not ready to make a recommendation to you seeing that we believe, in light of our past mandates, that this should be done in step with our sister churches in Australia and the Netherlands. Our aim, as outlined by past Synods, should be to strive for a united approach and a common set of rules.

For our part we regret that at the moment we can not recommend anything concrete to you. If Synod had met in the Fall of 1989 instead of in the Spring, things would have been different. However seeing that at present questions remain and details remain to be worked out, we deem it advisable to wait.

4. Recommendation

In light of the above, our Committee recommends that the mandate of Synod 1986 be renewed and that the Committee be charged to come to Synod 1992 with its findings and recommendations.

IX. THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES

1. Correspondence

- a. After the decisions of Synod Burlington West 1986 regarding the ICRC were made known to your Committee they were communicated to the Interim Committee (c/o the Secretary).
- b. Two provisional reports were received from Committees set-up by the last meeting of the ICRC, the one dealt with mission matters, and the other with the Ecumenical Creeds.
- c. We were informed about various proposals submitted to the ICRC by member churches relating to the Constitution, standing committees, topics, which will be discussed in the June 1989 meeting.
- d. On Oct.17, 1988, we were informed that the ICRC would meet from June 19-29, 1989. The following speakers and topics were suggested:
 - Dr.K. Deddens, "Contextualization in Mission"
 - Dr.J. Douma,"Apartheid"
 - Prof.D. Macleod, "Christology"
 - Prof.C. Graham, "Nehemiah the Reformer"
 - Dr.J. van Bruggen, "Hermeneutics and the Gift of the Spirit"
 - Dr.C. VanDam, "The Elder as Preserver of Life in the Covenant".

2. Delegation

In its meeting of June 30, 1988, your Committee, according to the mandate received from Synod 1986, appointed the following delegates:

Rev.Cl. Stam, voting delegate
Rev.J. Visscher, voting delegate
Dr.J. Faber, advisor
Dr.C. VanDam, advisor

3. Inter-church relations

In view of the incomplete discussion on inter-church relations at the Edinburgh meeting of the ICRC, your Committee has proposed that this topic be added to the agenda and that it be dealt with in a workshop format. We also hope to have separate meetings with the sister churches to discuss the same matter and reach a consensus.

4. Our mandate at the ICRC

Synod Burlington West 1986 outlined our mandate with regard to the June meeting of the ICRC. Unless you inform us differently we shall carry out that mandate to the best of our ability.

5. Report and Recommendations

After the Conference has been held we shall D.V. submit an extensive report of its proceedings to General Synod 1992, along with appropriate recommendations.

Respectfully submitted by your Committee,
Nov.10, 1988

E.C. Baartman	Cl. Stam
H.A. Berends	M. van Beveren
A.C. Lengkeek	J. Visscher (convener)

APPENDIX I

REPORT OF THE VISIT OF DR. K. DEDDENS TO THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, JUNE 10-18, 1987.

1. Goal

While staying in the Netherlands in the summer of 1987, I visited the Free Church of Scotland from June 10 to June 18, 1987. The visit took place on behalf and on the request of the *Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad* of the Canadian Reformed Churches. It had a twofold purpose:

- a. to serve the *Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad* with my impressions of the Free Church of Scotland, and my recommendations on how to proceed further with them;
- b. to contact the other members of the Missions Committee of the ICRC, Prof. A.C. Boyd and Prof. C. Graham, in order to prepare a report for the next conference of the ICRC in the Vancouver area in June 1989.

2. Meetings

I arrived at the Edinburgh airport in the morning of June 10. Prof. Boyd was so kind to pick me up from the airport and to bring me to Prof. Graham's place, who was my host most of the time during my visit. I was also the guest for a short time of Dr. A.C. Fraser and of the Rev. Ross. Dr. Fraser is involved in the mission work in Peru, and Rev. Ross is one of the ministers at Edinburgh.

Besides a congregational meeting, two prayer meetings, and two worship services, I attended three meetings: of the *Missions Committee of the ICRC*, of the *Committee on Assembly Arrangements and Ecumenical Relations*, and of the *Foreign Overseas and Jewish Missions' Board*. It just happened in these days that the several committees of the General Assembly held their meetings in the Theological College of the Free Church of Scotland in Edinburgh, according to their schedule. So I met quite some professors, ministers and elders of the Free Church, also from the Highlands and the Islands.

3. ICRC

As far as the work of the *Missions Committee of the ICRC* is concerned, I wrote in 1986 already two letters to the convenor Prof. A.C. Boyd. But it turned out to be useful to discuss several points orally. The results of the discussions is to be summarized as follows:

- a. the convenor will send a letter to all the member Churches according to the mandate of the Committee;
- b. after having received the requested information before the 15th of September 1987, the Committee will submit a report for the next meeting of the 1989 Conference;
- c. the undersigned hopes to deliver a paper on the topic *Contextualisation* at the next Conference of 1989 and he will send a copy of his speech before the Conference to the other members of the Committee.

4. FCS

As far as the Free Church of Scotland itself is concerned, I like to underline what is written in the report of the *Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad* to General Synod Burlington-West (Appendix III, Acts Burlington-West, p. 193) "that if meaningful bridges are to be built from our Churches to the Presbyterian Churches in the ICRC, the key might well be the Free Church of Scotland."

The FCS is indeed, I think, the key to the whole Presbyterian world and the history of this Church shows the heavy struggle, throughout the ages, to be and to remain faithful to her Reformed heritage.

5. Standards

The standards of the FCS are the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Scottish Confession of Faith, 1560. Although the last one is placed more or less in the background, the brethren stressed time and again that the history of the FCS did not start in the 17th century, but that the roots of the FCS are to be found in the Reformation of John Knox. So they consider themselves to be the legitimate continuation of the Church of the Reformation. See in this respect also Appendix III of the Acts of Burlington-West. I point also to some books which I received from Prof. C. Graham (cf. Appendix I of my report), and which I presented to the library of the Theological College of Hamilton.

I presented to the library of the Theological College of Edinburgh: a copy of the *Book of Praise*, of the book *Decently and in Good Order*, some copies of *Mission News*, and some publications about *Redemptive-Historical Preaching*.

They assured me that the standards of the FCS are not mere standards but that there was also good maintenance of them in the Churches.

6. Marks of the Church

What about the marks of the true Church? I have the same experience as what is said in the Committee Report concerning preaching in the FCS (cf. p. 192). The sermons which I have heard were really Scriptural and Reformed. In the morning worship service of June 14 I heard a sermon of the Rev. Ross about Hebrews 1:10-12, and in the evening I heard a sermon of the Rev. D. Lamont about Matthew 26:41. They are not used to give a theme of the sermon, but only a short title or the text as such. I must say that they delivered a good division, also good exegesis, Christology, appropriation and conclusion. The same is to be said of several written sermons (cf. some examples in Appendix II).

As for the sacraments, the children of the communicant members are baptized and there is a good attendance of the Lord's Supper. There are also quite some "adherents," who did not make their Confession of Faith yet. This is an old problem, just as the Prof. emeritus Collins assured me. The problem originated already in the times of the Disruption of 1843. (Prof. Collins told me lots of the history of the FCS, especially during the trip from Edinburgh to St. Andrews on Friday, 12th of June.) The number of the adherents is diminishing, but there are still a couple of thousands of them.

On the matter of Church discipline, I want to underline what is said in the report of *The Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad* (at Burlington-West 1986, p. 192) "the impression was very strong that the FCS defends and promotes the holiness of the LORD in the lives of its Churches and members."

The whole history of the FCS shows the maintenance of Church discipline and several discussions with ministers and elders of the Church affirmed that to me.

7. Worship Services

As far as the worship services are concerned, the liturgy is quite simple. In the centre of the service the sermon is placed. They are also used to the other main elements of liturgy, like reading of the Scriptures, public prayers, collection and Psalm singing. They do not have organs in the Church, but a precentor leads the congregation in singing. It is to be said that these matters are still discussed, because the General Assembly appointed a "Psalmody Committee," which is drafting a symposium concerning

- a. Christ in the Psalms,
- b. instrumental accompaniment of praise in public worship, and
- c. exegesis of stated Biblical passages relating to praise.

So there are some differences in liturgical respect, but they are not essential.

8. Other differences

It is well-known that there are differences between the Westminster standards and the standards of the Reformed Churches, e.g., the matter of the visible and invisible Church. It would be good to keep discussing these matters. On the other hand we have to bear in mind that some times the Westminster Confession is even more clear than the Belgic Confession, e.g., in the matter of the testimony of the Holy Spirit concerning the Holy Scriptures.

In the second place there are also differences in respect of Church polity, especially concerning the authority of the "major assemblies." Their presbyteries, for instance, have more authority than our classes. But it must be said also that the influence of "kirk sessions" is growing over against the authority of the presbyteries. It is also advisable to keep discussing these differences.

In the third place there are differences in respect of ethics. The Presbyterians have strong objections against smoking and drinking, more than many Reformed people. It struck me, however, that several ministers of the FCS assured me that their Churches never made a sjibboleth out of these points.

9. Mission

I attended one of the meetings of the *Foreign Overseas and Jewish Missions' Board*. There are many activities in respect of mission in Peru and in India. They gave me quite some details concerning these activities and also in the annual missionary review *From the Frontiers* is much to be read concerning these activities. The meeting was very much interested in the new mission review, initiated by the Rev. Joosse from Groningen, who visited Scotland some months before. I gave some details about the mission activities of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

10. Ecumenical Relations

In one of the meetings of the *Committee on Assembly Arrangements and Ecumenical Relations*, I reminded the brethren that according to the proposal of the Committee concerned, the General Assembly 1982 decided already to offer relationship to the Canadian Reformed Churches. The members of the current Committee were not able to explain why this had not been done. But anyway, the Committee enjoyed the fact that now mutual relations were growing. They were very much interested in the history and the struggle of the Canadian Reformed Churches and they understood very well that we did never participate the RES. In 1981 the General Assembly of the FCS finally decided to leave the RES, especially because of the bad development of the Synodical Churches of the Netherlands. They asked several questions and I had the impression that they would surely accept an invitation from Canada to attend a General Synod.

We concluded that there is no problem as far as the language is concerned, so that e.g., exchange of Acts of Synods and General Assemblies and also visits of Synods would be quite easily done.

There is still one point, namely, that the rules of relationship are not exactly the same, but this point is being discussed at the moment in the Churches.

11. Varia

- a. I was invited to preach in the Church of the Rev. Ross and also in the Church of the Rev. D. Lamont, but I explained that it was not right in this situation to accept one of these invitations. I had also the idea that it would be wise not to speak an edifying word, because the difference is not always clear to many people. So I only spoke in public in the congregational meeting on Sunday night after the worship service in the Church of the Rev. Ross.
- b. With Prof. Collins and the Rev. D. Lamont I visited St. Andrews and also Anstruther and I saw many historical places on this trip, while the caretaker of

- the Theological College, Mr. Anderson, showed me many historical places in the city of Edinburgh.
- c. More than once I was told that it was very regrettable that the schools were given over to the state in the 19th century. The consequence of this fact is that the young people of the Church are not educated enough in the Reformed way. The Church is trying to compensate this as much as possible.
 - d. Maybe the fact that there are no Reformed schools is also the reason why there is sometimes a problem with the young people in the Church who withdraw themselves sometimes from the Church.
 - e. I give some statistic data: the FCS has about 140 congregations, altogether about 170 ministers (five full-time professors and also the retired ministers included); there are eleven presbyteries, four Synods and one yearly General Assembly at Edinburgh. There are almost 6,000 members and 9,000 baptized members (the "adherents" included).

12. Conclusion

- a. According to my opinion the FCS shows the marks of the true Church and is to be recognized indeed as a true Church of Jesus Christ.
- b. For this reason it is right to offer relationship to the FCS and to discuss how to practice it, if this offer will be accepted.
- c. My advice is to start with sending the Acts of our General Synods, to ask for the Acts of their General Assemblies, and to invite one or more delegates to Canada.

Dr. K. DEDDENS

Appendix I

Books, Reviews, etc., received from the FCS

William D. Graham ed., *So We Preach (16 sermons)*, Knox Press, Edinburgh, 1976.

W.M. Mackay, *Thomas Chalmers*, Knox Press, Edinburgh, 1980.

Donald MacLeod a.o., *Hold Fast Your Confession*, Knox Press, Edinburgh, 1978.

James Walker, *The Theology and Theologians of Scotland 1560-1750*, Knox Press, Edinburgh, 1981 (repr.).

Yearbook 1987 of the Free Church of Scotland.

Copies of *From the Frontiers*, annual missionary review.

Reports to the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, 1987.

Copies of *The Bulwark magazine* of the Scottish Reformed Society, Edinburgh, 1985-1987.

Appendix II

Some titles and heads of sermons from *So We Preach*.

G.N.M. Collins, II Corinthians 6:1 *Partnership in Service*

1. The position occupied;
2. The power promised;
3. The prospect cherished.

J.D. MacMillan, Matthew 16:18 *Built on The Rock*

1. The enduring stability;
2. The envisaged structure;
3. The eternal security of the Church of Christ.

A.G. Ross, Exodus 3:2, *The Burning Bush*

1. A mystery that astonishes us;
2. An emblem that instructs us;
3. A magnet that attracts us.

F.A.J. MacDonald, Mark 1:8 *He will Baptize*

1. The power of the sacrament;
2. The privilege of the sponsors;
3. The position of the spectators.

H.G. MacKay, I Peter 5:10 *God's People in a Hostile World*

1. The Christian's situation;
2. The Christian's assets;
3. The Christian's promises.

APPENDIX II

THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

1. INTRODUCTION

The contact with the Free Church of Scotland (FCS) came into being especially via the Constituent Assembly for the International Conference of Reformed Churches, held in Groningen, the Netherlands, from October 26 to November 4, 1982. As a result of this contact Synod Kelmscott 1983 took the decision "to confirm that the FCS is a faithful Church of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts of Synod, Art. 75). The same Synod instructed deputies "to intensify the correspondence with this Church with the aim to establish full sister-church relationship with her."

Synod Launceston 1985 had to face several appeals against the above mentioned decision. It decided that the decision of Synod Kelmscott 1983 was taken "with undue haste and without due consideration." It instructed Deputies for Correspondence with Foreign Sister-Churches – now the "Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad" – "to thoroughly investigate the FRC, paying particular attention to the marks of the true Church and the question of the Church government" (Acts of Synod, Art. 43).

At the International Conference of Reformed Churches, held in Edinburgh, Scotland, from September 2-10, 1985, two delegates of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia have used the opportunity to speak extensively with delegates of the FCS. During their stay in Edinburgh they also attended two worship services of the FCS.

2. HISTORY

The roots of the FCS are to be found in the Reformation of the 16th and 17th century by John Knox and Andrew Melville. Its constant foe has been episcopacy and the unrelenting attempts of the state to gain dominance over the Church. Its authentic voice has been heard in the National Covenant of 1638. This document clearly states that the Church is not a department of the State and its spiritual jurisdiction must never be usurped by the State.

The battle regarding this issue, however, was not only to be fought during the 16th and 17th century, but the relationship between the Church and the State was also the main issue of the secessions during the 18th century, namely in 1733 and 1761. In both cases the Church had to defend her right to appoint ministers. In 1733 a heritor refused to appoint a certain Erskine as minister. This resulted in the institution of a separate Presbytery, called the "Secession Church." In 1761 the same issue was concerned, but now especially with respect to the authority of the General Assembly. One Gillespie was dismissed as minister and instituted a "Presbytery for Relief for Christians oppressed in their Church privileges." The Church originating from this secession was called "Relief Church."

Together with other seceded groups the "Secession Church" and "Relief Church" united in the "United Presbyterian Church" which in 1900 united with the majority

of the Free Church into the "United Free Church." In 1929 this "United Free Church" merged with the Church of Scotland.

In the meantime the Church of Scotland was confronted with a polarization between "moderates" who were influenced by Rationalism and "evangelicals" who were influenced by the Reveil. This polarization resulted in the Disruption of 1843 under the leadership of Thomas Chalmers. Those who signed the "Act of Separation and Deed of Demission" called themselves "Church of Scotland, Free." This addition "Free" later on became the proper name of this Church: Free Church. The issue at stake was once again the relationship between Church and State. Keeping the establishment-principle the Free Church also defended a principle of "non-intrusion" of the State in matters of the Church.

This Disruption of 1843 is seen as the third Reformation in Scotland.

1. The great Reformation of the 16th century.
2. The adoption of Presbyterianism in 1638 (The National Covenant).
3. The Disruption of 1843 (free from intrusion by government).

In 1846 the FCS built a theological college in Edinburgh. At present this is still the college for the training for the ministry of the Word within the Free Church. 474 out of 1226 ministers joined the Disruption, as well as 93 theological students. With the Disruption the FCS lost all Church property.

In 1863 the FCS started her first discussion with the "United Presbyterian Church" which ultimately resulted in a union of both Churches, called the "United Free Church." With this ecclesiastical reunion some were so fervent that they compromised on vital principles. Furthermore, within the United Free Church Liberalism in the form of the Higher Critical school made its impact felt, whilst also Revivalism under the leadership of Moody and Sanky with its Arminian stance gained a large following. Anti-confessionalism surfaced in its various forms.

All of these developments and others came to a head in the controversy surrounding the Declaratory Act. Properly understood a Declaratory Act, as its name suggests, was an act whereby a General Assembly would declare what it understood to be the true meaning, or meanings, of passages in the Westminster Standards whose importance might be uncertain. These Acts then functioned as explanatory Acts. However, in the movement for union between the FCS and the United Presbyterian Church which took place in the 1890s the Declaratory Act began to be used as a means of introducing doctrinal changes. Modifications were made in the doctrine of the corruption of man's whole nature by the fall, and in the matter of the Civil Magistrate. Allowances were made for "diversity of opinion" when it came to the Confession. The result was that the changes proposed and made were unacceptable to a minority of the members of the FCS. They voted against the union decided on in May 1900. Once again a minority found itself claiming to be the true continuation of the Church of Scotland. This Church claimed name and property with the authorities. In 1904 the House of Lords granted this claim, which in 1905 resulted in a fair division of Church property. The Free Church continued was once again called the Free Church of Scotland and it is this Church with which we have contact.

(The above-mentioned information is mostly derived from the report of deputies on Correspondence with foreign Churches of the GKN to Synod Groningen-Zuid, 1978 and from the report of the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad of the CRC to Synod Burlington-West, 1986. Furthermore, the book "The Heritage of our Fathers," written by Prof. G.N.M. Collins, is also used as reference.)

3. SITUATION

The Free Church of Scotland consists of about 140 congregations. These congregations are divided over nine Presbyteries (classes) which are under the jurisdiction of three regional synods. There is also a Synod of North America divided in two

Presbyteries, namely, Ontario/Western Canada and Prince Edward Island. The FCS had Mission Fields in South-Africa, Peru and India with respectively five, two and one missionaries. Furthermore, the FCS also supports the work of the Christian Witness to Israel. Close relations are maintained with the EPCI and the RPCI in Ireland and also with the PCEA in Australia.

The FCS maintains a theological college which has its seat in Edinburgh. It is acknowledged by university statute to train students for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity. It is supervised by the General Assembly via the training for the Ministry Committee. This Committee also deals with the admission of students. Amongst others the requirements for admission are a Bachelor of Arts degree as well as an attestation of the consistory (session) which has to testify that one is a communicant member. The training for the ministry consists of a four-year theological course. Five professors teach the following subjects:

- Apologetics and Practical Theology
- Greek and New Testament Literature
- Systematic Theology
- Church History and Church Principles
- Hebrew and Old Testament Literature

4. CONFSSIONAL STANDARDS

The subordinate standards of the FCS are the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, as well as the Scottish Confession of Faith, 1560.

5. MARKS OF THE TRUE CHURCH

5.1 The pure preaching of the Gospel

In the above-mentioned report of Deputies on Correspondence with Foreign Churches of the GKN to Synod Groningen-Zuid, 1978, it reads: "There is surely a subjectivistic tendency within the FCS, nevertheless this subjectivistic element does not dilute the pure preaching of the Gospel." This subjectivistic tendency differs locally. The set up of the sermons is different from the ones we are used to in Australia. Some are topical in approach, some have an experimental aspect, nevertheless it is still Scriptural and Reformed. This conclusion can be drawn from the reports of several people who attended worship services of the FCS. Homiletical approaches aside, the preaching is very sound.

5.2 The pure administration of the sacraments as Christ instituted them

Holy Supper is celebrated only once or twice a year. Usually the actual preparations begin already at mid-week and it is customary for two or three preparatory services to be held during that week. In those services the nature of the Supper is extensively dealt with, as well as the matter of admission to the Supper and the consequences of partaking with an unregenerate heart. Finally, on the Lord's Day itself the actual Supper is administered. There are voices demanding that Holy Supper should be celebrated more often. In this context a paper of Rev. J.D. Heenan may be mentioned in which is pleaded for a celebration even once every Sunday. He bases this on the term "breaking of bread" in the Acts of the Apostles.

As far as the administration of Holy Baptism is concerned the practice of infant baptism is an integral part of the Confession of the FCS. Adherents who faithfully attend the worship service are allowed to let their children be baptized. However, voices are heard from within the Free Church which express unhappiness with this situation, and refer to their Catechism which excludes this practice. There are no regular Catechism instructions. During the worship service in the morning the children go to Sunday School. They

leave just before the sermon starts. A year before they make profession of their faith they follow a special course. It is recognized by many a minister that the children ought to be present during the whole worship service. In this context the contact with the Reformed tradition will hopefully be very beneficial.

5.3 The exercise of Church discipline for correcting and punishing sins

On the matter of discipline the FCS is known for its strictness to Biblical norms. She defends and promotes very strongly the holiness of the Lord in the lives of its Churches and members. In this context it is worthwhile to quote some passages of "The practice of the Free Church of Scotland in her several courts." Chapter V of this book deals with discipline. The first paragraph of this chapter reads: "Church Discipline is held to be of great use and necessity in our ecclesiastical system. It is regarded as belonging to that government which Christ has instituted in the visible order of His kingdom, and which, by His institution, is essentially distinct from the government of civil magistrates." Paragraph two answers the question with whom Church Discipline deals. "It deals chiefly with Church members. But the adult children of adherents, are also amenable to it, when they fall into gross sin." Furthermore it is stated that "Church discipline admits of nothing as ground for its action but what has been declared censurable by the Word of God, or by some act of universal custom of the Church agreeable thereto." Distinction is also made between secret and public sins, whilst reference is made to the rule of Matthew 18 as well.

6. CHURCH POLITY

The information given in this paragraph is mainly derived from the above-mentioned book "The practice of the Free Church of Scotland in her several courts," which deals with:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Kirk-Session 2. The Deacons' Court 3. The Presbytery 4. The Provincial Synod 5. The General Assembly | } | its constitution, powers, and functions |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------------|

6.1 The Kirk-Session

Constitution

- The pastor or pastors of each congregation, along with a suitable number of elders, who are not pastors, constitute the Kirk-Session.
- Those elders who do not exercise the pastoral office are called ruling elders. These elders are elected for life, or until they cease to be members of the congregation, or their resignation be accepted of, or they be held and declared to have resigned through long absence from sessional meetings, or they be deposed.
- The election of ruling elders belongs, in the Free Church of Scotland, to the members of the congregation in full communion.
- The qualifications required of ruling elders are the following:
 - a. they must be in full communion with the congregation;
 - b. each of them must have attained the age of twenty-one years;
 - c. they must possess more or less of all the qualifications described in the New Testament, as needful for persons exercising spiritual oversight in the Church, whether such persons be designated in our translation by the term "bishop" or by the term "elder."
- An ordained minister who, from any cause not involving Church censure, is

without a pastoral charge, is eligible as a ruling elder in the congregation to which he belongs.

Powers and functions

- No one can be admitted to the privilege of Baptism or the Lord's Supper, without satisfying the Kirk-Session that he or she possesses these qualifications, viz.:
 - a. a confession of faith in accordance with the Word of God and the standards of the Church;
 - b. a life and conversation becoming the gospel, in so far as can be outwardly seen;
 - c. a competent knowledge of religious truth, and of the nature and meaning of Christian ordinances.
- A specially important function of the Kirk-Session is the exercise of discipline. This function belongs to the Kirk-Session exclusively in the first instance, with respect to all members and adherents of their congregation, except the pastor, who is specially subject to the immediate jurisdiction of the Presbytery.
- Every Kirk-Session has a right and is bound to elect one of the ruling elders belonging to their number, as a representative to the Presbytery and Provincial Synod of the bounds.

6.2 The Deacons' Court

Constitution

- The pastor or pastors of each congregation, along with the ruling elders and the deacons, constitute the Deacons' Court.
- The deacon's function is the administering of the temporal affairs of a congregation. The higher office scripturally includes the lower. The pastor and ruling elders are, therefore, not excluded from the exercise of the deacon's function. The number of deacons in each congregation ought to be in proportion to the size and position of the congregation. Deacons are also elected for life in the same way as the ruling elders (see above).
- The election of deacons belongs to the members of the congregation in full communion.

Powers and functions

- The Deacons' Court have charge of the whole property belonging to the congregation, or held for the congregations use by Trustees appointed in terms of deeds which the General Assembly has sanctioned; also of all the congregations secular affairs. They arrange for the Assembly's collections being taken and disposed of as instructed by the Assembly. The distribution of all the congregational funds is subject to the regulation of the Deacons' Court, in the exercise of their allowed discretion, or in obedience to the Presbytery, Synod, or General Assembly. They also attend to the temporal wants of the poor connected with the congregation.

6.3 The Presbytery

Constitution

- A Presbytery consists:
 - a. of all the pastors of the congregation within the bounds;
 - b. of the professors of theology, whose appointed sphere of labour is within the bounds;
 - c. of representative elders.

Powers and functions

- It is an important function of the Presbytery to consider carefully appeals and complaints affecting discipline, and to dispose of them in accordance with the Word of God and the laws of the Church.
- The Presbytery possesses inherently the function of deciding whether young men are qualified or not to be received into the number of enrolled students of theology, with a view to the pastoral office. It also has the function of examining them as to their qualification at any stage of their progress; of determining, in due time after examination, whether they may be licensed to preach the gospel or not, and of licensing them if they be found qualified. In the Free Church of Scotland, the exercise of these functions by the Presbytery is regulated by Acts of the General Assembly.
- It is the duty of the Presbytery to see that the ordinances are duly administered and discipline upheld in any congregation that may be vacant; to appoint one of their number as interim Moderator of its Kirk-Session; and to carry out the laws of the Church as to filling up the vacancy.

6.4 The Provincial Synod

Constitution

- A Provincial Synod consists:
 - a. of all the pastors of the congregations within the province;
 - b. of the professors of theology, whose appointed sphere of labour is within the province;
 - c. of the same representative elder from each Kirk-Session in the province, who represents it in the Presbytery to which it belongs;
 - d. of corresponding members, both ministers and elders, commissioned as such by neighbouring Synods.

Powers and functions

- A Provincial Synod is mainly a Court of Review especially regarding matters of discipline.

6.5 The General Assembly

Constitution

- The General Assembly differs from the Inferior Church Courts in the circumstance that, as a body, it has no permanent existence. Whatever powers of function belong to the General Assembly, belong to it entirely as a representative and temporary body.
- The General Assembly consists of an equal number of ministers and elders, commissioned annually by each recognized Presbytery of the Church. The exact number to be elected and commissioned by each Presbytery is fixed from time to time, by Act of Assembly, with consent of a majority of Presbyteries.

Powers and functions

- The General Assembly is also a Court of Review regarding complaints, appeals and petitions forwarded by Presbyteries and Synods.
- It has the authority to establish new Synods and Presbyteries.
- It may also dispose collections to be held in the Churches.
- Although the General Assembly is invested with the power of regulating the whole action of the Church in its Synods, Presbyteries, and Kirk-Sessions, it is still not regarded as having any lordly or absolutely binding authority. It is expected to act ministerially under Christ, and to carry out such rules as appear to harmonize with His own instructions in His Word. Consistent with

the principles of Presbyterian Government, all reasonable means ought to be taken for keeping the action of the Assembly in accordance with the general mind of the Church, inasmuch as all the ministers and ruling elders are entitled and called upon to judge for themselves as to the mind of the Great Head of the Church. Still it is held that, as Christ requires good order to be maintained in His Church, it is needful for the Assembly to act legislatively as well as judicially. But a particular course for procedure has been devised for preventing any innovation, and for securing due deliberation and harmony in the enactment of new laws, and in the alteration of old ones. An act (commonly called the Barrier Act) was passed in 1697 through which the course of procedure referred to has arisen. As to this Barrier Act this is more or less in line with approbating the Acts as it happens in our Churches, except that in the Free Church of Scotland this is not done by the Kirk-Session but by the Presbyteries.

- It is competent for the Assembly to pass Declaratory Acts. These are acts which declare what the Assembly understands the law of the Church to be. Such an act may be passed, without transmission to Presbyteries in terms of the Barrier Act, when it is generally agreed that the declaration is in accordance with the old law. But if there be much difference of opinion on the subject, and if the point enforced be new, in any considerable measure, to the existing ministers and ruling elders, it has been held that, before passing of such an act, an overture on the subject ought to be transmitted to Presbyteries, in terms of the Barrier Act.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- A. Although the Free Church of Scotland originates from another tradition than the FRCA, there is still fundamental unity in faith. As regards their Confessional Standards, although they differ in emphasis and formulation with our Confessions, they do give faithful expression to the Biblical truth.
- B. As regards the marks of the true Church it is evident that according to Art. 29, B.C. the Free Church of Scotland can be called a true and faithful Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. It governs itself according to the pure Word of God, whilst it really tries to reject all things contrary to it. The FCS takes resisting false doctrine seriously, whilst the preaching of the pure gospel is strongly emphasized.
- C. As regards Church Polity although the FCS adheres to the Presbyterian System many of the rules are similar to what is set out in our own Church Order.
- D. There is only one thing that might be considered as an impediment for maintaining a sister church relationship, namely that the FCS differs from us in interpreting such a relationship. In the Acts of the General Assembly of the FCS, 1982, it reads that such a full ecclesiastical relationship can hardly be practiced. As such they have no difficulties to give heed to one another that there is no deviation of the Reformed Confessions as far as doctrine, worship and Church government is concerned, but they wonder how this actually is to be maintained. Moreover, courteous as they are, they doubt if it is really their right when necessary to warn other Churches in this respect. Furthermore their rules regarding ecclesiastical relationship with other Presbyterian Churches differ from the rules we have. They have different levels of relationship, namely sister church relationship, brotherly contacts, and other contacts. The sister church relationship is only maintained with those Churches which are more or less daughters of the FCS, e.g. the EPCI and the PCEA.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Our Committee herewith recommends to Synod Albany 1987 to reconfirm that the Free Church of Scotland is a faithful Church of the Lord, showing the marks of the true Church as set out in Article 29 of the Belgic Confession of Faith and to propose to them to enter into a relationship of sisterchurches, on the basis of mutually accepted rules.

Appendix

Subscription Form to be subscribed by all office-bearers at the time of their admission.

I, _____, do hereby declare, that I do sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine contained in the Confessions of Faith, approved by former General Assemblies of this Church to be the truths of God; and I do own the same as the confession of my faith; as likewise I do own the purity of worship presently authorized and practiced in the Free Church of Scotland, and also the Presbyterian government, and discipline thereof; which doctrine, worship and Church government, I am persuaded, are founded on the Word of God, and agreeable thereto; I also approve of the general principles respecting the jurisdiction of the Church, and her subjection to Christ as her only Head, which are contained in the Claim of Right and in the Protest referred to in the questions already put to me; and I promise that, through the grace of God, I shall firmly and constantly adhere to the same, and to the utmost of my power shall, in my station, assert, maintain, and defend the said doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this Church, by Kirk-Sessions, Presbyteries, Provincial Synods, and General Assemblies, together with the liberty and exclusive jurisdiction thereof; and that I shall, in my practice conform myself to the said worship, and submit to the said discipline, government, and exclusive jurisdiction, and not endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion of the same; and I promise that I shall follow no divisive course from the doctrine, worship, discipline, government, and exclusive jurisdiction of this Church, renouncing all doctrines, tenets, and opinions whatsoever, contrary to, or inconsistent with, the said doctrine, worship, discipline, government, or jurisdiction of the same.

**Acts – Synod 1987 – Albany – FRCA
ARTICLE 82**

RELATIONS WITH CHURCHES ABROAD (SCOTLAND)

Committee 1 presents:

A MATERIAL – Agenda item 10.7a & b, (Section J) & 8.22

1. The report of deputies
2. The letter of br. P.W. Dekker

B OBSERVATIONS

- 1 The 1985 Synod gave Deputies for Contact with Churches Abroad the following mandate with respect to the F.C.S.:
 - a "to thoroughly investigate . . . the Free Church of Scotland . . . , and submit comprehensive reports to the churches and to the next synod, paying particular attention to the marks of the true church and the question of church government."
 - b "to maintain contact with these churches at the present level." (Acts of the 1985 Synod, Art. 43).
- 2 Deputies served synod with an extensive report. This report mentions o.a.:
 - a Two delegates from the FRCA have spoken extensively with delegates of the FCS during their stay in Edinburgh, while attending ICRC. During their stay in Edinburgh the two delegates also attended two worship services of the FCS.
 - b The FCS, in its history, has demonstrated a desire to remain faithful to the Word of the Lord.
 - c The FCS maintains close relations with the EPCI and the RPCI in Ireland, and also with the PCEA in Australia. It also has one synod in North America and Canada.
 - d The FCS maintains their Theological College in Edinburgh.
 - e The subordinate standards of the FCS are the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, as well as the Scottish Confession of Faith, 1560.
 - f Concerning the marks of the true church, deputies report:
 - 1 Though the preaching displays a "subjectivistic tendency," the preaching in the FCS "is still scriptural and reformed."
 - 2 Holy Supper is celebrated very infrequently, though with extensive preparation. Meanwhile, there are voices demanding that Holy Supper should be celebrated more often. With regards to attendance at Lord's supper, deputies report that:

"No one can be admitted to the privilege of baptism or the Lord's supper, without satisfying the Kirk-Session that he or she possesses these qualifications, viz.:

 - a a confession of faith in accordance with the Word of God and the standards of the church;
 - b a life and conversation becoming the gospel, insofar as can be outwardly seen;
 - c a competent knowledge of religious truth, and of the nature and meaning of christian ordinances."
 - 3 Despite the restrictions in the quote mentioned above, deputies report that adherents who faithfully attend the worship service are allowed to let their children be baptized. Deputies inform us that this anomaly has the attention of the churches.
 - 4 Re church discipline, the FCS is known for its strictness to Biblical norms. This discipline is extended also to "the adult children of adherents."

- g The FCS adheres to the traditional presbyterian church polity. Deputies report too that the FCS has a provincial synod.
 - h To prevent hierarchy, the FCS as adopted the "Barrier Act."
 - i The deputies conclude that between FRCA and FCS there is "fundamental unity of fait." Deputies are convinced that "according to Art. 29 BC the FCS can be called a true and faithful church of the Lord Jesus Christ."
 - j On this basis, deputies recommend to the 1987 Synod "to reconfirm that the FCS is a faithful church of the Lord." They further "propose to them to enter into a relationship of sister churches, on the basis of mutually accepted rules." Deputies report that the existing rules for sister church relations is inadequate for a relation with the FCS because the FCS has reservations about how such rules work in practice. Furthermore, the FCS knows "different levels of relationship."
- 3 Br. P.W. Dekker in his submission to synod,
- a wonders what the scriptural foundation for baptizing the children of adherents is. Br. Dekker notes that because the catechism of the FCS excludes this practice, the FCS is not adhering to its own confession.
 - b expresses his conviction that children being separated from the preaching of the Word in church is a serious matter.
 - c queries why adherents are allowed to partake in the Lord's supper seeing that they are not members of the church.
 - d sees dangerous hierarchy in the fact that
 - 1 the pastor is subject to the immediate jurisdiction of the presbytery.
 - 2 approbating the Acts of the General Assembly is not done by the Kirk-Session but by the presbyteries.
 Consequently br. P.W. Dekker concludes that "these churches haven't been shown to have the marks of the true church," and therefore disagrees with the deputies' recommendations to reaffirm the FCS as true and faithful, and so establish a sister church relationship.

C CONSIDERATIONS

- 1 The 1983 Synod "confirmed that the FCS "is a faithful church of the Lord" (Art. 75).
- 2 The 1985 Synod determined "The decisions recorded in Article 75 of the Acts of the 1983 Synod were taken with undue haste and without due consideration." Despite this judgment, the 1985 Synod did not feel that the decision of 1983 should be undone, since:

"Synod can only rescind a decision of a previous synod when that decision is proved to be in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order (Article 31 of the Church Order)."

 Instead, the Deputies for Relations with Churches Abroad were instructed as per mandate quoted in observation 1 above.
- 3 In the well-written report submitted by deputies, there is much information that gives reason for great thankfulness for the faithfulness found in these Scottish churches. These churches adhere to the infallible Scriptures as their supreme standard and to the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Scottish Confession of Faith of 1560 as their subordinate standards. Our churches have implicitly accepted these confessions as reformed.
- 4 The FCS have given a good testimony in withdrawing from the RES and in joining the ICRC instead. They also enjoy ecclesiastical contact with the GKN.
- 5 MARKS OF THE TRUE CHURCH
 - a *Preaching of the True Gospel*
By evaluating the training for the ministry, the pure doctrine maintained and the preaching itself the conclusion can be made that this mark is present.

b *Administration of the Sacraments*

Only the sacraments as instituted by Christ are administered. From their DIRECTORY FOR WORSHIP it is clear that the FCS administers them in a biblical manner.

The matter of adherents remains a matter of concern to them, even as the anomaly of communicant members not attending the Lord's supper concerned our reformed churches in the past. These adherents are mainly from the highlands where the conventicles and mysticism promoted an unhealthy antagonism towards church membership. These adherents are serious, attend church regularly, but are loathe to become members and to attend the Lord's supper (contrary to br. P.W. Dekker's understanding), though they desire baptism for their children. We conclude that there is a good movement to correct this anomaly by good instruction and sound preaching.

c *Discipline*

We conclude that a good, even strict, discipline is maintained in these churches in which the directives of Scripture, especially Matthew 18, are followed.

- 6 Concerning church polity one can gladly conclude that these covenanters have staunchly defended and practiced the essential principle of church government, i.e. that Jesus Christ is the only Head of the church. In addition to the usual presbyterian assemblies they include the provincial synods which approximate our regional/provincial synods.

The pastor's position (they are members of the kirk-session) does not demonstrate hierarchy. The local elders supervise them and report periodically to the presbytery. Also, local elders would initiate discipline against a minister by going to the presbytery. Though this system therefore does not equate ours it does not involve hierarchy.

- 7 We can conclude that the FCS is a faithful church of our Lord, according to Arts. 27-32, B.C.

- 8 Since the FCS has troubles accepting the rules for correspondence, we cannot expect them to accept a sister-church relationship on the basis of these rules. It is thus best to offer a temporary ecclesiastical relationship which shows them our sincerity in recognizing them, which requires official correspondence and discussion of items of mutual concern such as the rules for correspondence and the position of adherents and which demonstrates unity of like faith and practice.

Art. 67 of the 1985 Acts stipulated that recognition of another church as true and faithful means that an offer to them to become sister churches can be made.

This same decision acknowledges that there may be historical developments which form an obstacle to becoming sister-churches immediately. Art. 74 of the 1985 Acts allows for a formal relation of ecclesiastical contact as long as this relation does not become permanent and as long as it is actively used to come to relations as sister churches.

D RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Synod thanks the deputies for their work done.
- 2 Synod reaffirms the statement made by the 1983 Synod that the Free Church of Scotland is a faithful church of the Lord (Art. 75).
- 3 Synod instructs Deputies for Relations with Churches Abroad to move in the direction of becoming sister-churches with the FCS.
- 4 Synod instructs its deputies not to implement sister-church relations until mutually acceptable rules can be agreed upon.

- 5 In the meantime, Temporary Ecclesiastical Contact is to be established with the FCS, with the following rules:
 - a To invite delegates to each other's General Assemblies/Synods and to accord such delegates privileges of the floor in the assembly or synod but no vote.
 - b To exchange Minutes and Acts of each other's broadest assemblies as well as communications on major issues of mutual concern, specifically, the problem about the adherents, and to solicit comments on these documents.
 - c To be diligent by means of discussions to use the contact for the purpose of reaching a relation as sister-churches, specifically, to work out a set of mutually acceptable rules for relations as sister-churches.
- 6 Synod authorizes the deputies to send delegates to visit the FCS to help implement the above mentioned decisions.

UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED