
Day 1 — Morning Session
Tuesday, May 14, 2019

Article 1 – Opening of Synod

On behalf of the convening church, the Rev. Julius VanSpronsen called the meeting to order, welcoming all present, especially the delegates to GS 2019. He requested all who were present to sing Psalm 99:1,2,3 and then read 1 Timothy 6:11-21. After speaking some words on this passage (*Appendix 1*), he had the assembly sing Psalm 124 and then led in prayer. He spoke some words of introduction on the city of Edmonton, the Canadian Reformed Churches and NAPARC churches in the area, as well as information regarding pertinent logistics.

Article 2 – Credentials

The credentials were examined and found to be in good order. Twenty-two primary delegates and two alternate delegates were present and signed the attendance list.

Delegated by Regional Synod West November 2018:

Ministers: Dr. Karlo Janssen, Dr. Andrew Pol, Joe Poppe, James Slaa, Julius VanSpronsen, Bill Wielenga.

Elders: John DeHaas, Ken Huttema, Casey Leyenhorst, Harry Moes, Henry Schouten, Bert Vane.

Delegated by Regional Synod East November 2018:

Ministers: Douwe Agema, Clarence Bouwman, Peter Feenstra, Peter Holtvliuwer, John Louwerse, Clarence VanderVelde.

Elders: Ron Bremer (alt.) John Jager, Jeff Jans (alt.), Bernie Kottelenberg, Fred Stoffels, Dr. Art Witten.

Article 3 – Election of Officers

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

Chairman: D. Agema

Vice-chairman: J. Louwerse

First Clerk: K. Janssen

Second Clerk: P. Holtvliuwer

Article 4 – Constitution of Synod

On behalf of the convening church, the Rev. VanSpronsen declared Synod constituted. The elected officers took their places. The Rev. Agema thanked the assembly for the confidence expressed in the elected officers of Synod. He expressed appreciation to the convening church for all the work done in preparation for Synod. The chairman then called for a break to give the executive the opportunity to come with proposals regarding the proceedings of Synod and the division of tasks among the various members of Synod.

Synod adjourned for lunch.

Day 1 — Afternoon Session
Tuesday, May 14, 2019

45 **Article 5 – Reopening**

46 Synod reopened in plenary session. The chairman had the meeting sing Hymn 80:1,2. He read
47 the roll and noted all synod members were present.
48

49 **Article 6 – Housekeeping Matters**

50 The executive presented recommendations on housekeeping matters. Synod decided the
51 following:

- 52 1. *Presence on the Internet*: Synod will publish the *Acts of Synod* on the federation website as
53 they become available. However, as the *Acts* are adopted, Synod will decide whether there
54 are any decisions which should not be immediately posted on the Internet. Confidential acts
55 will not be posted.
- 56 2. *Privileges of the floor*: Synod will give the floor to all official representatives of the churches
57 in ecclesiastical fellowship.
- 58 3. *Time Schedule*: Monday to Friday
59 morning session – 9:00 - 12:00
60 afternoon session – 2:00 - 5:00
61 evening session – 7:00 - 9:00
- 62 4. *Devotions*: Synod shall begin and close each day in plenary session with Scripture reading,
63 prayer and singing. A schedule will be handed out.
- 64 5. *Press Release*: A press release shall be published after synod has been closed.
- 65 6. *Committees*: Advisory committees shall submit their proposals via email to the first clerk
66 before they are dealt with in plenary session. The first clerk will ensure distribution.
- 67 7. *Synod Documents*: Copies of synod documents are available only to members of synod and
68 fraternal delegates. Officially delegated observers will receive all non-confidential materials.
- 69 8. *Guidelines*: For all procedures the Guidelines for Synod shall apply.
- 70 9. *Travel expenses*: Expenses are to be submitted, with receipts, to br. Rob Duker.
- 71 10. *Roll call*: Roll call shall take place each plenary session by means of a visual check by the
72 executive.
- 73 11. *Advisory Committee Reports*: Advisory Committee reports shall be submitted to the first
74 clerk using the template provided.
75

76 **Article 7 – Late Submissions**

77 Regarding late submissions the executive recommended the following:

- 78 1. Letters from the churches interacting with the submissions from Hamilton-Blessings
79 CanRC (8.6.7 & 8.6.8) be declared admissible, since the Hamilton-Blessings CanRC
80 submitted them near the deadline.
81

82 **ADOPTED**

83 **Article 8 – Agenda**

- 85 1. Opening on behalf of the convening church
- 86 2. Examination of the credentials
- 87 3. Election of the officers
- 88 4. Constitution of Synod
- 89 5. Information from the convening church
- 90 6. Adoption of the agenda

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- 91 7. Setting of time schedule
- 92 8. Incoming mail
- 93 **8.1 General Matters**
- 94 8.1.1 Delegates to GS 2019 – RSW dd. Nov. 9, 2018
- 95 8.1.2 Nomination for Board of Governors – RSW dd. Nov. 14, 2018
- 96 8.1.3 Delegates to GS 2019 – RSE dd. Nov. 15, 2018
- 97 8.1.4 Nomination for Board of Governors – RSE dd. Nov 15, 2018
- 98 **8.2 Committee Reports**
- 99 8.2.1 Synod Guidelines
- 100 8.2.1.1 Synod Guidelines – GS 2016 Executive
- 101 8.2.2 Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA & CRCA-SRN)
- 102 8.2.2.1 Churches Abroad – CRCA
- 103 8.2.2.2 DGK – CRCA-SRN
- 104 8.2.2.3 GKN – CRCA-SRN
- 105 8.2.2.4 GKv – CRCA-SRN
- 106 8.2.2.5 GKN sister church request – CRCA-SRN
- 107 8.2.2.6 Ecclesiastical contact with DGK Marienberg - DGK Marienberg
- 108 8.2.2.7 Combined mandate CCCNA & CRCA – CRCA & CCCNA dd. Mar. 7, 2019
- 109 8.2.2.8 CRCA report on RCK – RCK dd. Mar. 8, 2019
- 110 8.2.2.9 CRCA report on RCK – CRCA dd. Mar. 15, 2019
- 111 8.2.2.10 Nominations CRCA – CRCA
- 112 8.2.2.11 Letter of greetings from GGRI
- 113 8.2.2.12 Letter of greetings from DGK
- 114 8.2.3 Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA)
- 115 8.2.3.1 Churches in North America
- 116 8.2.4 Committee for Church Unity (CCU)
- 117 8.2.4.1 URCNA – CCU
- 118 8.2.4.2 URCNA Church Order – CCU-SCO
- 119 8.2.4.3 URCNA Theological Education – CCU-STE
- 120 8.2.5 Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise (SCBP)
- 121 8.2.5.1 Book of Praise – SCBP
- 122 8.2.5.2 Nominations – SCBP
- 123 8.2.6 Archives
- 124 8.2.6.1 Inspection of Archives – Burlington-Rehoboth CanRC
- 125 8.2.7 Board of Governors
- 126 8.2.7.1 CRTS – Board of Governors
- 127 8.2.7.2 Board of Governors nomination letter for non-minister governor
- 128 8.2.7.3 Board of Governors letter for new professor
- 129 8.2.8 Committee for Pastoral Training Program Funding (CPTPF)
- 130 8.2.8.1 Pastoral Training Program Funding – Guelph-Emmanuel CanRC
- 131 8.2.9 Committee for Bible Translation
- 132 8.2.9.1 Bible Translation - CBT
- 133 8.2.10 Website
- 134 8.2.10.1 General Report - CWEB

- 135 8.2.10.2 Nominations - CWEB
- 136 8.2.10.3 Finances - CWEB
- 137 8.2.11 Needy Student Fund
- 138 8.2.11.1 Needy Student Fund – Grassie-Covenant CanRC
- 139 8.2.12 Days of Prayer
- 140 8.2.12.1 Days of Prayer – Burlington-Rehoboth CanRC & Edmonton-Providence
- 141 CanRC
- 142 8.2.12.2 Days of Prayer – Supplemental report dd. Nov. 17, 2018
- 143 8.2.13. General Fund
- 144 8.2.13.1 General Fund – Carman-East CanRC - Report
- 145 8.2.13.2 General Fund – Carman-West CanRC – Review
- 146 8.3 Letters from the Churches regarding the reports
- 147 8.3.1 Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA)
- 148 8.3.1.1 The Netherlands
- 149 8.3.1.1.1 GKv – Guelph-Emmanuel CanRC dd. Feb. 4, 2019
- 150 8.3.1.1.2 DGK – Flamborough-Redemption CanRC dd. Feb. 16, 2019
- 151 8.3.1.1.3 GKv – Flamborough-Redemption CanRC dd. Feb. 16, 2019
- 152 8.3.1.1.4 GKN – Flamborough-Redemption CanRC dd. Feb. 16, 2019
- 153 8.3.1.1.5 GKv – Fergus-North CanRC dd. Feb. 25, 2019
- 154 8.3.1.1.6 GKv – Hamilton-Cornerstone CanRC dd. Mar. 7, 2019
- 155 8.3.1.1.7 GKv – Houston CanRC dd. Mar. 13, 2019
- 156 8.3.1.1.8 General – Carman-West CanRC dd. Feb. 18, 2019
- 157 8.3.1.1.9 GKv – Burlington-Ebenezer CanRC Mar. 18, 2019
- 158 8.3.1.1.10 GKv – Barrhead CanRC
- 159 8.3.1.1.11 GKv – Winnipeg-Grace CanRC dd. Mar. 21, 2019
- 160 8.3.1.1.12 GKv - Orangeville CanRC – dd. Mar. 30, 2019
- 161 8.3.1.2 GGRI-Timor – Smithville CanRC dd. Feb. 4, 2019
- 162 8.3.1.3 IRCK – Smithville CanRC dd. Feb. 4, 2019
- 163 8.3.1.4 RCK – Smithville CanRC dd. Feb. 4, 2019
- 164 8.3.1.5 GGRC – Smithville CanRC dd. Feb. 4, 2019
- 165 8.3.1.6 GGRC – Lincoln-Vineyard CanRC dd. Mar. 9, 2019
- 166 8.3.1.7 IRCK – Hamilton-Cornerstone CanRC dd. Mar. 7, 2019
- 167 8.3.1.8 General – Burlington-Rehoboth CanRC dd. Mar. 20, 2019
- 168 8.3.1.9 General – Attercliffe CanRC
- 169 8.3.2 Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA)
- 170 8.3.2.1 General – Dunnville CanRC dd. Dec. 18, 2018
- 171 8.3.2.2 FRCNA – Lincoln-Vineyard CanRC dd. Mar. 9, 2019
- 172 8.3.2.3 HRC – Lincoln-Vineyard CanRC dd. Mar. 9, 2019
- 173 8.3.2.4 CRCA&CCCNA – Toronto-Bethel CanRC dd. Mar. 17, 2019
- 174 8.3.2.5 HRC – Toronto-Bethel CanRC dd. Mar. 17, 2019
- 175 8.3.2.6 General – Attercliffe CanRC dd. Mar. 28, 2019
- 176 8.3.2.7 EF rules & tiered relationships - Grassie-Covenant CanRC dd. Mar. 27, 2019
- 177 8.3.2.8 CRCA&CCCNA – Spring Creek CanRC dd. Feb. 20, 2019

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- 178 8.3.2.9 PCA – Flamborough-Redemption CanRC dd. Feb. 16, 2019
179 8.3.3 Committee for Church Unity (CCU)
180 8.3.3.1 General – Winnipeg-Redeemer CanRC dd. Jan. 14, 2019
181 8.3.3.2 General – Barrhead CanRC n.d.
182 8.3.3.3 General – Attercliffe CanRC dd. Mar. 28, 2019
183 8.3.3.4 General – Lynden ARC dd. Mar. 17, 2019
184 8.3.4 Board of Governors of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary (CRTS)
185 8.3.4.1 General – Willoughby Heights CanRC dd. Feb. 18, 2019
186 8.3.4.2 Principals of the College - Coaldale CanRC
187 8.3.4.3 Principal appointment – Toronto-Bethel CanRC dd. Mar. 13, 2019
188 8.3.4.4 Changes to By-Laws and Handbook – Brampton-Grace CanRC dd. Mar. 27,
189 2019
190 8.3.5 Committee for Bible Translations (CBT)
191 8.3.5.1 Mandate – Willoughby Heights CanRC dd. Feb. 18, 2019
192 8.3.5.2 NIV – Fergus-North CanRC dd. Feb. 25, 2019
193 8.3.5.3 General – Attercliffe CanRC dd. Mar. 28, 2019
194 8.3.5.4 General – Grassie-Covenant CanRC dd. Mar. 27, 2019
195 8.3.6 Committee for the Needy Students’ Fund (NSF)
196 8.3.6.1 Ownership of fund - Willoughby Heights CanRC dd. Feb. 18, 2019
197 8.3.7 Standing Committee for the Book of Praise (SCBP)
198 8.3.7.1 General – Willoughby Heights CanRC Feb. 18, 2019
199 8.3.7.2 General – Smithville CanRC dd. Feb. 4, 2019
200 8.3.7.3 General – Lincoln CanRC dd. Mar. 9, 2019
201 8.3.7.4 General – Carman-West CanRC dd. Feb. 18, 2019
202 8.3.7.5 General – Ancaster CanRC n.d.
203 8.3.7.6 General – Fergus-Maranatha CanRC dd. Mar. 30, 2019
204 8.3.7.7 General – Aldergrove CanRC Mar. 29, 2019
205 8.3.7.8 Wording of Hymn 1 – Winnipeg-Grace CanRC dd. Feb. 14, 2019
206 8.3.8 Committee for the Official Website Report
207 8.3.8.1 Email services – Burlington-Ebenezer CanRC dd. Mar. 18, 2019
208 8.3.8.2 Email services – Barrhead CanRC n.d.
209 8.3.8.3 Email services – Toronto-Bethel CanRC dd. Mar. 17, 2019
210 8.3.8.4 Email services – Grassie-Covenant CanRC dd. Mar. 27, 2019
211 8.3.8.5 Email services – Burlington-Rehoboth CanRC n.d.
212 8.3.8.6 Email services – Taber CanRC dd. Mar. 27, 2019
213 8.3.8.7 Email services – London-Pilgrim CanRC dd. Mar. 21, 2019
214 8.3.8.8 General – Orangeville CanRC dd. Apr. 2, 2019
215 **8.4 Overtures**
216 8.4.1 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – RSW 2018 – Aldergrove – CPE overture
217 8.4.1.1 Letter from RSW Nov 2018 re overtures
218 8.4.1.2 RSW 19-1.1: Aldergrove CanRC – CPE overture
219 8.4.1.3 RSW 19-1.3 Nooksack Valley ARC submission
220 8.4.1.4 RSW 19-1.4: Chilliwack CanRC submission

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- 221 8.4.1.5 RSW 19-1.5: Lynden ARC submission
- 222 8.4.2 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – RSW 2018 (Denver – CM overture)
- 223 8.4.2.1 RSW 19-1.2: Denver ARC – CM overture
- 224 8.4.3. Licensure – RSW 2018 (CPW; Willoughby Heights CanRC)
- 225 8.4.4. Licensure – RSE 2018 (COW; Hamilton-Cornerstone CanRC), appended with:
- 226 8.4.4.1 Markings to RSE 2018 overture “implementation of CO 21”
- 227 8.4.5. Lord Supper Form – RSE 2018 (CCO; Toronto-Bethel CanRC)
- 228 **8.5 Letters from the churches regarding the overtures**
- 229 8.5.1 Lord’s Supper Form - Willoughby Heights CanRC dd. Feb. 18, 2019
- 230 8.5.2 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – Dunnville CanRC dd. Dec. 18, 2018
- 231 8.5.3 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – Elora CanRC dd. Jan. 26, 2019
- 232 8.5.4 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – Fergus-North CanRC dd. Feb. 25, 2019
- 233 8.5.5 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – Guelph-Living Word CanRC dd. Mar. 11, 2019
- 234 8.5.6 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – Ottawa-Jubilee CanRC dd. Mar. 15, 2019
- 235 8.5.7 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – Carman-West CanRC dd. Feb. 18, 2019
- 236 8.5.8 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – Burlington-Ebenezer CanRC dd. Mar. 18, 2019
- 237 8.5.9 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – Ancaster CanRC dd. Mar. 18, 2019
- 238 8.5.10 Lord’s Supper Form – Barrhead CanRC n.d.
- 239 8.5.11 Licensure – Barrhead CanRC n.d.
- 240 8.5.12 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – Barrhead CanRC n.d.
- 241 8.5.13 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – Hamilton-Cornerstone CanRC n.d.
- 242 8.5.14 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – Grand Rapids ARC dd. Mar. 28, 2019
- 243 8.5.15 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – Toronto-Bethel CanRC dd. Mar. 13, 2019
- 244 8.5.16 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – Calgary CanRC dd. Apr. 1, 2019
- 245 8.5.17 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – Grassie-Covenant CanRC dd. Mar. 27, 2019
- 246 8.5.18 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – Burlington-Fellowship CanRC dd. Mar. 29, 2019
- 247 8.5.19 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – Glanbrook-Trinity CanRC n.d.
- 248 8.5.20 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – Lynden ARC dd. Mar. 13, 2019
- 249 8.5.21 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – Orangeville CanRC dd. Mar. 30, 2019
- 250 8.5.22 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – Neerlandia CanRC dd. Feb. 11, 2019
- 251 8.5.23 Lord’s Supper form – Winnipeg–Grace CanRC dd. Feb. 14, 2019
- 252 8.5.24 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – Fergus-Maranatha CanRC dd. Mar. 30, 2019
- 253 8.5.25 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – St. Albert CanRC dd. Apr. 1, 2019
- 254 8.5.26 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal – Edmonton-Immanuel CanRC dd. Apr. 2, 2019
- 255 **8.6 Appeals**
- 256 8.6.1 GS 2016 Art. 87 re: GS 2013 Art. 110 (Women’s Voting)
- 257 8.6.1.1 Chilliwack CanRC dd. Jan. 2, 2019
- 258 8.6.2 RSE May 16, 2018 Art. 7
- 259 8.6.2.1 Orangeville CanRC dd. Oct. 17, 2018
- 260 8.6.3 RSE Nov. 2017 (Trinity Psalter-Hymnal)
- 261 8.6.3.1 Burlington-Rehoboth CanRC dd. Oct. 1, 2018
- 262 8.6.3.2 Flamborough-Redemption CanRC dd. Feb. 16, 2019, appended with:
- 263 8.6.3.2.1 Acts of Regional Synod East 2017
- 264 8.6.3.2.2 Trinity Psalter-Hymnal Principles and Guidelines
- 265 8.6.3.2.3 Standing Committee for the Book of Praise report 2004

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- 266 8.6.3.3 Burlington-Ebenezer CanRC dd. Mar. 18, 2019
- 267 8.6.4. RSE May 2018, Art. 7
- 268 8.6.4.1 T. Bosma, appended with
- 269 8.6.4.1.1 Broader Assemblies’ Responses. RSE 2017, Acts of Early RSE 2018,
- 270 Early RSE 2018, Classis Niagara 2017
- 271 8.6.4.1.2 T. Bosma’s Appeal to RSE 2018
- 272 8.6.4.1.3 Letters referenced in appeal to General Synod 2019. T. Bosma
- 273 8.6.4.2 C. Sloots, appended with
- 274 8.6.4.2.1 Ref C. Sloots – Appeal to Early Convocation May RSE 2018-CSLOOTS
- 275 8.6.4.2.2 Ref C. Sloots – Broader assemblies’ responses
- 276 8.6.4.2.3 Ref C. Sloots - C. Sloots. Referenced materials from appeal to General
- 277 Synod 2019
- 278 8.6.4.3 Lincoln CanRC re T. Bosma dd. Apr. 2, 2019
- 279 8.6.4.4 Lincoln CanRC re C. Sloots dd. Apr. 2, 2019
- 280 8.6.5. RSW 2017, Article 5 (marriage after divorce)
- 281 8.6.5.1 J & M deBoer, appended with
- 282 8.6.5.1.1 J & M Deboer -Ref - Appeal Regional Synod West
- 283 8.6.5.1.2 J & M Deboer -Ref - Regional Synod response
- 284 8.6.5.1.3 J & M Deboer -Ref - Classis decision re appeal
- 285 8.6.5.1.4 J & M Deboer -Ref - Classis appeal 13 pages
- 286 8.6.6GS 2016 Art. 53 and GS 2013 Art. 62
- 287 8.6.6.1 Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford
- 288 8.6.7 GS 1983 Art. 145 (expression “confessions” in liturgical forms)
- 289 8.6.7.1 Request of Hamilton-Blessings CanRC
- 290 8.6.7.1.1 Reaction to request, Dunnville CanRC dd. Mar. 28, 2019
- 291 8.6.7.1.2 Reaction to request, Guelph-Emmanuel CanRC dd. Apr 2, 2019
- 292 8.6.7.1.3 Reaction to request, Grand Rapids ARC dd. Mar 29, 2019
- 293 8.6.8 RSE Nov 14, 2018 (modifying CO art. 55)
- 294 8.6.8.1 Hamilton-Blessings CanRC
- 295 8.6.8.1.1 Reaction to appeal, Grand Rapids ARC dd. Mar. 29, 2019
- 296 8.6.8.1.2 Reaction to appeal, Lincoln-Vineyard CanRC dd. Ap.6, 2019
- 297 8.6.8.1.3 Reaction to appeal, Chilliwack CanRC dd. Apr. 25, 2019
- 298 8.6.8.1.4 Reaction to appeal, Winnipeg-Redeemer CanRC, Mar. 29, 2019
- 299 8.6.8.1.5 Reaction to appeal, Guelph-Emmanuel dd. Apr. 2, 2019
- 300 8.6.9. RSW Art. 5 & 19
- 301 8.6.9.1 Chilliwack CanRC
- 302 8.6.10 GS 2016 Art. 111
- 303 8.6.10.1 Neerlandia CanRC
- 304 8.6.11 RSW 2018 Art. 7 & 18
- 305 8.6.11.1 Neerlandia CanRC
- 306 8.6.11.2 S. Viersen
- 307 8.6.12 GS 2016 Art. 103 (confidentiality of the acts)
- 308 8.6.12.1 Spring Creek CanRC, appended with
- 309 8.6.12.1.1 Article 103 General Synod 2016 Confidential

- 310 9. Appointments
311 10. Censure *ad* Article 34 CO
312 11. Publication of the Acts
313 12. Financial Matters - wages claim
314 13. Preparation for next General Synod
315 14. Adoption of the Acts
316 15. Approval of the Press Release
317 16. Closing

318
319 **Article 9 – Advisory Committees**

320 The following advisory committees were appointed:

321 **Committee 1:**

322 C. VanderVelde (convener/reporter), P. Feenstra, B. Kottelenberg, J. Jager, F. Stoffels.
323 Materials: Appeal RSW 2017 art. 5 (8.6.5); Appeal RSW 2018 art. 7 & 18 (8.6.11); Appeal GS
324 2016 art. 87 (8.6.1.1); Committee for Bible Translation (8.2.9); Appeal GS 2016 art. 111
325 (8.6.10.1).

326 **Committee 2:**

327 J. Slaa (convener/reporter), J. Poppe, H. Moes, K. Huttema, H. Schouten.
328 Materials: Appeal RSE May 2018 art. 7 (8.6.2); Appeal RSE May 2018 art. 7 (8.6.4.1-4);
329 Committee for Pastoral Training Program Funding (8.2.8); Committee for Needy Students'
330 Fund (8.2.11); Licensure Overture (8.4.3;8.4.4; 8.5.11).

331 **Committee 3:**

332 C. Bouwman (convener/reporter), A.J. Pol, C. Leyenhorst, R. Bremer, B. Vane.
333 Materials: Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (8.2.2.1-12; 8.3.1.1-9); Committee for
334 Contact with Churches in North America (8.2.3.1; 8.3.2.1-8.3.2.9); Coordinators for Church
335 Unity; (8.2.4.1-3; 8.3.3.1-4); Appeal GS 2016 art. 53 and GS 2013 art. 62 (8.6.6.1); Appeal
336 GS 2016 art. 103 (8.6.12.1); Committee for the Website (8.2.10.1-3; 8.3.8.1-8); Appeal RSE
337 Nov 2018 art. 8 (8.6.8.1; 8.6.8.1.1-5).

338 **Committee 4:**

339 J. VanSpronsen (convener/reporter), B. Wielenga, A. Witten, J. Jans, J. DeHaas.
340 Material: Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise* (8.2.5; 8.2.5.1-2); *Trinity Psalter-Hymnal*
341 Overtures and related materials (8.4.1.1-5; 8.4.2.1; 8.5.2-9,12-22,24-26); Appeal RSE 2017
342 (8.6.3.1-2); Appeal RSW 2018 art. 5 & 19 (8.6.9.1); LS forms overture (8.4.5; 8.5.1; 8.5.10;
343 8.5.23).

344 **Committee 5 (executive):**

345 D. Agema (convener/reporter), P. Holtvlüwer, K. Janssen, J. Louwerse.
346 Material: Appeal GS 1983 art. 145 etc. (8.6.7); Board of Governors (8.1.4; 8.2.7; 8.3.4; 8.1.2);
347 Archives (8.2.6); General Fund (8.2.13); Days of Prayer (8.2.12); Address Church (no
348 report); Appointments (9); Preparation for next synod (13); Synod Guidelines (8.2.1).

349
350 *Following some final comments from the chairman regarding procedures, seating arrangements,*
351 *and the evening session, Synod adjourned for committee work until 8:00pm.*

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353
354

Day 1 — Evening Session
Tuesday, May 14, 2019

355 **Article 10 – Reopening**

356 Synod reopened in plenary session. The chairman had the meeting sing Psalm 84:1,2. He noted
357 all synod members were present.
358

359 **Article 11 – GGRI – Letter of Greetings**

360 The Rev. Janssen read a letter of greeting sent by the Reformed Churches of Indonesia (GGRI),
361 declaring gratitude for our relationship and expressing regret at being unable to attend synod in
362 person on account of lack of funds. The full text of the letter can be found in [Appendix 2](#).
363

364 **Article 12 – ERQ – Fraternal Delegate Address**

365 The Rev. Feenstra introduced the Rev. Ben Westerveld, credentialed delegate of the Reformed
366 Churches in Quebec (ERQ). The Rev. Westerveld addressed synod describing the ERQ and its
367 ministries, and expressing gratitude for our sister church relationship. The full text of his address
368 can be found in [Appendix 3](#).
369

370 **Article 13 – FCC – Fraternal Delegate Address**

371 Elder Schouten introduced Elder Dr. James Wanliss, credentialed delegate of the Free Church of
372 Scotland (Continuing) (FCC). Elder Wanliss addressed synod describing the FCC, its worship
373 and outreach efforts, its history and distinctives, and expressing gratitude for our unity in faith.
374 The full text of his address can be found in [Appendix 4](#).
375

376 **Article 14 – RCUS – Fraternal Delegate Address**

377 The Rev. Pol introduced the Rev. Travis Grassmid, credentialed delegate of the Reformed
378 Church of the United States (RCUS). The Rev. Grassmid addressed synod expressing
379 appreciation for the relationship with the CanRC and urging the Synod to be faithful to the Word
380 in the matters before it. He briefly discussed matters the RCUS has been and is dealing with. The
381 full text of his address can be found in [Appendix 5](#).
382

383 **Article 15 – Closing Devotions**

384 The chairman made some announcements regarding agenda items and housekeeping matters.
385 The Rev. Holtvliwer had those present sing Psalm 101:1,2,3. He read Philippians 1:1-11 and
386 spoke some words of meditation and encouragement. He then had those present sing Psalm
387 16:1,4 and led in prayer, among others for the ERQ, FCC, and RCUS.
388

389 *Synod adjourned until 9:00am the next day.*
390

391 **Day 2 — Morning Session**
392 **Wednesday, May 15, 2019**

393 **Article 16 – Reopening**

394 Synod reopened in plenary session. The chairman noted all synod members were present. He
395 read Psalm 119:1-8, spoke some words, led in prayer, and had those present sing
396 Psalm 119:1,2,3. Some housekeeping matters were dealt with. A newly arrived fraternal observer
397 was welcomed.
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399 **Article 17 – Adoption of Acts**

400 Prepared articles of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

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Article 18 – FCC (Free Church of Scotland (Continuing))

1. Material

- 1.1 Report of the Committee on Relations for Churches Abroad (CRCA) regarding the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) (FCC) (8.2.2.1)

2. Observations

- 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 45) decided concerning the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing):
 - [4.1] To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) (FCC) under the adopted rules;
 - [4.2] To mandate the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA):
 - [4.2.1] To continue personal contact with the FCC whenever that is feasible (e.g., at meetings of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC), mutual presence at assemblies of sister-churches, and to send a delegation to their assemblies at least once every three years.
 - [4.2.2] To encourage the congregations to seek out and strengthen ties with local FCC congregations in North America.
- 2.2 There is an FCC mission post in Smith Falls, Ontario, in the vicinity of the Ottawa-Jubilee CanRC.
- 2.3 The CRCA reports that they have visited the General Assembly of the FCC (GA-FCC) in May, 2017, and reviewed the materials for this GA. On the basis of that review and visit, they conclude that “the FCC desires to be a faithful church of Jesus Christ.”
- 2.4 There is no report concerning the GAs of 2016 or 2018.
- 2.5 The CRCA recommends to continue the relationship with the FCC.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The committee is positive about the faithfulness of the FCC. However, for Synod to be able to evaluate the CRCA’s assessment, it would have been helpful to receive more information. For example, there is no information concerning the GAs of 2016 and 2018.

4. Recommendations

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To continue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship (EF) with the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) (FCC) under the adopted rules;
- 4.2 To mandate the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA):
 - 4.2.1 To continue personal contact with the FCC whenever that is feasible (e.g., at meetings of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC), and mutual presence at assemblies of sister churches;
 - 4.2.2 To encourage the congregations to seek out and strengthen ties with local FCC congregations in North America.
 - 4.2.3 To send a delegation to their assemblies at least once every three years;
 - 4.2.4 To submit its report to the churches 6 months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

ADOPTED

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446 *Synod was adjourned until 2:00pm for committee work.*

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448 **Day 2 — Afternoon Session**
449 **Wednesday, May 15, 2019**

450 **Article 19 – Reopening**

451 Synod reopened in plenary session. The chairman had the meeting sing Psalm 90:1,2. He noted
452 all synod members were present.

453
454 **Article 20 – Synod Guidelines – Motion from the floor**

455 It was moved by Elder A. Witten and seconded by the Rev. C.J. VanderVelde that the following
456 be added to the Guidelines for General Synod as I.4 – voting: “The tabulation of votes of
457 decisions made in open plenary sessions – upon request – may be recorded.”

458 A motion to amend was moved and seconded, to have “upon request” read “upon request by two
459 delegates at general synod”. The amendment was taken over by the movers.

460 Following discussion the motion was

461
462 **DEFEATED**

463
464 **Article 21 – FCS (Free Church of Scotland)**

465 **1. Material**

- 466 1.1 Report of the Committee on Relations for Churches Abroad (CRCA) regarding the Free
467 Church of Scotland (FCS) (8.2.2.1)

468 **2. Observations**

- 469 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 46) decided concerning the Free Church of Scotland:

470 [4.1] To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Free Church of Scotland
471 (FCS) under the adopted rules;

472 [4.2] To mandate the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA):

473 [4.2.1] To continue personal contact with the FCS whenever that is feasible (e.g., at
474 meetings of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC),
475 mutual presence at assemblies of sister-churches, and to send a delegation to
476 their assemblies at least once every three years.

477 [4.2.2] To encourage the congregations to seek out and strengthen ties with local
478 FCS congregations in North America.

- 479 2.2 There are no FCS congregations in the vicinity of CanRCs; there are several
480 congregations on Prince Edward Island.

481 2.3 The CRCA reports that they have visited the General Assembly (GA) of May, 2017, and
482 reviewed the materials for this GA. On the basis of that review and visit, they conclude
483 that “the FCS desires to be a faithful church of Jesus Christ.”

484 2.4 There is no report concerning the annual GAs of 2016 or 2018.

485 2.5 The CRCA recommends to continue the relationship with the FCS.

486 **3. Considerations**

- 487 3.1 There is no point in continuing the mandate “to seek out and strengthen ties with local
488 FCS congregations in North America,” given that there are no FCS congregations near
489 CanRCs.
- 490 3.2 The committee is positive about the faithfulness of the FCS. However, for synod to be
491 able to evaluate the CRCA’s assessment, it would have been helpful to receive more
492 information. For example, there is no information concerning the GAs of 2016 and
493 2018.

494 **4. Recommendations**

495 That Synod decide:

- 496 4.1 To continue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship (EF) with the Free Church of
497 Scotland (FCS) under the adopted rules;
- 498 4.2 To mandate the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA):
- 499 4.2.1 To continue personal contact with the FCS whenever that is feasible (e.g., at
500 meetings of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC), and
501 mutual presence at assemblies of sister churches);
- 502 4.2.2 To send a delegation to their assemblies at least once every three years;
- 503 4.2.3 To submit its report to the churches 6 months prior to the convening of the next
504 general synod.

505 **ADOPTED**

506 **Article 22 – ERQ (Reformed Church of Quebec)**

507 **1. Material**

- 508 1.1 Report of the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA)
509 regarding the Reformed Church of Quebec (ERQ) (8.2.3.1)
- 510 1.2 Letter from the following CanRC: Attercliffe (8.3.2.6)

511 **2. Observations**

- 512 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 59) decided concerning the ERQ:
- 513 [4.1] To thank the Lord for the faithful Reformed witness provided in and by the ERQ;
514 continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the ERQ under the adopted rules;
- 515 [4.2] To mandate the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America
516 (CCCNA) to continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the
517 ERQ under the adopted rules;
- 518 [4.3] To involve the fraternal delegates in discussions at synods in such a way as to
519 honour the sister-to-sister-church relationship;
- 520 [4.4] To encourage the churches to support the ERQ prayerfully and financially in their
521 missionary endeavours and special projects.
- 522 2.2 The CCCNA had frequent interactions with the ERQ committee and attended ERQ
523 synods. They provide details relating to how we support one another in God’s service.
524 For example, regarding the issue of the interpretation of Genesis 1, the ERQ decided not
525 to make separate doctrinal pronouncements beside the confessions. However, our
526 committee noted that the ERQ synod did decide to add specific questions regarding this
527
528

529 issue during the examination of ministers and elders. The CanRC delegates were
530 privileged to witness two elder examinations in person.

531 2.3 The Attercliffe CanRC requests that we continue discussions on points of doctrine
532 where we differ on and continue to build each other up.

533 2.4 The CCCNA recommends to continue the relationship with the ERQ.

534 **3. Considerations**

535 3.1 With gratitude we note the faithfulness that the CCCNA could observe within the ERQ
536 and the fruitfulness of our contact together.

537 3.2 GS 2016 Art. 59 Cons. 3.4 already addressed the point raised by Attercliffe, “When we
538 enter EF we accept each other as faithful churches without qualifications. Differences
539 that were noted and discussed prior to EF, but which did not hinder entering EF, do not
540 require resolution. It is incorrect to speak of ‘outstanding differences.’ The word
541 ‘outstanding’ implies a need for resolution. Bringing up these issues repeatedly, without
542 proper proof of necessity, is potentially damaging to sister-church relationships.
543 Discussion of these issues may take place naturally in the course of EF, but a specific
544 mandate, identifying particular issues, need not be given.”

545 **4. Recommendations**

546 That Synod decide:

547 4.1 To continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Reformed
548 Church of Quebec (ERQ) under the adopted rules;

549 4.2 To encourage the churches to support the ERQ prayerfully and financially in their
550 missionary endeavours and special projects.

551 4.3 To mandate the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA):

552 4.3.1 To maintain contact with the ERQ according to the adopted rules;

553 4.3.2 To submit its report to the churches 5 months prior to the convening of the next
554 general synod.

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556 **ADOPTED**

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558 **Article 23 – Overture RSE Nov. 2018 regarding Lord’s Supper forms**

559 **1. Material**

560 1.1 Overture from Regional Synod East (RSE) Nov. 2018 (8.4.5)

561 1.2 Letters from the following CanRC: Willoughby Heights (8.5.1), Barrhead (8.5.10),
562 Winnipeg-Grace (8.5.23)

563 **2. Observations**

564 2.1 RSE Nov. 2018 overtures General Synod 2019 “to revise the Forms for Celebration of
565 the Lord’s Supper by replacing gender specific pronouns intended to include both
566 genders with pronouns that overtly include both genders where it is appropriate.”

567 2.1.1 RSE Nov. 2018 observes:

568 2.1.1.1 The English language has changed, and the use of the masculine pronoun to
569 refer to both genders has become linguistically inaccurate;

570 2.1.1.2 The masculine pronouns in the forms for the Lord’s Supper make them liable
571 to misinterpretation, given the current usage of the English language.

572 2.1.2 RSE Nov. 2018 gives the following rationale:

573 2.1.2.1 Historically the Reformed Church since the Reformation has insisted that the
574 language of the worship services be in the vernacular. For example, the
575 Reformation Bible translators insisted on using the common language of the
576 people.

577 2.1.2.2 For Canadian Reformed worship services to speak meaningfully and with
578 unambiguous clarity to our society, it is necessary to eschew all possible
579 misinterpretation and misunderstanding. For example, many of our
580 contemporaries would understand masculine pronouns to exclude women. If
581 a minister were to begin his sermon with “Brothers in the Lord Jesus...” this
582 would be considered inappropriate.

583 2.2 The churches make the following points:

584 2.2.1 The Willoughby Heights CanRC supports the intent of the overture and suggests
585 appointing a committee to present GS 2022 with revised texts for the Lord’s
586 Supper forms. Willoughby Heights notes that it does not consider it proper for
587 General Synod to adopt revised texts for liturgical forms without the input of the
588 churches.

589 2.2.2 The Barrhead CanRC finds “that the adjustment of pronouns would be an
590 improvement which would more clearly relay the sense of the content in the Forms
591 as applying equally to all.” Barrhead questions the timing of making such a
592 change, as the newest version of the *Book of Praise* is only five years old and the
593 urgency of such an update is disputable. They suggest that the SCBP be mandated
594 to study this matter and come with a recommendation to the churches in its report
595 to a subsequent General Synod.

596 2.2.3 The Winnipeg-Grace CanRC writes “as churches we need to be on guard that if we
597 do change the pronouns that we do not do it from a standpoint that accepts the
598 tenets of the modern feminist worldview or undermines Biblical teaching in any
599 way. We are not necessarily against the recommendation of this overture from
600 RSE. However, we propose that General Synod appoint the Standing Committee
601 for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* to study this matter and come with
602 recommendations to a future General Synod with specific wording in line with the
603 overture. This will allow the churches to know exactly what it will be accepting if
604 changes are made.” Winnipeg-Grace further states that “If we do change the
605 pronouns, then we need to keep them singular to keep the self-examination part of
606 the form as personal as possible.”

607 3. Considerations

608 3.1 RSE Nov. 2018 makes a valid point that the English language has changed and
609 therefore the use of masculine pronouns in the forms for Lord’s Supper could make
610 them liable to misinterpretation.

611 3.2 General Synod has been served by SCBP in matters of linguistic changes to the
612 liturgical forms (see GS 2013 Art. 101). It would be advisable to ask the committee to
613 study this and propose appropriate changes to the Lord’s Supper forms giving special
614 attention to the personal nature of self-examination. In this process the churches would
615 have opportunity to interact with any proposed changes.

616 4. Recommendation

617 That Synod decide:

618 4.1 To mandate the SCBP to study and propose appropriate changes as per Considerations
619 3.1, 3.2.

620 **ADOPTED**

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622 **Article 24 – Appeal of Orangeville re: RSE May 2018 Art. 7 (“Revision of previous
623 ecclesiastical decisions”)**

624 Committee 2 submitted a report seeking direction on an appeal from the Orangeville CanRC
625 (8.6.2.1). The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further work.
626

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628 **Article 25 – Request of Hamilton-Blessings re: GS 1983 Art. 145**

629 Committee 5 presented draft 1 of a report on an appeal from the Hamilton-Blessings CanRC
630 (8.6.7.1) The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for refinement.
631

632 **Article 26 – CRTS – Appointment of professor New Testament**

633 Synod went into closed-restricted session.

634 **1. Material**

635 1.1 Letter with appendices from the Board of Governors of the Theological College of the
636 Canadian Reformed Churches with a proposal to fill the vacancy in the department of
637 New Testament (8.2.7.3)

638 1.2 Report of the Board of Governors (8.2.7.1)

639 **2. Observations**

640 2.1 The Board of Governors informs General Synod that it granted Dr. Gerhard Visscher’s
641 request to retire upon the completion of the 2019-20 academic year.

642 2.2 The Board appointed a Search Committee for a new professor and received input from
643 many churches as well as from the Faculty.

644 2.3 Having investigated several possibilities the Board now requests GS 2019 to give leave
645 to the Board to appoint Dr. William den Hollander of Langley BC, as professor of New
646 Testament.

647 2.4 The Board has supplied Synod with information about Dr. den Hollander as well as
648 letters of reference.

649 **3. Consideration**

650 3.1 Based on the information supplied by the Board of Governors, General Synod deems
651 Dr. William den Hollander to be well qualified for this position.

652 **4. Recommendations**

653 That Synod decide:

654 4.1 To approve of the retirement of Dr. Gerhard Visscher and express deep gratitude for his
655 many years of faithful and diligent service to the Seminary and the Churches as
656 professor of New Testament and for his nine years as principal of the Seminary.

657 4.2 To direct the Board of Governors to appoint Dr. William den Hollander of Langley, BC
658 as professor of New Testament.

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660 **ADOPTED** by secret ballot with members of the Board of Governors and family of Dr. William
661 den Hollander abstaining.

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Article 27 – Appeal of S. Viersen re: RSW 2018 Art. 7 & 18

Not published in draft form on the web

Article 28 – Appeal of T. Bosma re: RSE May 2018 art. 7

Not published in draft form on the web

Article 29 – Letter from Lincoln regarding appeal of T. Bosma

Not published in draft form on the web

Synod adjourned until 7:00pm for committee work.

**Day 2 — Evening Session
Wednesday, May 15, 2019**

Article 30 – Reopening

Synod reopened in open plenary session. The chairman had the meeting sing Hymn 84:1,2. He noted all synod members were present. He welcomed newly arrived fraternal delegates.

Article 31 – FRCSA – Fraternal Delegate Address

The Rev. Poppe introduced br. Johannes Moes, credentialed delegate of the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa (FRCSA). Br. Moes addressed Synod describing the FRCSA, its history and its ministries. He expressed gratitude for unity in the faith, evident in the assistance the FRCSA receives from CRTS in training theological students. He outlined the need for financial support in South Africa for mission projects and described the inter-church relations of the FRCSA. The full text of his address can be found in *Appendix 6*.

Article 32 – IRB – Fraternal Delegate Address

The Rev. VanSpronsen introduced the Rev. Adriano Gama, Elder Ademir Souza, and the Rev. Iraldo Luna, credentialed delegates of the Reformed Churches in Brazil (IRB). The Rev. Gama, with the Rev. Jim Witteveen translating, addressed Synod describing the IRB, expressing gratitude for the relationship with the CanRC and the 48 years of work by the CanRC in Brazil. He described the history of the IRB and some of its projects and ministries. The full text of his address can be found in *Appendix 7*.

Article 33 – CRTS – Announcement re New Testament professor

The chairman made the public announcement that the Rev. Dr. William den Hollander had been appointed as professor of New Testament at CRTS, to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of the Rev. Dr. Gerhard Visscher in 2020.

Article 34 – GKv – Fraternal Delegate Address

The Rev. VanderVelde introduced the Rev. Rinze IJbema and the Rev. Dr. Melle Oosterhuis, credentialed delegates of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (GKv). The Rev. IJbema addressed synod, bringing greetings in the Name of the risen Lord. He described the origin of the relationship between the GKv and CanRC in 1952. He expressed regret about the tension that exists between the GKv and the CanRC at this time. He stated that the GKv would dearly love for the sister church relationship to continue. The Rev. Dr. Oosterhuis then addressed synod. He

708 explained the decisions of GS-GKv 2017 (Meppel), especially regarding hermeneutics as the
709 background to GKv decisions that concern the CanRC. The full text of their addresses can be
710 found in *Appendix 8*.

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712 **Article 35 – GGRC – Fraternal Delegate Address**

713 The Rev. Janssen introduced the Rev. Yonson Dethan, credentialed delegate of the Calvinist
714 Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRC). The Rev. Dethan addressed Synod passing on
715 greetings. He expressed appreciation for the ties with the CanRC, and regret over the fact that
716 those ties have not yet becomes ones of ecclesiastical fellowship. He described the history of the
717 GGRC, its Indonesian context, its current ministries and outreach projects, including its
718 involvement with Smithville’s mission work in Timor. The full text of his address can be found
719 in *Appendix 9*.

720

721 **Article 36 – Closing Devotions**

722 The chairman made some announcements regarding agenda items and housekeeping matters.
723 The Rev. VanderVelde led in evening devotions. He had those present sing Hymn 66. He read
724 2 Corinthians 9 and spoke some words of meditation, connecting the passage to inter-church
725 relations. He then led in prayer, among others for the FRCSA, IRB, GKv, and GGRC, and for
726 the Rev. Dr. W. den Hollander and the Rev. Dr. G. Visscher.

727

728 *Synod adjourned until 9:00am the next day.*

729

730 **Day 3 — Morning Session** 731 **Thursday, May 16, 2019**

732 **Article 37 – Reopening**

733 Synod reopened in plenary session. The chairman noted all synod members were present. He
734 read Psalm 119:9-17, spoke some words, led in prayer, and had those present sing
735 Psalm 119:4,5,6. A newly arrived fraternal observer was welcomed.

736

737 **Article 38 – Adoption of Acts**

738 Prepared articles of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

739

740 **Article 39 – Voting**

741 The chairman presented the following as a ruling of the chair in relation to voting:

742 A delegate should abstain if:

- 743 1. a matter particularly involves his person or his church (CO article 32);
- 744 2. a matter pertains to the Board of Governors and he is a member of the Board (on
745 account of his legal context);
- 746 3. a matter pertains to the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise* and he is a member
747 of the Committee (on account of his legal context);

748 A delegate has freedom to vote or abstain but is encouraged to keep the spirit of CO art. 32 in
749 mind when:

- 750 4. he was a member of a minor assembly which previously decided regarding a matter
751 being appealed;

752 A delegate has freedom to vote even though:

- 753 5. he was a member of a committee reporting to synod (e.g. CRCA, CNSF).

754 A simple majority constitutes more than half of the votes cast, not counting the abstentions.
755

756 *After announcements regarding some housekeeping matters, Synod adjourned until 2:00pm for*
757 *committee work.*
758

759 **Day 3 — Afternoon Session**
760 **Thursday, May 16, 2019**

761 **Article 40 – Reopening**

762 Synod reopened in plenary session. The chairman had the meeting sing Psalm 108:2. He noted
763 all synod members were present.

764 The chairman informed Synod that Rev. Dr. den Hollander would be coming in person to Synod
765 on Monday.
766

767 **Article 41 – GKv (Reformed Churches in The Netherlands)**

768 **1. Material**

769 1.1 Report of the CRCA–SRN on the GKv (8.2.2.4)

770 1.2 Letters from the following CanRC: Guelph-Emmanuel (8.3.1.1.1), Flamborough-
771 Redemption (8.3.1.1.3), Fergus-North (8.3.1.1.5), Hamilton-Cornerstone (8.3.1.1.6),
772 Houston (8.3.1.1.7), Carman-West (8.3.1.1.8), Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.1.1.9),
773 Barrhead (8.3.1.1.10), Winnipeg-Grace (8.3.1.1.11), Orangeville (8.3.1.1.12),
774 Attercliffe (8.3.1.9)

775 **2. Observations**

776 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 104) decided:

777 [4.2] To express thankfulness and joy to the Lord for much faithfulness in the Reformed
778 Churches in the Netherlands (GKv) as well as grief and disquiet over tolerance of
779 deviations from Scriptures and confession;

780 [4.3] To continue EF with the GKv, with the temporary suspension of the operation of
781 EF rules 4 and 5;

782 [4.4] To mandate the CRCA-SRN:

783 [4.4.1] To maintain contact with the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad
784 (BBK) of the GKv and represent the CanRC at the next GKv Synod;

785 [4.4.2] To inform the next synod of the GKv in writing of GS 2016's decision;

786 [4.4.3] To send a copy of this act of GS 2016 to each of the GKv churches,
787 accompanied by a cover letter;

788 [4.4.4] To monitor the work of the committee “Males / Females and Office”, as well
789 as the decisions of the next GKv Synod regarding this matter;

790 [4.4.5] To monitor the ongoing discussions between the GKv and the Netherlands
791 Reformed Churches (NGK);

792 [4.4.6] To continue to observe developments at the Theological University of the
793 GKv in Kampen (TUK), which includes paying attention to the article by Dr.
794 Burger;

795 [4.4.7] To monitor the results of the GKv's involvement with the National Synod;

796 [4.4.8] To work in consultation with the deputies of our other sister-churches;

797 [4.4.9] To report to the churches six months prior to GS 2019 giving special
798 attention to the question whether or not to continue EF.

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- 799 2.2 The subcommittee responsible for contact with the Reformed Churches in the
800 Netherlands (GKv) provides an extensive report of their work since GS 2016. Of
801 particular interest are the following points:
- 802 2.2.1 The subcommittee sent a copy of the decision of GS 2016 to each of the GKv
803 churches. They also informed GS-GKv 2017 (hereafter Synod Meppel) in writing
804 of the decisions of GS 2016.
- 805 2.2.2 Almost all of the sister churches represented at Synod Meppel (including our own)
806 voiced “serious concerns” to this Synod about the proposal to open the offices of
807 the church to women. Nevertheless, Synod Meppel decided that there were
808 Scriptural grounds to call women to serve in the offices of deacon, elder, and
809 minister. This decision has subsequently been implemented within the churches.
- 810 2.2.3 Synod Meppel expressed the longing to become a single federation with the NGK
811 as soon as possible, “on the basis of the Word of God and the Reformed
812 Confessions and organized according to the principles of the Reformed church
813 order.” Our subcommittee expresses reservation about this proposed union because
814 the commitment to listen to what the Lord says in his Word sounds hollow in light
815 of the fact that both the GKv and the NGK have admitted women to office in spite
816 of Scripture’s clear directives to the contrary. Further, there has historically been
817 no clear and common understanding of what subscription to the Reformed
818 Confessions and adherence to the Church Order means as it was one of the central
819 reasons for the split between the two churches in the first place. On this topic our
820 subcommittee concludes that “these two churches are continuing to turn away
821 from the clear directives of God’s Word and the Reformed Confessions.”
- 822 2.2.4 One of the professors at the Theological University in Kampen, Dr. A de Bruijne,
823 has written material that opens the door to ethical judgments that could contradict
824 the directives of Scripture. For example, though Scripture condemns
825 homosexuality Dr. de Bruijne’s reasoning would provide opening to the
826 legitimization of this behavior. In this context it is striking to note that Synod
827 Meppel appointed deputies to study whether there is reason to modify the way the
828 churches have traditionally dealt with homosexuality.
829 Dr. Burger has clarified but not backed away from what he had earlier written.
830 Though he was encouraged to, he has not published anything that would remove
831 the confusion he generated by his earlier writings.
832 Synod Meppel also decided to work positively to the establishment of a Reformed
833 Theological University that would include the Kampen Seminary and the
834 Theological University in Apeldoorn of the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken
835 (CGKN). The Synod of the CGKN decided, however, that the TUA would not be
836 part of this venture on grounds of distrust about the theological direction they see
837 in Kampen.
- 838 2.2.5 Synod Meppel decided to instruct deputies to “participate” in the proposed
839 “National Synod” and “if possible to even join the proposed covenant of Protestant
840 churches in the Netherlands, taking into consideration obedience to God’s Word
841 and the value of the Reformed confessions.” Given that this proposed body is
842 “composed of representatives of very different churches including the Remonstrant
843 Brotherhood,” the sort of unity being pursued by this body cannot be based on

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- 844 Scripture and the Reformed Confessions. It is understood that the unity proposed
845 by this “National Synod” is not necessarily meant to be ecclesiastical in nature.
- 846 2.2.6 The International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) suspended the GKv
847 from its membership in its meeting in July 2017.
- 848 2.2.7 Our subcommittee reports with sadness that “the GKv as federation has continued
849 to move away from a submission to the authoritative, sufficient and clear Word of
850 God and has more and more accommodated itself to 21st century western culture.”
851 Though the movement has been happening for some time, “it has come to a real
852 watershed with the decision of Synod Meppel to permit the ordination of females
853 to office.”
- 854 2.2.8 The subcommittee recommends that Synod Edmonton decide “to discontinue the
855 relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the GKv,” and provide the following
856 grounds:
- 857 [a.] The decision by Synod Meppel 2017 to admit females to ecclesiastical
858 office is contrary to Scripture as shown in Appendix H of our report.
- 859 [b.] It is highly unlikely that this decision will be reversed on appeal to the next
860 general synod since Synod Meppel decided that the churches could ordain
861 female office bearers immediately, and since the NGK with whom the GKv
862 are in the process of uniting have been allowing female ordination for some
863 time already.
- 864 [c.] By the decision to permit female ordination the GKv has ignored the
865 numerous warnings about unbiblical hermeneutics directed to their synods
866 by the SRN as well as delegates of other sister churches since Synod Zwolle
867 2008. The GKv has also brushed aside the serious admonitions directed to
868 Synod Ede by Synod Carman 2013 concerning the place of those unbiblical
869 hermeneutics at the TUK as well as in the report Deputies M/F.
- 870 [d.] The decision of Synod Meppel to work towards full unity with the NGK
871 shows that the GKv have moved in the direction of those churches which
872 have also opened the offices to females and which allow same-sex couples
873 to remain members in good standing.
- 874 [e.] The decision of Synod Meppel 2017 to continue to take part in the wide
875 ecumenical forum of Dutch Protestant churches at the National Synod in
876 the Netherlands is concerning. This forum has moved to discussing some
877 type of eventual union of all participating churches, so GKv involvement
878 displays a weakening of commitment to true Reformed ecumenicity based
879 on Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity.
- 880 [f.] A decision to discontinue the relationship with the GKv is consistent with
881 maintaining relations with churches with which we presently have
882 Ecclesiastical Fellowship as well as membership in the ICRC and
883 NAPARC. The GKv membership in the International Conference of
884 Reformed Churches has been suspended because of the decision to allow
885 females to be ordained to office. Some of our sister churches have also
886 terminated their relationship with the GKv and within NAPARC the OPC
887 and the URCNA have ceased contact with the GKv due to female
888 ordination.

889 [g.] A decision to discontinue the relationship with the GKv would be an
890 encouragement to faithful members within the GKv to take action, and it
891 would be a final call to the GKv as a whole to take stock of the direction of
892 those churches which once stood with us on the same basis of Scripture and
893 Reformed Confessions.

894 [h.] Severing ties with the GKv is the only responsible course of action in view
895 of the spiritual wellbeing of the CanRC, which would otherwise be
896 vulnerable to the unbiblical thinking which is becoming more and more
897 evident in the GKv.

898 2.2.9 The subcommittee recommends that in the event Synod decides to go along with
899 the recommendation, Synod also “appoint a CRCA delegation to attend the next
900 Synod of the GKv to communicate its decision with appropriate words of sadness
901 concerning this breaking with the churches with which we share such deep roots.”

902 2.3 Several churches have responded to the Report about the GKv. They all express
903 agreement with the recommendation of the subcommittee to discontinue the historic
904 relationship with the GKv. Some specifics should be noted:

905 2.3.1 The Guelph-Emmanuel CanRC requests Synod to provide public instruction to our
906 churches to be on guard lest we follow the GKv in their slide.

907 2.3.2 The Hamilton-Cornerstone CanRC requests Synod to discontinue EF with the GKv
908 but at the same time to instruct the CRCA to continue to monitor the developments
909 in the GKv and maintain some (undefined) contact with these churches so as to be
910 able to assist those within the GKv who remain concerned. The Winnipeg-Grace
911 CanRC makes a similar request.

912 2.3.3 The Flamborough-Redemption CanRC requests that, as GS 2016 mandated
913 deputies to communicate its decision to each of the GKv churches in writing, GS
914 2019 ought to communicate the present decision (to discontinue sister relations) in
915 writing to each GKv church as a means of encouraging the faithful to take
916 appropriate action.

917 2.4 The delegation from the GKv addressed synod:

918 2.4.1 Rev Rinze IJbema passed on greetings from the GKv. As he has served in both
919 federations, he was able to articulate that the “gap” between the two churches was
920 painful for both parties. For the text of his address see [Appendix #](#).

921 2.4.2 Rev Dr Melle Oosterhuis had served as chairman of the Synod of Meppel. He
922 offered a presentation to defend the thought that the new hermeneutic adopted by
923 the GKv was in fact not new at all but was the hermeneutic of K. Schilder and
924 B. Holwerda, and in line with that of the apostle Paul, and indeed of Jesus Christ
925 himself. He stressed that the report of our subcommittee did not provide sufficient
926 grounds relating to the topic new hermeneutics to discontinue EF with the GKv,
927 and urged the Synod to postpone a decision till at least next Synod. For the text of
928 his address see [Appendix #](#).

929 3. Considerations

930 3.1 The report of the subcommittee is clear in its presentation of developments in the GKv
931 as outlined above and convincing in its assessment of what these developments signal.
932 Nothing in Rev Oosterhuis’ presentation shows that the subcommittee’s outline of

- 933 developments is inaccurate or that its assessment of these developments and their
 934 implications is in error.
- 935 3.2 Sister churches from around the world have encouraged the GKv to rethink the course
 936 upon which they have gone, including admonitions from the CanRC. At Synod Meppel
 937 in 2017, the GKv was not convinced by the admonitions of their sister churches. This
 938 gives no confidence for us to expect change in the GKv in the immediate future.
- 939 3.3 Ecclesiastical Fellowship is extended to churches where we find the marks of the true
 940 church (Article 29, Belgic Confession). The presence of the marks of the church are
 941 premised on a given church accepting the authority of the Word of God. Now that the
 942 Reformed Churches in the Netherlands approve of developments contrary to the Lord's
 943 instruction in his Word, the marks of the true church cannot with confidence be said to
 944 be consistently present in these churches.
- 945 3.4 Continuing a relation with the GKv could communicate that we are not sorely grieved
 946 by their recent decisions and are not in earnest about our past letters and words of
 947 admonition. Conversely, severing the relation would communicate to our own members
 948 the need to be watchful that we in the Canadian Reformed Churches do not follow a
 949 similar path. At the same time, severing the relation would give encouragement to the
 950 faithful members in the GKv to take similar action.
- 951 3.5 Discontinuing the relationship at this time does not have to be irreversible. Should a
 952 future synod of the GKv give evidence that the churches have reversed their direction,
 953 the CanRCs can re-establish relations.

954 **4. Recommendations**

955 That Synod decide:

- 956 4.1 To thank the subcommittee mandated by GS 2016 for the diligent work they have done.
- 957 4.2 With sadness to discontinue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship (EF) with the
 958 Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKv) and to implore the CanRCs to continue in
 959 prayer for the GKv.
- 960 4.3 To convey this decision, together with a letter of explanation and encouragement, to
 961 each of the GKv congregations.
- 962 4.4 To mandate the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA):
- 963 4.4.1 To deliver this decision and letter (see 4.3) in person to the next Synod of the
 964 GKv;
- 965 4.4.2 To submit its report to the churches 6 months prior to the convening of the next
 966 general synod.

967 **ADOPTED** unanimously.

968 The Rev. Bouwman read Psalm 25:1-10 and led in prayer.

969

970

971

972 During discussion the following **amendment** was moved and seconded

973 To replace in consideration 3.3 the words:

974 *the marks of the true church cannot be said to be present*

975 with the words:

976 *the marks of the true church cannot with confidence be said to be consistently*
 977 *present in these churches.*

The amendment was **ADOPTED**

Article 42 – Appeal of Orangeville re: RSE May 2018 Art. 7 (“Revision of previous ecclesiastical decisions”)

1. Material

1.1 Appeal from the Church of Orangeville re Art 7 of the Acts of RSE May 2018 (8.6.2.1).

2. Admissibility

2.1 This appeal is deemed admissible.

3. Observations

3.1 The Acts of RSE May 2018 state the following in Article 7:

Article 7 – Lincoln’s Request to Revise (or Review) RSE 2017 Article 19.

Lincoln acknowledges that, according to Article 31 CO, it has the right to appeal RSE 2017 Article 19 to the next general synod but argues that a revision (or review) by this RSE May 2018 would be more appropriate for pastoral concerns and church political grievances.

[3.1.1.1] Regarding the pastoral concerns, Lincoln argues that the decision of RSE 2017 has left the appellant feeling vindicated while Lincoln consistory feels otherwise. This confusion presents an “obstacle” to the pastoral care of the member. To wait till general synod 2019 would prolong the confusion and hamper pastoral care. Additionally, due to the sensitive nature of the materials, Lincoln is concerned that the matter be dealt with in the “smallest circle” possible.

[3.1.1.2] Regarding the church political grievances, Lincoln finds several faults with the decision of RSE 2017 in Article 19:

[3.1.1.2.1] Lincoln faults synod for going beyond the mandate given it in Article 31 CO. RSE 2017 was confronted with an appeal of a sister against the decision of a classis. However, RSE 2017 instead of judging that decision, endeavoured in its considerations to identify “critical and key moments” in the course of events that “should be addressed and focussed on as the heart of the matter.” Among these moments were many specific interactions between the appellant and the consistory of Lincoln (see especially Lincoln faults synod for stating in Consideration 3 that the “appellant does not clearly show how the decisions of Classis Niagara are in conflict with Scripture and the Church Order,” but failing to render the necessary, consequent decision to deny the appeal.

[3.1.1.2.2] Lincoln faults synod for not making “a decision either to sustain or to deny the sister’s appeal,” but only presenting its considerations as its answer to the appeal. Lincoln complains that it is unclear how one “may appeal considerations of a minor assembly to a major assembly.”

[3.1.1.2.3] Lincoln faults RSE 2017 for ignoring the fact that Classis Niagara June 21, 2017 had clarifying materials available to it from Lincoln consistory

1022 which RSE 2017 itself did not. Yet RSE 2017 proceeded to make
1023 commentary on the actions of Lincoln consistory without hearing its
1024 version of events.

1025 [3.1.1.2.4] The motion carried, and synod acceded to Lincoln’s request. A motion as
1026 made and seconded to review (i.e. to set aside the original decision and
1027 revisit the matter) the decision of RSE 2017 (Art. 19).

1028 3.2 Orangeville asks GS 2019 to judge that RSE May 2018 acted contrary to the Church
1029 Order, when it decided to set aside a decision of RSE 2017 and revisit a matter that
1030 should have been dealt with by a General Synod.

1031 3.3 Orangeville notes that RSE May 2018 simply takes over Lincoln’s statement that “it has
1032 the right to appeal the decision of RSE 2017 Art. 19 but argues that a revision (or
1033 review) would be more appropriate for pastoral and church political grievances.”
1034 Orangeville observes that even though Church Order Article 31 stipulates that if
1035 someone complains that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly he
1036 shall have the right to appeal to the major assembly, the Church Order has no article
1037 dealing with revision by the same level of ecclesiastical assembly. Orangeville states
1038 that RSE May 2018 should have given reasons for not abiding by CO Art. 31.

1039 3.4 Orangeville notes that RSE May 2018 unquestioningly takes over Lincoln’s reasoning
1040 that pastoral concerns and church political grievances would be more appropriate at the
1041 level of Regional Synod. According to Orangeville this is an unsubstantiated statement.
1042 They argue that although it can be appreciated that consistories deal with difficult
1043 situations, the peace of the church is not served by ignoring the rules that have been
1044 adopted by common consent.

1045 3.5 Orangeville notes that RSE May 2018 did not interact with the fact that it was not the
1046 original appellant who asked for review of her appeal, but the party against which the
1047 accusation originated. As the party that felt wronged by the decision of RSE 2017, the
1048 only proper way for Lincoln to address the matter was to approach the next General
1049 Synod.

1050 3.6 Orangeville notes that the reality of church life is that although decisions of broader
1051 assemblies do not function as common law or case law, this action of RSE May 2018
1052 will serve as precedent for ignoring the clear provision of CO Art. 31.

1053 4. Considerations

1054 4.1 Although some church order commentaries do leave allowance for revision of previous
1055 ecclesiastical decisions others do not. The request for revision can potentially result in a
1056 conflict of interest or even a perception thereof. In the history of the CanRC we have
1057 worked with broader assemblies to minimize the possibility that those judging do not
1058 influence or judge the same case a second time.

1059 4.2 Orangeville is correct that RSE May 2018 unquestioningly takes over Lincoln’s
1060 reasoning that pastoral concerns and church political grievances would be more
1061 appropriate at the level of Regional Synod. Lincoln can be commended for the desire to
1062 keep this pastoral matter in the smallest circle possible but this is not sufficient grounds
1063 to deviate from the clear intent of CO Art. 31. Lincoln’s church political grievances are
1064 also matters that should be dealt with by way of an appeal to the broader assembly.

1065 4.3 Although Orangeville argues that the appellant to RSE 2017 could request a revision,
1066 the proper recourse for either party is to appeal to the broader assembly.

- 1067 4.4 Orangeville is correct that this decision of RSE May 2018, allowing a revision, will
 1068 serve as precedent for ignoring the clear intent of CO Art. 31.
 1069 4.5 In appealing this decision Orangeville’s intent was not to undo the decision of RSE May
 1070 2018, but rather to prevent the setting of a precedent. Thus this decision has no impact
 1071 on the other appeals against RSE May 2018.

1072 **5. Recommendations**

- 1073 5.1 To sustain the appeal of the Orangeville CanRC re: RSE May 2018 Art. 7.
 1074

1075 **ADOPTED**

1076
 1077 During discussion the following amendments were moved and seconded and **adopted**:

- 1078 1. To delete from observation 4.1 the line:

1079 *Orangeville is correct that Church Order Article 31 does not leave room for*
 1080 *revision of previous ecclesiastical decisions.*

- 1081 2. To insert at the * in the following sentence in consideration 4.1:

1082 *Although some church order commentaries do leave allowance for revision **
 1083 *others do not.*

1084 the words:

1085 *of previous ecclesiastical decisions*

1086 so that the sentence reads:

1087 *Although some church order commentaries do leave allowance for revision of*
 1088 *previous ecclesiastical decisions others do not.*

1089
 1090 **Article 43 – Appeal of Chilliwack re: RSW Art. 5 & 19 (treating an “appeal” as a**
 1091 **“submission”)**

1092 Committee 1 presented draft 1 of a report on a Chilliwack appeal (8.6.9.1). The report was
 1093 discussed. The committee took the report back for refinement.
 1094

1095 **Article 44 – Appeal of Chilliwack re: GS 2016 Art. 87 (Women Voting)**

1096 Committee 1 presented draft 1 of a report on a Chilliwack appeal (8.6.1.1). The report was
 1097 discussed. The committee took the report back for refinement.
 1098

1099 **Article 45 – General Fund**

1100 **1. Material**

- 1101 1.1 Financial Report for General Fund from January 1, 2016 to February 4, 2019 by the
 1102 Carman-East CanRC (8.2.13.1)
 1103 1.2 Audit of the General Fund by the Carman-West CanRC (8.2.13.2)

1104 **2. Observations**

- 1105 2.1 Carman-East was appointed by GS 2016 to administer the General Fund, and to collect
 1106 funds as required from the churches.
 1107 2.2 Carman-East notes that br. Gerry Vandersluis, who had been appointed by Carman-East
 1108 to serve as the treasurer of this fund on their behalf, has retired from this position after
 1109 thirty years, and sr. Hilly Kooiker has been appointed in his place.

NOT FINAL

- 1110 2.3 Carman-East “requests that Synod 2019 have each committee appoint a treasurer to
1111 approve all requests for reimbursement for any member on that committee.”
1112 2.4 Carman-West reports that an audit of the books was performed and all was found to be
1113 in good order.
1114 2.5 To administer this fund, the churches were assessed \$2 annually for each of the years
1115 2016, 2017, and 2018.
1116 2.6 The balance of the Fund as of January 1, 2016 was \$41,614.59; total income amounted
1117 to \$70,053.61; total disbursements amounted to \$100,245.90; and the balance as of
1118 February 4, 2019 was \$11,422.30.

3. Considerations

- 1119 3.1 Carman-East has fulfilled its mandate regarding the General Fund.
1120 3.2 The lengthy and faithful service of br. G. Vandersluis is highly appreciated and duly
1121 noted and he should receive the gratitude of the churches.
1122 3.3 Carman-East is essentially requesting (see Obs. 2.3) internal accountability within each
1123 committee for expenses being submitted to the General Fund. This is reasonable and
1124 prudent. This will have implications for the mandates synod gives to the various
1125 committees of synod.
1126 3.4 Carman-West has fulfilled its mandate in performing an audit of the books. Synod notes
1127 that the word “audit” is normally reserved as a technical term for an official inspection
1128 of the books by professionals. A more appropriate way to describe Carman-West’s
1129 mandate is to say that Carman West is being asked to inspect the books.
1130

4. Recommendations

1131 That Synod decide:

- 1132 4.1 To receive with thankfulness the report from Carman-East and the audit from Carman-
1133 West;
1134 4.2 To express gratitude to br. G. Vandersluis for faithfully functioning as treasurer for so
1135 many years and to note with gratitude that sr. H. Kooiker is willing to serve in his place;
1136 4.3 To authorize Carman-East to collect funds from the churches as required until the time
1137 of the next synod;
1138 4.4 To discharge Carman-East for the duties completed during the period of January 1, 2016
1139 to February 4, 2019;
1140 4.5 To reappoint Carman-East to administer the General Fund;
1141 4.6 To reappoint Carman-West to inspect the books of the General Fund;
1142 4.7 To mandate each committee of synod that has expenses to claim from the General Fund
1143 to ensure that all submitted expenses are first verified by someone within that
1144 committee appointed for that purpose.
1145
1146

1147 **ADOPTED**

Article 46 – General Synod Archives

1. Material

- 1150 1.1 Report on the Inspection of Archives for GS 2019 (8.2.6.1)
1151

1152 **2. Observations**

1153 2.1 No report was received from the Archive Church for general synods (i.e. Burlington-
1154 Ebenezer).

1155 2.2 The Burlington-Rehoboth church inspected the archives of GS 2016 and reports that
1156 they are complete and in good order.

1157 **3. Considerations**

1158 3.1 While it was not mandated by GS 2016, it has been customary for the Archive Church
1159 to report to general synod on its activities since at least 2007. It is a good practice to
1160 keep the churches informed by means of such regular reporting. At the same time, it is
1161 clear from the inspection report that Burlington-Ebenezer has continued to faithfully
1162 keep the archives in order and up to date.

1163 3.2 Burlington-Rehoboth has fulfilled its mandate regarding inspection of the archives.

1164 **4. Recommendations**

1165 That Synod decide:

1166 4.1 To express gratitude to Burlington-Ebenezer and Burlington-Rehoboth for fulfilling
1167 their mandates;

1168 4.2 To reappoint Burlington-Ebenezer as Archive Church and Burlington-Rehoboth to
1169 inspect synod archives;

1170 4.3 To appoint one of its members to validate and submit to the treasurer of the General
1171 Fund all expenses being submitted for committee work;

1172 4.4 To mandate both the Archive Church and the inspecting church to report to the churches
1173 on their activities six months prior to the next general synod.

1174

1175 **ADOPTED**

1176

1177 *Synod adjourned until 7:00pm for committee work.*

1178

1179 **Day 3 — Evening Session**

1180 **Thursday, May 16, 2019**

1181 **Article 47 – Reopening**

1182 Synod reopened in plenary session. The chairman had the meeting sing Psalm 87:1,2,3. He noted
1183 all synod members were present.

1184

1185 **Article 48 – FRCA – Fraternal Delegate Address**

1186 Elder Vane introduced the Rev. Hendrik Alkema and the Rev. Richard Pot, credentialed
1187 delegates of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA). The Rev. Alkema addressed
1188 Synod, expressing appreciation and gratitude for the close ties between the FRCA and CanRC.
1189 He described some of the many ways in which the two federations are connected. He spoke
1190 briefly of the development of an Australian *Book of Praise* and the study of the feasibility of
1191 training for the ministry in Australia. He gave an overview of the inter-church relations of the
1192 FRCA. The full text of the address can be found in **Appendix #**.

1193

1194 **Article 49 – RCNZ – Fraternal Delegate Address**

1195 Elder Jans introduced the Rev. Leo de Vos, credentialed delegate of the Reformed Churches in
1196 New Zealand (RCNZ). The Rev. de Vos addressed Synod, describing the New Zealand setting,

1197 the history of Christianity in New Zealand, and the blended character of the RCNZ. He gave an
1198 impression of church life in the RCNZ and expressed appreciation of the way in which the
1199 RCNZ and CanRC cooperate in mission in Papua New Guinea. The full text of his address can
1200 be found in [Appendix #](#).

1201

1202 **Article 50 – URCNA – Fraternal Delegate Address**

1203 The Rev. Slaa introduced the Rev. Bill Pols, credentialed delegate of the United Reformed
1204 Churches in North America (URCNA). The Rev. Pols expressed appreciation for the ties
1205 between the URCNA and the CanRC, describing how some of those ties are evident in church
1206 life. He outlined some of the recent developments in the URCNA, including the doctrinal
1207 affirmation on marriage and the introduction of the *Trinity Psalter-Hymnal*. The full text of his
1208 address can be found in [Appendix #](#).

1209

1210 **Article 51 – ARPC – Fraternal Observer Address**

1211 Elder Bremer introduced the Rev. Bill Barron, credentialed delegate of the Associate Reformed
1212 Presbyterian Church (ARPC). The Rev. Barron addressed Synod, speaking of the history of the
1213 ARPC and its current character. He described how the ARPC and RPCNA are growing together.
1214 He gave an impression of some of the works in the ARPC, including its education ministries and
1215 its mission projects. The full text of his address can be found in [Appendix #](#).

1216

1217 **Article 52 – Request of Hamilton-Blessings re: GS 1983 Art. 145**

1218 Committee 5 presented a second draft. One round of discussion took place. Because of the late
1219 hour, the second round was deferred to the next session. (Continued: Article 56)

1220

1221 **Article 53 – Closing Devotions**

1222 The chairman made some announcements regarding agenda items and housekeeping matters.
1223 The Rev. P. Feenstra read 1 Corinthians 16:19-24 and spoke some words of meditation on the
1224 place of greetings in the church. He had those present sing Hymn 61:1,2. He then led in prayer,
1225 among others for the FRCA, RCNZ, URCNA, and ARPC.

1226

1227 *Synod adjourned until 9:00am the next day.*

1228

1229 **Day 4 — Morning Session**
1230 **Friday, May 17, 2019**

1231 **Article 54 – Reopening**

1232 Synod reopened in plenary session. The chairman noted all synod members were present. He
1233 read Psalm 119:17-24, spoke some words, led in prayer and had those present sing
1234 Psalm 119:7,8,9. Some housekeeping matters were dealt with.

1235

1236 **Article 55 – Adoption of Acts**

1237 Prepared articles of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

1238

1239 **Article 56 – Request of Hamilton-Blessings re: GS 1983 Art. 145**

1240 Discussion continued on the report of Committee 5 (cf. Article 52). The committee took the
1241 report back for refinement.

1242

1243 **Article 57 – Letter from Lincoln regarding appeal of T. Bosma**

1244 Not published in draft form on the web

1245

1246 *Synod adjourned until 7:00pm for committee work.*

1247

1248 **Day 4 — Evening Session**

1249 **Friday, May 17, 2019**

1250 **Article 58 – Reopening**

1251 Synod reopened in open plenary session. The chairman had the meeting sing Hymn 49. He called
1252 the roll and noted all synod members were present.

1253

1254 **Article 59 – Adoption of Acts**

1255 A prepared article of the *Acts* was adopted.

1256

1257 **Article 60 – RCUS (Reformed Church in the United States)**

1258 **1. Material**

1259 1.1 Report of the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA)
1260 regarding the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS) (8.2.3.1)

1261 1.2 Letter from Attercliffe (8.3.2.6)

1262 **2. Observations**

1263 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 60) decided concerning the RCUS:

1264 [4.1] To thank the Lord for the faithfulness of the Reformed Church in United (RCUS)
1265 to the Word of God and the Reformed confessions;

1266 [4.2] To continue the relationship of EF with the RCUS under the adopted rules.

1267 2.2 The CCCNA has fulfilled its mandate and has also sent a delegation to the RCUS 270th
1268 Synod Bakersfield, CA (May 16-19, 2016), RCUS 271st Synod, Kansas City, MO (May
1269 15-18, 2017), and RCUS 272nd Synod, Golden Valley MN (May 21-24, 2018). In each
1270 of these years, the CCCNA also met with the RCUS ICR committee at NAPARC.

1271 2.3 The RCUS has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the CanRC in regard to the issues
1272 confronting the GKv, a sister church to both church bodies. The RCUS very much
1273 appreciates the developing relationship with the CanRC. They especially appreciate
1274 having fraternal delegates attend a significant portion of the meeting at both classis and
1275 the synod level.

1276 2.4 Opportunities exist to work together on foreign mission projects, especially in the
1277 Philippines.

1278 2.5 The CCCNA has had discussions and will continue at opportune times to discuss
1279 differing church polity or practices.

1280 2.6 The CCCNA recommends continuing the relationship with the RCUS.

1281 2.7 The Attercliffe CanRC agrees with the EF we have with the RCUS. Attercliffe is unclear
1282 where we stand with the RCUS on matters of proper Lord's Supper supervision, Sunday
1283 observance, and church doctrine (GS 1998 Art. 51).

1284 **3. Considerations**

1285 3.1. It is evident that the CCCNA has been diligent in fulfilling its mandate in regard to the
1286 RCUS.

- 1287 3.2. The RCUS is very appreciative of the relationship that they have with the CanRC.
 1288 3.3 With gratitude the CCCNA could observe faithfulness within the RCUS and the
 1289 fruitfulness of our contact together.
 1290 3.4. It would be beneficial for the RCUS and the CanRC to continue to interact with each
 1291 other in the possibility of foreign mission projects.
 1292 3.5. The CCCNA has already interacted with the RCUS on the matters raised by the church
 1293 at Attercliffe. GS 2016 Art. 59 Cons. 3.4 should also be kept in mind.

1294 **4. Recommendations**

1295 That Synod decide:

- 1296 4.1 To continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Reformed
 1297 Church in the United States (RCUS);
 1298 4.2 To mandate the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA):
 1299 4.2.1 To maintain contact with the RCUS according to the adopted rules;
 1300 4.2.2 To submit its report to the churches 5 months prior to the convening of the next
 1301 general synod.
 1302

1303 **ADOPTED**

1304 **Article 61 – ARPC (Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church)**

1306 **1. Material**

- 1307 1.1 Report of the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA)
 1308 regarding the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC) (8.2.3.1)

1309 **2. Observations**

- 1310 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 49) decided to mandate the CCCNA:
 1311 [4.1.2] To investigate diligently all the requests received for entering into EF in North
 1312 America;
 1313 [4.1.3] To respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests to attend assemblies,
 1314 synods, or meetings of other churches in North America;
 1315 [4.1.4] To report on its findings with suitable recommendations to the next general synod
 1316 and to present to the churches a report of its work six months prior to the
 1317 convening of next general synod.
 1318 2.2. The CanRC does not have EF with the ARPC but is a member of NAPARC together
 1319 with the ARPC. Their delegate to GS 2019 mentioned that the ARPC is also a member
 1320 of the ICRC.
 1321 2.3 The committee received invitations from the ARPC Inter-church Relations Committee
 1322 (IRC) to their 2017 and 2018 General Synods in which the CCCNA sent observers.
 1323 They also had an informal bi-lateral meeting with the ARPC delegates to NAPARC in
 1324 November of 2017 and 2018.
 1325 2.4 The ARPC has a very long history that dates back to the 18th century. As a result of this
 1326 lengthy history, they often have many small congregations within a relatively limited
 1327 geographical region. Though the ARPC has congregations as far north as in Canada and
 1328 as far west as California, they are a deeply southern denomination.
 1329 2.5 Historically, the ARPC's closest ecclesiastical relationships have been with the
 1330 RPCNA. They have met jointly in Synod with RPCNA in 2015 and plan to meet jointly

again in the year 2019. The biggest difference between the ARPC and the RPCNA is that the RPCNA adheres to exclusive psalmody. The ARPC also has “fraternal relationships” with the PCA and OPC.

- 2.6 Of late, most ARPC churches have a single service on Sundays. Most congregations also have Sunday school prior to the worship service. Catechism instruction and preaching are not part of their history or current practice, although a significant number of congregations are making an effort to introduce catechetical instruction to the whole congregation.
- 2.7 A particular high point of the ARPC Synod in 2018 involved the “return to the fold” of Erskine College and Theological Seminary. Those institutions had been in the grip of liberalism for some time, but a successful, concentrated effort was made to bring them under more direct Synodical control and therefore return to conservative, biblical orientation.
- 2.8. Like their “cousins” in the RPCNA, the ARPC allows women to serve in the office of deacon. Again, as with the RPCNA, they understand the diaconate as a service, rather than an authoritative office within the church.
- 2.9. There have been various interactions between the ARPC and members of the CanRC federation:
- Several churches within the Canadian Presbytery have established Gillespie Academy in Woodstock, Ontario. Gillespie Academy offers a one-year post-secondary program designed to prepare students for university, future employment, or the building of a Christian home. The number of students enrolling at Gillespie Academy has grown steadily over the past several years. Their numbers have included young people from CanRCs.
 - In October 2017, Dr. T.G. Van Raalte attended a meeting of Catawba Presbytery in South Carolina. A student from CRTS was being taken on as a student-under-care by that Presbytery.
 - The Chatham CanRC has established a close relationship with Rev. Henry Bartsch who pastors the ARPC congregation in Chatham. Rev. Bartsch has helped to support this congregation during the time of their vacancy.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The committee has been diligent in completing their mandate.
- 3.2. The committee gives an informative report about the ARPC.
- 3.4 There has been an increase in contact that merits investigating the possibility of closer contact between the ARPC and the CanRC.

4. Recommendations

That Synod mandate the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA):

- 4.1 To engage in continued dialogue and contact with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC).
- 4.2 To submit its report to the churches five months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

ADOPTED

1375 **Article 62 – Appeal of Chilliwack re: RSW Art. 5 & 19 (treating an “appeal” as a**
1376 **“submission”)**

1377 **1. Material**

1378 1.1 Appeal to GS 2019 from the Chilliwack CanRC re: RSW Art. 5 & 19 (8.6.9.1)

1379 **2. Observations**

1380 2.1 Chilliwack believes that:

1381 2.1.1 RSW erred in its decision to change Chilliwack’s appeal into “Expressions of
1382 Sentiment” (see Acts of RSW Article 5) even though Chilliwack had clearly
1383 submitted an appeal and the agenda of RSW was adopted with Chilliwack’s letter
1384 noted as an appeal (see Acts of RSW Article 4, 5.5). When RSW reclassified
1385 Chilliwack’s appeal as an ‘expression of sentiment’, RSW took away Chilliwack’s
1386 right to appeal the decision of a minor assembly to a major assembly as per Article
1387 31, CO.

1388 2.1.2 RSW 2018 erred in its decision to deal with proposals that had not been circulated
1389 to the churches ahead of time. Chilliwack did not receive a copy of the overture of
1390 Classis Pacific East or the overture of Classis Manitoba prior to RSW, and thereby
1391 did not receive opportunity beforehand to interact with these proposals going to
1392 RSW.

1393 2.1.3 After RSW changed Chilliwack’s appeal into an ‘expression of sentiment’, RSW
1394 then erred in its decision to pass on the appeal of the Chilliwack CanRC to General
1395 Synod 2019 for its consideration, without RSW dealing with it first (RSW 2018
1396 Article 19, Recommendation 3.2, 3.3).

1397 2.2 Chilliwack requests that:

1398 2.2.1 General Synod Edmonton 2019 rule that RSW 2018 erred in the way that RSW
1399 dealt with Chilliwack’s appeal against a decision of the minor assembly.

1400 2.2.2 General Synod Edmonton 2019 decide that the overture from RSW 2018 regarding
1401 the Trinity Psalter Hymnal is wrongfully on the agenda of General Synod 2019.

1402 2.2.3 The overture from RSW 2018 be sent back to RSW to be dealt with first in an
1403 orderly way.

1404 **3. Considerations**

1405 3.1 It is evident that Chilliwack did submit an appeal against the decision of classis to RSW
1406 2018, which was deemed admissible by RSW. RSW treated the appeal as an
1407 ‘expression of sentiment’ related to two overtures, and thereby did not consider or make
1408 a ruling on what was in reality Chilliwack’s appeal against a decision of the minor
1409 assembly, Classis Pacific East, February 22, 2018 (Article 31, CO). RSW did not give
1410 any grounds for not dealing with Chilliwack’s appeal nor for redesignating Chilliwack’s
1411 appeal as an ‘expression of sentiment’.

1412 3.2 It is the expectation (cf. RSW Regulations I.C.) with an overture that copies of overtures
1413 / proposals be sent to the churches of the region in which an assembly of churches is
1414 held, prior to the convening of such an assembly. According to the RSW regulations,
1415 RSW should have determined that Chilliwack and the other churches had received the
1416 proposals prior to RSW dealing with the matter.

1417 3.3 RSW should have dealt with the appeal of Chilliwack as an appeal which was rightly on
1418 its agenda and should not have sent the appeal as an “expression of sentiment” on to GS

1419 2019. An appeal to a regional synod against the decision of a classis should receive a
1420 clear response and not be forwarded by a regional synod to a general synod.
1421 3.4 RSW erred in not responding to the appeal of Chilliwack against CPE. However
1422 that does not mean that the overture should be removed from the agenda of GS 2019,
1423 for the fact is that the Overture was passed on to GS2019 and several churches have
1424 interacted with it in good faith. Now to remove it from the agenda due to an error at
1425 RSW would not do justice to the churches who took this overture seriously.

1426 **4. Recommendations**

1427 That Synod decide:

1428 4.1 To sustain the appeal of the Chilliwack CanRC that RSW 2018 erred in the way that
1429 RSW dealt with Chilliwack’s appeal against a decision of the minor assembly.

1430 4.2 To deny the request of the Chilliwack CanRC that the overture from RSW 2018 be sent
1431 back to RSW (cf. consideration 3.4.).

1432 **ADOPTED**

1433 **Article 63 – Appeal of Chilliwack re: GS 2016 Art. 87 (Women Voting)**

1436 **1. Material**

1437 1.1 Appeal to GS 2019 from the Chilliwack CanRC re: GS 2016 Art. 87 (8.6.1.1)

1438 **2. Observations**

1439 2.1 Chilliwack appealed the decision of GS 2010 to leave the matter of women voting in the
1440 freedom of the local church. Its appeal was answered with the decision of GS 2013 to
1441 reverse the decision of GS 2010. Chilliwack believes it was wrong for GS 2016 to
1442 overturn the decision of GS 2013 by using the argument that GS 2013 did not prove that
1443 GS 2010 was in conflict with Scripture or the Church Order. Chilliwack is of the
1444 opinion that GS 2013 did not have to prove anything but that GS 2010 should have
1445 proved that the decisions of previous synods were in conflict with the Word of God and
1446 the Church Order, which GS 2010 did not do.

1447 2.2 Chilliwack is of the opinion that GS 2016 should not have reopened the way for women
1448 to vote based on something that is unclear in Scripture. Chilliwack states that we can be
1449 confident that men participated in the calling of office bearers, but we cannot be
1450 confident that women did. Therefore, Chilliwack finds that male only voting is the only
1451 option.

1452 2.3 Chilliwack believes a Council is bound by the result of a congregational vote and refers
1453 to CO Art. 3 in support of its opinion (“Those elected shall be appointed by the
1454 consistory with the deacons...”). This leads Chilliwack to conclude that women should
1455 not participate in the election, otherwise women make a decision which is binding on
1456 Council. In this way, women would exercise authority in the church.

1457 2.4 Chilliwack argues that since GS 2016 agreed that women’s voting is a matter of the
1458 “churches in common,” it cannot be left to the local church. According to Chilliwack, a
1459 matter of the churches in common means that there must be a common answer to the
1460 question whether women may vote. Chilliwack says that it cannot be yes and no at the
1461 same time.

3. Considerations

- 1462
1463 3.1 Chilliwack does not take into account that GS 2007 appointed a committee to “finish the
1464 mandate extended by Synod Smithville 1980” regarding women voting (GS 2007 Art.
1465 136, Rec. 5.2). This committee reported to GS 2010 where a decision was then
1466 made. Chilliwack is therefore incorrect in its analysis that the burden of proof rested on
1467 GS 2010 rather than GS 2013.
- 1468 3.2 It is a logical and theological fallacy to reason that if Scripture does not have clear
1469 evidence of women voting, then women may not vote. When Scripture does not speak
1470 directly to a matter, we are called to take into account the full scope of Scripture and to
1471 exercise our judgement in coming to a responsible decision.
- 1472 3.3 Chilliwack overlooks that the Council *binds itself* to the outcome of the election
1473 according to the stipulation in the Church Order agreed upon by the churches. This
1474 means that the congregation is not binding Council or exercising authority in the church
1475 by way of a congregational vote. The view that the congregation’s vote binds Council
1476 is wrong because, according to Reformed church polity, not the congregation but
1477 Council exercises authority in the church.
- 1478 3.4 A matter of the “churches in common” is a matter decided upon by the churches
1479 together. This does not always mean that the outcome of the decision must be the same
1480 for all the churches in the federation. If the churches together decide that a matter of the
1481 “churches in common” can be left to the local churches, then the decision is made by
1482 the churches together, but the outcome is not necessarily always the same locally.

4. Recommendations

1483 That Synod decide:

- 1484 4.1 To deny the appeal of the Chilliwack CanRC re: GS 2016 Art. 87.
1485

ADOPTED

Article 64 – Request of Hamilton-Blessings re: GS 1983 Art. 145

1. Material

- 1490
1491 1.1 Hamilton-Blessings’ request to revise the decision of GS 1983 Art. 145 (8.6.7.1)
1492 1.2 Letters from Dunnville, Guelph-Emmanuel, and Grand Rapids (8.6.7.1.1–3)

2. Admissibility

- 1493
1494 2.1 Since the matter concerns a decision of a synod which involves changing the wording of
1495 some liturgical forms, it is a matter of the churches in common (CO Art. 56) and thus
1496 admissible.

3. Observations

- 1497
1498 3.1 GS 1983 considered the following in Art. 145 regarding changes to the Form for
1499 Baptism: “In order to avoid misunderstanding, the word ‘creeds’ in the second question
1500 should be replaced by ‘confessions.’” Regarding changes to the Form for Profession of
1501 Faith, synod considered the following: “In the first question the word ‘creeds’ should be
1502 replaced by ‘confessions.’” Both changes were adopted.
- 1503 3.2 The Hamilton-Blessings CanRC summarizes its request this way: “In light of new
1504 research, the emergence of a new ecumenical landscape, and the conviction that
1505 previous appeals to synods (1986, 1989, 1992) were inadequately considered and

- 1506 therefore unjustly denied, the Blessings Christian Church requests a revision of the 1983
1507 (Cloverdale) General Synod’s decision to modify the questions in the liturgical forms
1508 for Baptism and Profession of Faith by replacing the phrase ‘articles of the Christian
1509 faith’ (or the tentatively approved ‘Apostles’ Creed’) with the term ‘confessions.’”
- 1510 3.3 Hamilton-Blessings took it upon itself to send its request for revision to all the churches
1511 in the federation shortly before the deadline for submissions to General Synod
1512 Edmonton. It did so with a cover email stating “Due to the late hour with which these
1513 documents are being submitted to General Synod, we are sending them to all the
1514 consistories in order to provide a little time, however short, to provide feedback to
1515 General Synod if so desired.”
- 1516 3.4 Hamilton-Blessings makes a point of distinguishing its submission as a “request for
1517 revision” and not an “appeal” in footnote 13: “The language of ‘request for revision’ is
1518 invoked rather than ‘appeal’ because ‘appeal’ implies a request to a major assembly to
1519 rehear a case that has been rejected or denied by a minor assembly.”
- 1520 3.5 The Dunnville CanRC, Guelph-Emmanuel CanRC, and Grand Rapids ARC complain
1521 that the submission came too late for the churches to interact with it meaningfully.
1522 Dunnville suggests that a revision of this nature should go the route of the ecclesiastical
1523 assemblies on the principle that, “churches must be given adequate time to interact.”
1524 Grand Rapids observes that “this matter has not served at General Synod in 27 years”
1525 and adduces that, “in general, the churches do not have an issue with the 1983
1526 decision.”

1527 4. Considerations

- 1528 4.1 Hamilton-Blessings is clearly requesting a revision of a decision of a past synod in order
1529 to change some wording in several adopted liturgical forms. Regarding changes to
1530 liturgical forms, GS 2013 decided the following: “To decide that all requests concerning
1531 factual errors, grammatical, typographical, or other minor stylistic matters throughout
1532 the *Book of Praise* may be addressed by individuals or churches to the SCBP for its
1533 consideration and possible suggestion for change to a future synod. All requests
1534 concerning other changes to the contents of the *Book of Praise* (e.g. translation of
1535 confessions, changes to metrical psalms, rewording and rhyming of psalms and hymns,
1536 changes to liturgical forms) need to arise out of the churches in the ecclesiastical way,
1537 namely from consistory to classis to regional synod and general synod” (GS 2013 Art.
1538 125 Rec. 4.5). It is true that on appeal GS 2016 decided to direct churches to return to
1539 the previous practice of submitting hymns to the SCBP but the rest of GS 2013’s
1540 decision remains unaffected (see GS 2016 Art. 122).
- 1541 4.2 While Hamilton-Blessings consistently calls its submission a “request for revision,” and
1542 makes a point of not calling it an “appeal,” the Church Order does not speak of “request
1543 for revision.” The Church Order speaks only of two avenues to bring a matter forward
1544 to a general synod: the way of appeal (CO Art. 31) or the way of presenting a new
1545 matter through the ecclesiastical route (consistory to classis to regional synod to general
1546 synod, CO Art. 30). GS 2013 (Art. 99, Cons. 3.1) clarified that even when the new
1547 matter is dealt with by the churches in common, it must first travel the ecclesiastical
1548 route through the minor assemblies.
- 1549 4.3 Changing the liturgical forms in the way Hamilton-Blessings requests will affect all the
1550 churches and thus all the churches should have ample opportunity to meaningfully

interact with this request. Hamilton-Blessings implicitly understands this principle for it took it upon itself to send out its request for revision to all the churches seeking their input only it was too late for that to be done in any substantive way. Hamilton-Blessings is to be commended for wanting to involve all the churches in their quest, however, the Church Order indicates that the way to garner the input of the churches is via the ecclesiastical route (CO Art. 30; see Cons. 4.1).

4.4 The fact that the decision of GS 1983 has served in the churches for more than 30 years is also significant. During all that time, the 1983 decision was honoured as settling and binding. Also for this reason, the request of Hamilton-Blessings should come in the form of an overture that follows the ecclesiastical route (see Cons. 4.2 and 4.3), seeking support. In this way, all the churches will have ample time and opportunity to interact with it through this filtering process.

4.5 The above considerations will address the concerns of Dunnville, Guelph-Emmanuel, and Grand Rapids.

5. Recommendations

That Synod decide:

5.1 To not accede to the request of the church at Hamilton-Blessings but to point it to consider the appropriate process as per Consideration 4.1, 4.2, and 4.4.

ADOPTED

During discussion, the following **amendment** was moved and seconded:

To add at the end of recommendation 4.4

Much care ought to be exercised that the vital role of our reformed confessions in church and family life is not minimized.

The amendment was **DEFEATED**

Article 65 – Appeal of Neerlandia-(North) re: GS 2016 Art. 111 (NIV2011)

1. Material

1.1 Appeal to GS 2019 from the Neerlandia-(North) CanRC re: GS 2016 Art. 111 (8.6.10.1)

2. Observations

2.1 Neerlandia-(North) believes that GS 2016 erred by not giving a strong warning against the use of the NIV2011 and asks General Synod to recommend to the churches that the NIV2011 not be used because it contains problematic texts.

2.2 GS 2016 (Art. 111 Cons. 3.3) stated that “regarding texts pertaining to office” only two texts remain problematic and noted that “Brampton-Grace has a valid point when it states that the NIV2011 should not be rejected on the basis of two problematic texts”. Neerlandia considers this “a very subjective argument” and posits the hypothetical question, “How many problematic texts now need to be in place before a translation can be rejected.”

2.4 GS 2016 (Art. 111 Cons. 3.5) stated that “The recommendations of the CBT and the decisions of synods ultimately are advisory, as is evident in the way a synod does not prescribe but recommends translations for use in the churches”.

1594 2.5 GS 2016 adopted the recommendation “To acknowledge that while it may not be
1595 possible to recommend the NIV2011, a general synod may not forbid churches to use it
1596 if they so desire.” (GS 2016 Art. 111 Rec. 4.3)

1597 3. Considerations

1598 3.1 Neerlandia-(North) argues that “we should aim for using the best possible [translation]”
1599 and that “we have a Committee for Bible Translations so that the resources of the
1600 church can be pooled together so that the best translations are in use.” Neerlandia-
1601 (North)’s argument implicitly acknowledges that translations are not perfect. A decision
1602 which takes all considerations into account in a balanced way will need to be made
1603 when determining which are the “best translations.”

1604 3.2 The issue of so-called problematic texts in Bible translations is not limited to the
1605 NIV2011. GS 1977 Art. 104, Obs. 4 noted that the Committee mandated to review the
1606 RSV “indicates that there are unscriptural and evolutionistic influences” and cites five
1607 problematic texts regarding the Holy Spirit, three texts where the evolutionistic view
1608 could be suspected and notes that the RSV has unnecessary contradictions between
1609 some texts. GS 1977 Art. 104 Obs. 5 noted that the Committee concluded “that it is
1610 afraid that the RSV shows evidence of unscriptural influence.” Despite these
1611 considerations, GS 1977 decided to “To leave the use of the Revised Standard Version -
1612 though with discretion and care - in the freedom of the Churches.”

1613 3.3 Neerlandia-(North) believes that permitting the use of a translation with two
1614 problematic texts seems to be a contradiction of the consistory’s responsibility to ward
1615 off false doctrine (CO Art. 27). However, Neerlandia-(North) does not provide any
1616 evidence that the particular problematic texts of the NIV2011 are inherently more likely
1617 to introduce false doctrine than the issues identified in other translations (see
1618 Consideration 3.2).

1619 3.4 GS 2016 had no need to give “a strong warning against the use of the NIV2011,” since
1620 GS 2016 did not recommend the use of this translation and such a warning would have
1621 been redundant.

1622 3.5 Even though GS 2016 went further than previous synods when it stated in Consideration
1623 3.5 that “a general synod may not forbid churches to use it if they so desire” Neerlandia-
1624 (North) incorrectly concludes that this makes the CBT of no purpose.

1625 4. Recommendations

1626 That Synod decide:

1627 4.1 To deny the appeal of the Neerlandia-(North) CanRC re: GS 2016 Art. 111.
1628

1629 **ADOPTED**

1630 **Article 66 – CBT (Committee for Bible Translations)**

1632 1. Material

1633 1.1 Report of the Committee for Bible Translation (CBT) (8.2.9.1)

1634 1.2 Letters from: Willoughby Heights (8.3.5.1), Fergus-North (8.3.5.2), Attercliffe (8.3.5.3),
1635 Grassie-Covenant (8.3.5.4)

1636 2. Observations

1637 2.1 GS 2016 mandated the CBT to:

-
- 1638 [4.1.1] To solicit, receive and evaluate comments from the churches on the ESV;
1639 [4.1.2] To submit worthy translation changes to the ESV editorial committee;
1640 [4.1.3] To prepare and distribute a report to the churches in advance of the next Synod.
- 1641 2.2 The Committee consists of two members, the Revs. Dave de Boer and Rodney
1642 Vermeulen. Rev. de Boer has completed nine years on the committee and is scheduled
1643 to retire. Therefore, the committee requests that General Synod release Rev. de Boer
1644 and appoint a replacement.
- 1645 2.3 The CBT did not receive any materials or inquiries from the churches and did not pass
1646 on any suggested translation changes to the ESV editorial committee.
- 1647 2.4 The CBT reports that an updated version of the ESV2011, the ESV2016, has been
1648 provided by the publisher. The CBT reports on changes to 29 verses which were
1649 incorporated into the ESV2016, of which the most significant change was to Genesis
1650 3:16. The opinion of the CBT is that the translation of this text in the ESV2011 is to be
1651 preferred.
- 1652 2.6 The CBT, on its own initiative, provided some information about the Christian Standard
1653 Bible (CSB) but noted that it had not done a study or evaluation of the CSB and did not
1654 provide a recommendation for or against the use of this translation in the churches.
- 1655 2.7 The CBT recommends that General Synod maintain the CBT as a resource for the
1656 churches with the same mandate as given by GS 2016.
- 1657 2.8 The Willoughby Heights CanRC appreciates the information provided by the CBT on
1658 the CSB but notes that this was not part of the Committee's mandate and recommends
1659 that General Synod mandate the CBT to serve the churches on Bible translation matters
1660 brought to the attention of the Committee by a church.
- 1661 2.9 The Fergus-North CanRC wonders if the CBT's original mandate from GS 2010, i.e. "to
1662 thoroughly evaluate the updated NIV translation when it is released in 2011" (GS 2010
1663 Art. 72) has been fulfilled. It suggests that as the substantive portion of the CBT report
1664 issued to the churches in 2011 is under 10 pages while the 1995 CBT comparison of the
1665 NASB, NIV and NKJV was 235 pages, a thorough evaluation has not been completed.
1666 It therefore requests that General Synod mandate the CBT to complete the study
1667 mandated by GS 2010.
- 1668 2.10 The Attercliffe CanRC endorses the CBT report and agrees with the CBT's conclusion
1669 regarding Genesis 3:16 and considers the other changes to be less significant.
- 1670 2.11 The Grassie CanRC recommends that the CBT suggest to the publisher of the ESV that
1671 changes should only be made once every generation and that the translation of Genesis
1672 3:16 in the ESV2016 be reverted to the wording in ESV2011 in the next edition. Grassie
1673 also believes it would be worthwhile for General Synod to mandate the CBT to further
1674 investigate the CSB.

1675 3. Considerations

- 1676 3.1 The Committee has fulfilled its mandate from GS 2016.
- 1677 3.2 The Committee provided some general information about the history, background and
1678 translation methodology of the Christian Standard Bible (CSB) on its own initiative but
1679 has not recommended to General Synod that it be mandated to further evaluate the CSB.
1680 Since only one church considered it worthwhile to further investigate the CSB, General
1681 Synod does not believe this warrants further study at this time.

- 1682 3.3 The recommendation of the Grassie-Covenant CanRC that the translation of Genesis
1683 3:16 in the ESV2016 be reverted to the wording in ESV2011 in the next edition is a
1684 matter that falls within the mandate of the CBT.
- 1685 3.4 The Fergus North CanRC requests that General Synod mandate the CBT to complete
1686 the study of the NIV2011 mandated by GS 2010, which it believes was not completed.
1687 By only providing a comparative page count of the CBT's report and quoting statistics
1688 regarding the number of changes between the NIV1984 and NIV2011 (see Obs. 2.9)
1689 without any consideration of the significance of those changes, Fergus North does not
1690 sufficiently prove that the evaluation conducted by the CBT and issued to the churches
1691 in 2011 was insufficient.
- 1692 3.5 The Willoughby Heights CanRC is correct when it states that the CBT's review of the
1693 CSB was not within the mandate given to it by GS 2016. It appropriately requests that
1694 General Synod mandate the CBT to serve the churches as a resource for Bible
1695 translation matters brought to the attention of the Committee by a church, rather than on
1696 its own initiative.

1697 4. Recommendations

1698 That Synod decide:

- 1699 4.1 To thank the committee for its work;
- 1700 4.2 To thank Rev. D de Boer for his work on this committee;
- 1701 4.3 To mandate the Committee for Bible Translation (CBT):
- 1702 4.3.1 To solicit, receive and evaluate comments from the churches on the ESV;
- 1703 4.3.2 To submit worthy translation suggestions to the ESV editorial committee,
1704 including recommending changing the wording of Genesis 3:16 back to the
1705 ESV2011 version;
- 1706 4.3.3 To serve the churches as a resource for Bible translation matters brought to the
1707 attention of the Committee by a church;
- 1708 4.3.4 To appoint one of its members to validate and submit to the treasurer of the General
1709 Fund all expenses being submitted for committee work.
- 1710 4.3.5 To prepare and distribute a report to the churches 6 months in advance of the next
1711 General Synod.

1713 ADOPTED

1715 Article 67 – Days of Prayer

1716 1. Material

- 1717 1.1 Report from Burlington-Rehoboth and Edmonton-Providence regarding days of prayer
1718 dated September 27, 2018 (8.2.12.1)
- 1719 1.2 Supplemental report from these two churches regarding days of prayer dated November
1720 17, 2018 (8.2.12.2).

1721 2. Observations

- 1722 2.1 GS 2016 appointed the churches at Edmonton-Providence and Burlington-Rehoboth as
1723 the churches to implement the provisions of CO Art. 54.
- 1724 2.2 The main report indicates that no church requested the organization of a day of prayer.
1725 The supplemental report indicates that, after the main report had already been submitted

1726 to the churches ahead of Synod, Tintern-Spring Creek requested the two churches to
1727 organize a day of prayer. The supplemental report states that, following separate
1728 discussion of the request by each church, “Both Councils interpreted the request as
1729 being of a serious nature but yet not an acute or urgent affliction threatening the life of
1730 the Church. Therefore the conclusion was that the request did not fit the criteria stated in
1731 Article 54 CO, namely, ‘In times of war, general calamities, and other great afflictions
1732 the presence of which is felt throughout the churches.’ Therefore the decision was not to
1733 proceed with the request.”

1734 **3. Considerations**

1735 3.1 Both reports indicate that the churches appointed have been active and responsive in
1736 fulfilling their mandate given by GS 2016.

1737 **4. Recommendations**

1738 That Synod decide:

- 1739 4.1 To express gratitude to the Burlington-Rehoboth CanRC and the Edmonton-Providence
1740 CanRC for their reports.
- 1741 4.2 To reappoint the Burlington-Rehoboth CanRC and the Edmonton-Providence CanRC to
1742 implement CO Art. 54 as needed.
- 1743 4.3 To mandate the Burlington-Rehoboth CanRC and the Edmonton-Providence CanRC to
1744 submit a report to the churches on their activities 6 months prior to the next general
1745 synod.

1746

1747 **ADOPTED**

1748

1749 **Article 68 – CCCNA (Committee for Contact with Churches in North America) - General**

1750 **1. Material**

- 1751 1.1 Report of the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA)
1752 (8.2.3.1)
- 1753 1.2 Letter from Dunnville (8.3.2.1)

1754 **2. Observations**

- 1755 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 49) decided concerning the CCCNA:
- 1756 [4.1.1] To continue contact with all those churches in North America with which we have
1757 Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) according to the adopted rules, and in accordance
1758 with the mandates described in decisions taken by synod with respect to the
1759 churches with which we have ongoing relationships;
- 1760 [4.1.2] To investigate diligently all the requests received for entering into EF in the
1761 Americas;
- 1762 [4.1.3] To respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests made to attend
1763 assemblies, synods, or meetings of other churches in the Americas;
- 1764 [4.1.4] To report on its findings with suitable recommendations to the next general synod,
1765 and to present to the churches a report of its work six months prior to the
1766 convening of the next general synod.
- 1767 2.2 The CCCNA maintained its Subcommittees East and West. Subcommittee West was
1768 responsible for contacts with the RCUS, RPCNA and NAPARC. Subcommittee East
1769 was responsible for contacts with the ARPC, ERQ, FRCNA, HRC, KPCA and OPC.

-
- 1770 2.3 Minutes of the subcommittee meetings were exchanged via email to promote good
1771 communication and mutual scrutiny.
- 1772 2.4 At least two members of each subcommittee attended NAPARC in 2016, 2017 and
1773 2018. During NAPARC, these members met with their counter-parts.
- 1774 2.5 Rev. D.W. Vandeburgt and br. H. VanDelden have completed their terms in 2019, but
1775 due to the recommendations of the combined CRCA-CCCNA report to Synod, the
1776 CCCNA recommends that these brothers be reappointed to the CCCNA since their
1777 significant years of experience would be of great assistance to the committee should
1778 Synod adopt the recommendations of the combined report.
- 1779 2.6 The CCCNA recommends that Synod continue the committee’s mandate until 2022
1780 with one change, namely, to point 4 so that it reads:
1781 To report on its findings with suitable recommendations to the next general synod,
1782 and to present to the churches a report of its work **five** months prior to the
1783 convening of the next general synod.
- 1784 2.7 Dunnville recommends that Synod not accept the CCCNA’s recommended change since
1785 the churches need adequate time to respond to reports. Dunnville argues that providing
1786 an exception to one committee may result in the same request from other committees
1787 and contends that the CCCNA does not provide convincing reasons for the change.

1788 **3. Considerations**

- 1789 3.1 The CCCNA carried out its mandate diligently, especially considering that four
1790 additional churches (ARPC, FRCNA, HRC, KPCA) have requested to interact with the
1791 CanRC via the committee.
- 1792 3.2 The annual NAPARC meetings and meetings with delegates of the other churches at
1793 NAPARC occur in November. Changing the number of months that the CCCNA has to
1794 report on its work from six to five months would allow the committee to report on the
1795 most recent meetings at NAPARC.
- 1796 3.3 A one-month delay for the CCCNA does not significantly impact the ability of the
1797 churches to respond to the CCCNA report and the delay is reasonable when measured
1798 against its benefit.
- 1799 3.4 An exception to the CCCNA for the time allowed for reporting to the churches does not
1800 need to be given to other committees, considering they do not have to deal with the
1801 same time constraints.

1802 **4. Recommendations**

1803 That Synod decide:

- 1804 4.1 To thank the Rev. D.W. Vandeburgt and br. H. VanDelden for their work on the
1805 CCCNA.
- 1806 4.2 To mandate the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA):
1807 4.2.1 To continue contact with all those churches in North America with which we
1808 have Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) according to the adopted rules, and in
1809 accordance with the mandates described in decisions taken by synod with
1810 respect to the churches with which we have ongoing relationships;
- 1811 4.2.2 To investigate diligently all the requests received for entering into EF in North
1812 America;
- 1813 4.2.3 To respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests made to attend
1814 assemblies, synods, or meetings of other churches in North America;

1815 4.2.4 To report on its findings with suitable recommendations to the next general
1816 synod, and to present to the churches a report of its work five months prior to the
1817 convening of the next general synod.
1818

1819 **ADOPTED**

1820
1821 **Article 69 – Closing Devotions**

1822 The chairman made some announcements regarding agenda items and housekeeping matters.
1823 The Rev. Bouwman led in evening devotions. He read Revelation 1 and spoke some words of
1824 meditation and encouragement. He had those present sing psalm 97:1,4,5 and then led in prayer,
1825 remembering, among others, the GKv and CanRC.
1826

1827 *Synod adjourned until 9:00am Monday.*
1828

1829 **Day 5 — Morning Session**
1830 **Monday, May 20, 2019**

1831 **Article 70 – Reopening**

1832 Synod reopened in plenary session. The chairman read Psalm 119:25-32, spoke some words, led
1833 in prayer, and had those present sing Psalm 119:10,11,12. He noted all synod members were
1834 present.
1835

1836 **Article 71 – Adoption of Acts**

1837 A question was raised regarding the position of amendments in an article of the Acts. Past
1838 practice has been to report things chronologically, and thus amendments made on the floor of a
1839 synod in plenary session are recorded first in an article. It was objected that this draws undue
1840 attention to the amendment. The first clerk proposed that amendments be placed at the end of the
1841 article. This suggestion was discussed and adopted, to be applied to all the records of the acts of
1842 GS 2019.
1843

1844 **Article 72 – Housekeeping matters**

1845 Some housekeeping matters were dealt with. Among others Synod was informed the Rev. Dr.
1846 William den Hollander and the chairman of the Board of Governors, the Rev. Richard Aasman,
1847 together with his wife, would be joining Synod for supper.
1848

1849 *Synod adjourned until 2:00pm for committee work.*
1850

1851 **Day 5 — Afternoon Session**
1852 **Monday, May 20, 2019**

1853 **Article 73 – Reopening**

1854 Synod reopened in open plenary session. The chairman had the meeting sing Hymn 14:1,2. He
1855 noted all synod members were present.
1856

1857 **Article 74 – Appeal of T. Bosma re: RSE May 2018 art. 7**

1858 Not published in draft form on the web
1859

1860 **Article 75 – HRC (Heritage Reformed Congregations)**

1861 Committee 3 presented draft 1 of a report on the Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC)
1862 (8.2.3.1). The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for refinement.

1863

1864 **Article 76 – LRCA (Liberated Reformed Church of Abbotsford)**

1865 **1. Material**

1866 1.1 Appeal from the Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford (LRCA) (8.6.6.1).

1867 **2. Admissibility**

1868 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 53) agreed with GS 2013’s observation (Art. 62) that “The churches of
1869 the Canadian Reformed federation set the agenda for general synod. No church has
1870 asked us to address this issue. Synod also accepts correspondence received from
1871 churches with which we are in Ecclesiastical Fellowship. The letter from the LRCA
1872 does not fulfil either criterion.”

1873 **3. Recommendation**

1874 That Synod declare the appeal inadmissible.

1875

1876 **ADOPTED**

1877

1878 **Article 77 – Hamilton Blessings re: RSE Nov. 2018 (CO Art. 55)**

1879 Committee 3 presented draft 1 of a report on an appeal from the Hamilton-Blessings CanRC re:
1880 RSE Nov 2018 Art. 8 (8.6.8.1). The report was discussed. The committee took the report back
1881 for refinement.

1882

1883 **Article 78 – Motion to change an already adopted act of GS 2019**

1884 The following was moved by the Rev. P. Holtvlüwer and seconded by the Rev. R.C. Janssen:

1885 To insert into Article 68 of GS 2019 an additional recommendation as follows (numbered

1886 4.2.4. with the understanding that the old 4.2.4 becomes 4.2.5):

1887 *4.2.4 To appoint one of its members to validate and submit to the treasurer of the*
1888 *General Fund all expenses being submitted for committee work.*

1889 **Ground:** GS 2019 when dealing with the decision on the General Fund (Art. 45) decided
1890 this should be done.

1891 Following discussion the motion was

1892

1893 **ADOPTED**

1894

1895 **Article 79 – KCPA-K (Korean Presbyterian Church in America – Kosin)**

1896 **1. Material**

1897 1.1 Report of the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA)
1898 regarding the Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) (KPCA-K) (8.2.3.1)

1899 1.2 Letter from the following CanRC: Attercliffe (8.3.2.6)

1900 **2. Observations**

1901 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 26) decided:

- 1902 [4.1] To express gratitude to the Lord for the establishment of contact with the Korean
 1903 Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) (KPCA-K).
 1904 [4.2] To mandate the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America
 1905 (CCCNA) to continue dialogue with the KPCA-K where feasible, with a view to
 1906 getting to know the KPCA-K better over time.
 1907 2.2 Contact between the CanRC and the KPCA-K was attempted by the CCCNA (under
 1908 synod mandate) in the early 2000s but, due largely to the language barrier, bore little
 1909 fruit and formal attempts were discontinued by GS 2007.
 1910 2.3 Informal acquaintances with the KPCA-K began to emerge at NAPARC meetings. This
 1911 resulted with an invitation to attend their 30th General Assembly in 2014.
 1912 2.4 Two bi-lateral meetings with their inter-church relations committee were held at
 1913 NAPARC 2014 and 2015.
 1914 2.5 There was no dialogue or contact with the KPCA-K from the Summer 2016 to the Fall
 1915 2018. The hope was that a bi-lateral meeting would be held at NAPARC 2018.
 1916 2.6 The Attercliffe CanRC agrees with the committee’s recommendation to continue
 1917 dialogue with the KPCA-K to get to know this church better over time.

1918 **3. Considerations**

- 1919 3.1 The committee has been diligent in completing their mandate.
 1920 3.2 Although there has been minimal contact with the KPCA-K, the little contact that they
 1921 have had has been positive.

1922 **4. Recommendations**

1923 That Synod decide to mandate the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America
 1924 (CCCNA):

- 1925 4.1 To continue dialogue with the Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) (KPCA-
 1926 K) where feasible, with a view to getting to know the KPCA-K better over time.
 1927 4.2 To submit its report to the churches 5 months prior to the convening of next general
 1928 synod.
 1929

1930 **ADOPTED**

1931 **Article 80 – RPCNA (Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America)**

1933 **1. Material**

- 1934 1.1 Report of the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA)
 1935 regarding the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America (RPCNA) (8.2.3.1.)
 1936 1.2 Letter from the following CanRC: Attercliffe (8.3.2.6).

1937 **2. Observations**

- 1938 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 90) decided:
 1939 [4.1] To express gratitude for the Reformed doctrine and practice evident in the
 1940 Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America (RPCNA), evident through the
 1941 contact between the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America
 1942 (CCCNA) and the Inter-church Relations committee (IRC) of the RPCNA;
 1943 [4.2] That the CanRC not enter into a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF);
 1944 [4.3] That the CCCNA interact with the RPCNA at the North American Presbyterian
 1945 and Reformed Council (NAPARC).

- 1946 2.2 The CanRC does not have EF with the RPCNA; they are a member of NAPARC and
1947 the ICRC.
- 1948 2.3 The RPCNA has formal fraternal relations (EF) with these sister churches of the
1949 CanRC: FCS (in North America); OPC; RCUS and the URCNA.
1950 At the invitation of the RPCNA, members of CCCNA attended the RPCNA synod in
1951 Marion, IN, in June 2017 and June 2018. The CCCNA and IRC interacted at the
1952 NAPARC meeting on November 17, 2017.
- 1953 2.4 The CCCNA has recommended to GS 2010 and GS 2016 that EF be extended to the
1954 RPCNA. The recommendation was not adopted at GS 2016 because of two issues: The
1955 practice of ordaining female deacons and the exegetical defense thereof (GS 2016, Art.
1956 90, Cons. 3.2), and reservations about the place and function of The Testimony (GS
1957 2016, Art. 90, Cons. 3.3 and 3.5).
- 1958 2.5 GS 2016 does acknowledge that the RPCNA can be recognized for their faithfulness
1959 to the Word of God and their strong Reformed convictions (GS 2016, Art. 90, Cons.
1960 3.5, Rec. 4.1)
- 1961 2.6 The RPCNA have congregations or preaching points in close proximity to CanRCs in
1962 Ottawa, Elora, Fergus, Guelph and Denver. Several of these have expressed a desire for
1963 progression towards unity.
- 1964 2.7 The CCCNA has attended the last two synods of the RPCNA. These were historic
1965 “watershed” moments where, among other matters, the RPCNA defended the scriptural
1966 position of men only in the teaching offices and upheld the discipline of a presbytery to
1967 suspend a retired professor who advocated opening the teaching offices to women.
1968 Several RPCNA brothers noted that the acceptance of women as deacons is on the
1969 decline in the federation.

3. Considerations

- 1970 3.1 The committee has been diligent in completing their mandate.
1971 3.2. The committee gives an informative report about the RPCNA.
1972

4. Recommendations

- 1973 That Synod mandates the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA):
1974 4.1 To engage in continued dialogue and contact with the Reformed Presbyterian Church in
1975 North America (RPCNA);
1976 4.2 To submit its report to the churches 5 months prior to the convening of next general
1977 synod.
1978
1979

ADOPTED

1980
1981
1982 *Synod adjourned until 7:00pm for committee work.*
1983

Day 5 — Evening Session Monday, May 20, 2019

Article 81 – Reopening

1986 Synod reopened in open plenary session. The chairman had the meeting sing Psalm 134. He
1987 called the roll and noted all synod members were present.
1988
1989

1990 **Article 82 – CRTS – Professor NT**

1991 The chairman spoke some words of welcome to the Rev. Dr. William den Hollander, newly
1992 appointed professor of New Testament, and to the Rev. Richard Aasman, chairman of the Board
1993 of Governors.

1994 Dr. den Hollander addressed Synod. He announced that he accepted the appointment. He
1995 explained that he, knowing himself to be a clay vessel, seeks strength in the power of Christ and
1996 knows he will find it there. His address can be found in [Appendix](#) .

1997 The chairman expressed gratitude for the acceptance of the appointment. He noted the
1998 importance of the Word as our light in life, and how the Rev. Dr. William den Hollander has
1999 been entrusted with the task of teaching young men to open their eyes to behold wondrous things
2000 in God’s Word and thus to proclaim that Word.

2001 The chairman then read a letter from the Rev. Dr. Gerhard Visscher, current professor of New
2002 Testament. The text of his letter can be found in [Appendix](#) .

2003 The chairman expressed gratitude for the work of Dr. Visscher. He indicated a letter would be
2004 sent to Dr. Visscher and a token of appreciation would be given to him.

2005 The Rev. Richard Aasman then spoke some words of gratitude, first for the CRTS, next for the
2006 labour of Dr. Visscher, and finally for the fact that Dr. den Hollander had been found to serve
2007 next.

2008 The chairman led in prayer and then had those present sing Hymn 85:1,3.

2009

2010 **Article 83 – OPC – Letter of Greetings**

2011 The Rev. Jack W. Sawyer had been delegated to attend the General Synod of the CanRC on
2012 behalf of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC). Personal circumstances that arose during the
2013 time of Synod prevented him from coming. Hence the Rev. P. Holtvlüwer read the speech
2014 prepared by the Rev. Sawyer. The history of the OPC was briefly described, followed by a
2015 description of ministries and current activities of the OPC. For the text of his speech, see
2016 [Appendix](#).

2017

2018 **Article 84 – CRTS – Board of Governors**

2019 **1. Material**

2020 1.1 Report of the Board of Governors (BoG) of the Canadian Reformed Theological
2021 Seminary (CRTS), (8.2.7.1), Nomination for BoG – RSW (8.1.2), Nomination for BoG
2022 – RSE (8.1.4.), BoG nomination letter for non-minister (8.2.7.2),

2023 1.2 Letters from the following CanRC: Willoughby Heights (8.3.4.1), Coaldale (8.3.4.2),
2024 Toronto-Bethel (8.3.4.3), Brampton-Grace (8.3.4.4)

2025 1.3. The letter received from Coaldale was incomplete and not signed and therefore declared
2026 inadmissible.

2027 **2. Observations**

2028 2.1 The report of the Board of Governors [hereafter the “Board”] provides an overview of
2029 its effort to ensure the continued operation of Theological College in Hamilton (CRTS).
2030 With the faithful support of the churches the work, training, and instruction at CRTS has
2031 continued without interruption since last general synod. The Board appreciates the
2032 contribution of non-teaching staff to the smooth running of CRTS, Since GS 2016, 12
2033 students have graduated with an MDiv degree, 2 students with a BTh degree and 1
2034 student with a Theological Studies diploma.

-
- 2035 2.2 The Lord took to himself Dr. J. DeJong on April 15, 2017. Mrs. Faber, the widow of
2036 Dr. J. Faber, was also taken into glory on June 30, 2018.
- 2037 2.3 Dr. G.H.Visscher has informed the Board that he will retire D.V. after the 2019-20
2038 academic year. Therefore the Board declared a vacancy in the New Testament
2039 department beginning September 2020.
- 2040 2.4 The faculty is active in visiting the churches in the federation as well as participating in
2041 teaching and speaking engagements overseas. Since 2016 there have been a number of
2042 faculty publications.
- 2043 2.5 The support of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) for CRTS is reflected
2044 not only in the students they send, but also in the significant financial contributions they
2045 make.
- 2046 2.6 The Pastoral Training Program continues to work very well. There is good cooperation
2047 from the churches in finding placements for the students, and the students continue to
2048 testify that the benefits for them are considerable.
- 2049 2.7 In 2013 CRTS received accreditation from the Association of Theological Schools
2050 (ATS). This accreditation is valid until spring 2020. CRTS submitted two reports to
2051 ATS since that time, which were accepted.
- 2052 2.8 On September 6, 2017, the Board, faculty, staff, and other invited participants held a
2053 strategic planning session. At this session, the existing strategic plan was reviewed and
2054 refreshed, a presentation on distance education was given, and there was development
2055 of new key thrusts and initiatives to be worked on over the next few years.
- 2056 2.9 Since the last Synod, the Board has dealt with the procedure regarding the appointment
2057 of the principal which requires an amendment to the By-laws. This change has been
2058 approved by the Board, but since all By-law changes need to be approved by General
2059 Synod, the Board hereby submits it for approval. The following is observed:
- 2060 2.9.1 The Board of Governors notes that according to the College Act, 5.11 a. *The*
2061 *government, conduct, management and control of the College and of its property,*
2062 *revenues, expenditures, business and affairs are vested in the Board and the Board*
2063 *has all powers necessary or convenient to perform its duties and achieve the object*
2064 *and purpose of the College including, without limiting the generality of the*
2065 *foregoing, the power, (a) through (f) omitted (g) to appoint or remove the*
2066 *Principal;*
- 2067 2.9.2 Meanwhile, Bylaw 12, 10.01 (b) stipulates: *a.10.01 Composition and Powers – All*
2068 *appointments to the faculty shall be subject to the approval of Synod. The Board of*
2069 *Governors shall seek the advice of Synod with respect to the following matters...*
2070 *(b) the appointment of the Principal, and his power, function, and duty; (d), the*
2071 *termination of a member of the faculty or the Principal.*
- 2072 2.9.3 From the above it appears that these two are in conflict with each other, the one
2073 maintaining that the Board can appoint the principal, the other maintaining that a
2074 General Synod should be consulted beforehand.
- 2075 2.9.4 In recent years CRTS with Synod involvement, has transitioned from a rotational
2076 system (new principal every three years) to a more permanent system (with a
2077 Principal appointed for up to 9 years (3 renewable terms for 3 years each). There
2078 is general agreement that this new system works well as it allows for some more
2079 continuity for some years, without saddling one person with the task permanently.

- 2080 2.9.5 The involvement of a General Synod is, however, somewhat cumbersome with
2081 respect to the implementation of the new system for the following reasons.
- 2082 2.9.5.1 The end of each of the three years do not necessarily coincide well with the
2083 timing of General Synod with respect to re-appointment.
- 2084 2.9.5.2 One can imagine situations in which the need for a Synod to terminate a
2085 faculty member’s role as a principal would be problematic.
- 2086 2.9.5.3 Furthermore, if a person who is Principal wishes to be such no longer, or the
2087 CRTS community no longer wants him to be such, is it really beneficial and
2088 edifying for this to become a matter for a federational discussion through a
2089 Synod? Would it not be best to keep such discussions to the smallest circle,
2090 especially since the Acts 198 states that “the Board has all powers necessary
2091 or convenient to perform its duties and achieve the object and purpose of the
2092 College including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the
2093 power ... to appoint or remove the Principal?”
- 2094 2.9.6 Recommendations
- 2095 2.9.6.1 That Synod agree that, with a view to the smooth operation of the Seminary,
2096 the Board should be allowed to execute the power to the Act, Section 5.11
2097 without limitation, and simply report at a Synod either what it expects will
2098 happen and/or report on what has happened with respect to the position of the
2099 Principal.
- 2100 2.9.6.2 That Synod agree to the following changes to Bylaw 12: a. That section (b) of
2101 Bylaw 12 10.01 be deleted b. That the words “or the Principal” be deleted
2102 from section (d) of Bylaw 12, 10.03.
- 2103 2.9.6.3 That once the above changes are made to the Bylaw, the Board be mandated
2104 by Synod to make the necessary consequential changes to the CRTS
2105 Handbook (CH).
- 2106 2.10 The Board responded to GS 2016’s interaction with the proposed basis of the Statement
2107 of Institutional Purpose (SIP) “CRTS submits to the infallible Word of God and is
2108 faithful the ecumenical creeds and the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and
2109 the Canons of Dort.” Synod Dunnville took over the Church of Dunnville’s proposal
2110 and approved its wording: “CRTS submits to the infallible Word of God in the Old and
2111 New Testaments as summarized in the ecumenical creeds and the Belgic Confession,
2112 the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort”. At the same time Synod
2113 Dunnville motioned the Board toward Toronto’s suggestion that the SIP should be an
2114 internal CRTS document. In conclusion, the Board is in agreement with the advice of
2115 Toronto, that the SIP is best understood as an internal policy document. With respect to
2116 the SIP, the Board informs Synod 2019 that it
- 2117 [a.] Adopts the word, “CRTS submits to the wording ‘CRTS submits to the doctrine of
2118 the infallible Word of God as summarized in the ecumenical creeds and the Belgic
2119 Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort.’”
- 2120 [b.] Agrees to regard the SIP as an internal document, intended to support and in no
2121 way contradict the Act of 1981.
- 2122 2.11 The Board responded to GS 2016 (and Toronto)’s recommendation to mandate a
2123 comprehensive review of tenure policy of CRTS and provide a proposal at the next
2124 Synod. It proposes to maintain the current procedure of granting tenure to professors.
- 2125 2.12 The Board recommends:

NOT FINAL

-
- 2126 [1.] To receive this report and all its appendices.
 2127 [2.] To acknowledge the expiration of the terms of office of Revs. J. Ludwig, R.
 2128 Aasman, and br. B. Hordyk and to express gratitude for their work.
 2129 [3.] Pursuant to Section 5(2) of the Act and Section 3.04 of By-Law 3
 2130 [a.] To appoint, elect or re-appoint six active ministers to hold office until the next
 2131 General Synod and to appoint at least three substitutes from each Regional
 2132 Synod area, keeping in mind that the By-laws prohibit anyone from serving
 2133 more than three consecutive terms and also keeping in mind that:
 2134 [i.] The following brothers were appointed by Synod 2016 and are eligible to be
 2135 reappointed for two more terms: from Regional Synod West, Rev. J. Poppe
 2136 and Rev. J. Slaa; from Regional Synod East, Rev. J. Louwense.
 2137 [ii.] The following brother was appointed by Synod 2013 and is eligible for
 2138 reappointment for one more term: from Regional Synod East, Rev.
 2139 M. VanLuik;
 2140 [b.] To reappoint brs. K. Van Veen and P. Vandersluis as Governors for a term
 2141 lasting until the second subsequent General Synod.
 2142 [c.] To reappoint br. C. Medemblik and F. Oostdyk as Governors for a term lasting
 2143 from the date of re-appointment until the next subsequent General Synod.
 2144 [d.] To appoint one new non-ministerial Governor for a term lasting from the date
 2145 of appointment until the third subsequent General Synod, with a standby
 2146 replacement candidate as well. The Board’s recommendation for these
 2147 appointments can be found in a separate letter which also contain curricula
 2148 vitae.
 2149 [4.] To request the churches to continue to remember in their prayers the needs of Mrs.
 2150 G. Deddens, Mrs. M. DeJong, Dr. and Mrs. N.H. Gootjes and Prof. J. Geertsema.
 2151 [5.] To appoint Dr. J. VanVliet as Principal for the years 2019-2022;
 2152 [6.] To approve the change to the By-laws described in this report;
 2153 [7.] To maintain the current procedure of granting tenure to professors;
 2154 [8.] To approve all other decisions and actions of the Board and of its committees for
 2155 the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 until the date of this Report;
 2156 [9.] To express gratitude for the support from the Free Reformed Churches in
 2157 Australia.
 2158 [10.] To consider the audited financial statements and the report of the Auditors for the
 2159 previous fiscal periods; to relieve the Treasurer of the Board of all responsibilities
 2160 for these fiscal periods; to support and recommend the reappointment of DBK
 2161 Accounting as Auditor until the next General Synod, subject to the discretion and
 2162 direction of the Board.
 2163 [11.] To acknowledge with gratitude the financial contributions of the Women’s Savings
 2164 Action to the well-being of the Seminary.
- 2165 2.13 Willoughby Heights has no concerns with Synod deciding as the Board report
 2166 recommends concerning Bylaw 12. This church presents two alternative options.
 2167 2.14 Toronto-Bethel requests Synod not to accede to the request of the Board to change
 2168 Bylaw 12. They question whether the Board correctly understands the current bylaws.
 2169 It is their understanding that the by-law as worded now does not provide the authority or
 2170 right of a General Synod to override, disagree with or otherwise interfere with a Board
 2171 decision on the appointment or removal of a Principal. Rather, the bylaw establishes

2172 that the Board will seek the advice of Synod with respect to the appointment of the
2173 Principal and his power, function, and duty. It would seem that then the expectation was
2174 that the advice would be sought, with proper grounds, and rationale, and that advice
2175 would be given, which if properly set out, conveyed and considered, would be given
2176 serious consideration. This understanding of the bylaw would suggest that although the
2177 power remains with the Board with respect to the appointment of the Principal, there
2178 should be substantive and respectful dialogue around the matters for which advice is
2179 being sought. Given this understanding, the concern regarding the timing of Synod
2180 would be alleviated as well. The Board has the ability to make appointments and such
2181 during any 3-year interval between general synods, which could be made provisionally,
2182 subject to substantive dialogue and advice subsequently being sought. If Bethel's
2183 understanding is correct then no changes to the bylaws should be required.

- 2184 2.15 Brampton-Grace has a request (which they called an "appeal") similar to Toronto-
2185 Bethel. It also addresses the concern of the Board about the cumbersome aspects of
2186 seeking advice of Synod and recommends that the Board be requested that CH 4.5. be
2187 changed to add a point 2.5. similar CH 5.1, 3.2 to have an interim appointment until
2188 General Synod has had the opportunity to offer advice.

2189 3. Considerations

- 2190 3.1 Synod notes with thankfulness that the work of CRTS could continue without
2191 interruption between GS 2016 and GS 2019.
- 2192 3.2 Synod notes with the sadness the passing away of Dr. J. DeJong and Mrs. W. Faber into
2193 glory.
- 2194 3.3 Synod is grateful for the faithful service of Dr. G.H. Visscher as professor of New
2195 Testament over the past 19 years and as principal of CRTS for 9 years.
- 2196 3.4 Synod is grateful to the FRCA for their continued involvement in CRTS, as well as their
2197 prayerful and significant financial support.
- 2198 3.5 Synod notes with gratitude that the Pastoral Training Program continues to be beneficial
2199 for the students and the churches.
- 2200 3.6 The Board request to approve all other decisions and actions of the Board and its
2201 committees is a legal requirement in accordance with the College Act.
- 2202 3.7. Toronto-Bethel and Brampton-Grace's understanding is correct and no changes to
2203 Bylaw 12 are required.
- 2204 3.8. Brampton-Grace's recommendation that the Board be requested that Ch 4.5. be changed
2205 ought to be passed on to the Board for their consideration.

2206 4. Recommendations

2207 That Synod decide:

- 2208 4.1 To receive this report and all its appendices;
- 2209 4.2 To acknowledge the expiration of the terms of office of the Rev. J. Ludwig, the Rev.
2210 R. Aasman, and br. B. Hordyk and to express gratitude for their work;
- 2211 4.3. Pursuant to Section 5(2) of the Act and Section 3.04 of By-Law 3
- 2212 4.3.1 To appoint, elect or re-appoint six active ministers to hold office until the next
2213 General Synod and to appoint at least three substitutes from each Regional Synod
2214 area, keeping in mind that the By-laws prohibit anyone from serving more than
2215 three consecutive terms and also keeping in mind that:

- 2216 4.3.1.1 The following brothers were appointed by Synod 2016 and are eligible to be
2217 reappointed for two more terms: from Regional Synod West, Rev. J. Poppe
2218 and Rev. J. Slaa; from Regional Synod East, Rev. J. Louwerse;
2219 4.3.1.2 The following brother was appointed by Synod 2013 and is eligible for
2220 reappointment for one more term: from Regional Synod East, Rev. M.
2221 VanLuik;
2222 4.3.2 To reappoint brs. K. Van Veen and P. Vandersluis as Governors for a term lasting
2223 until the second subsequent General Synod;
2224 4.3.3 To reappoint br. C. Medemblik and F. Oostdyk as Governors for a term lasting
2225 from the date of re-appointment until the next subsequent General Synod;
2226 4.3.4 To appoint br. Alan Datema (alternate br. Brian VanderHout) as one new non-
2227 ministerial Governor for a term lasting from the date of appointment until the third
2228 subsequent General Synod;
2229 4.3.5 To appoint the Rev. C.J. VanderVelde (alternate the Rev. Marc Jagt) as one
2230 ministerial governor from RSE;
2231 4.3.6 To appoint the Rev. R. Schouten (alternate the Rev. D. DeBoer) as one ministerial
2232 governor from RSW;
2233 4.4 To request the churches to continue to remember in their prayers the needs of Mrs. G.
2234 Deddens, Mrs. M. DeJong, Dr. and Mrs. N.H. Gootjes and Prof. J. Geertsema;
2235 4.5 To appoint Dr. J. VanVliet as Principal for the years 2019-2022;
2236 4.6 To not approve the change to the By-laws described in this report;
2237 4.7 To maintain the current procedure of granting tenure to professors;
2238 4.8 To approve all other decisions and actions of the Board and of its committees for the
2239 years 2016, 2017 and 2018 until the date of this Report;
2240 4.9 To express gratitude for the support from the Free Reformed Churches of Australia.
2241 4.10 To consider the audited financial statements and the report of the Auditors for the
2242 previous fiscal periods; to relieve the Treasurer of the Board of all responsibilities for
2243 these fiscal periods; to support and recommend the reappointment of DBK Accounting
2244 as Auditor until the next General Synod, subject to the discretion and direction of the
2245 Board;
2246 4.11 To acknowledge with gratitude the financial contributions of the Women's Savings
2247 Action to the well-being of the Seminary.

2248
2249 **ADOPTED** with members of the Board of Governors abstaining.

2250
2251 **Article 85 – Overture – RSE & RSW on licensure (CO article 21)**

2252 **1. Material**

2253 1.1 Overtures

2254 1.1.1 Overture Regional Synod East (8.4.3) re: Licensure proposal

2255 1.1.2 Overture Regional Synod West (8.4.4) re: Licensure proposal

2256 1.2 Letter from Barrhead (8.5.11) re: overture RSW 2018

2257 **2. Admissibility**

2258 2.1 Both overtures have followed the ecclesiastical route (CO Art 30), therefore both
2259 overtures are admissible.

2260 3. Observations

- 2261 3.1 RSE Nov 2018 recommends the adoption of a proposal to permit seminary students to
2262 pursue licensure following two years of study in the M.Div program.
- 2263 3.2 RSW 2018 recommends the adoption of a proposal to permit seminary students to
2264 pursue licensure following two years of study in the M.Div program.
- 2265 3.3 Barrhead is in full agreement with the proposal of RSW 2018.
- 2266 3.4 Both regional synods have submitted similar proposals that originated from the same
2267 source. However RSE 2018 has made a number of amendments making the proposals
2268 slightly different from each other.
- 2269 3.5 RSE Nov 2018 (Observation h) amended the proposal of Classis Ontario West May
2270 2018 (COW 2018), from “CRTS rejoices to be of service to the URCNA,” to “CRTS
2271 enjoys being of service to the URCNA.”
- 2272 3.6 RSE Nov 2018 (Recommendation b.iv) amended the proposal of COW May 2018, from
2273 “That in the summer immediately following classical permission or licensure—whether
2274 this be after either the student’s second or third year of studies” to “That in the summer
2275 immediately following classical permission or licensure—whether this be after the
2276 student’s second or third year of studies.”
- 2277 3.7 RSE Nov 2018 (Recommendation b.iv) amended the proposal of COW May 2018, from
2278 “the student must follow a summer internship during which...” to “the student must
2279 complete a summer internship during which...”
- 2280 3.8 RSE Nov 2018 (Recommendation b.v) amended the proposal of COW May 2018, from
2281 regarding the student’s progress and his suitability for ministry,” to “regarding the
2282 student’s progress and suitability for ministry.”
- 2283 3.9 RSE Nov 2018 (Recommendation b.vi) amended the proposal of COW May 2018, from
2284 “That the license to speak an edifying word be valid for 12 months, with the possibility
2285 of one or two 12-month renewals if a written request is made,” to “That the license to
2286 speak an edifying word be valid for 12 months, ordinarily renewable twice if a written
2287 request is made.”
- 2288 3.10 According to the Acts of RSW Nov 2018, the following amendments are listed under
2289 recommendations:
- 2290 [3.3.] To request GS 2019 to consider the following amendments to the overture:
- 2291 [3.3.1] Re 3.1.2.3 above: As the internship may be a way for the student to ascertain
2292 whether or not he is suited to the work, this condition should be removed;
- 2293 [3.3.2] Re 3.1.2.8 above: to add “..., or by a minister recommended by the Senate
2294 and appointed by the Board of Governors.”

2295 4. Considerations

- 2296 4.1 All the above amendments made by RSE Nov 2018 are of a cosmetic nature and do
2297 nothing to change the intent of the original proposal. There are no significant
2298 improvements that justify changing the original proposal.
- 2299 4.2 RSW 2018 recommends that the Recommendation 3.b.viii now read, “That all other
2300 regulations remain in place, such as that new practice sermons made outside of the
2301 internship periods and before a student graduates from CRTS be subject to approval by
2302 the Professor of Ministry and Mission at CRTS, or by a minister recommended by the
2303 Senate and appointed by the Board of Governors.” Since licensure after this decision

2304 can now take place after the second year of study, the number of sermons needing
 2305 approval by the Professor of Ministry and Mission at CRTS will increase significantly.
 2306 4.3 RSW 2018 recommends dropping the condition that a “student desire to enter gospel
 2307 ministry, if called to such by the churches” (Recommendation 3.b.iii of the overtures)
 2308 in order to receive licensure to preach. It is possible for a student to not have a desire to
 2309 enter gospel ministry when they begin seminary training. However, it is not correct to
 2310 receive licensure if that desire is not present.

2311 5. Recommendations

2312 That Synod decide:

- 2313 5.1 That as part of the “general ecclesiastical regulations” of article 21 of the Church Order,
 2314 the churches grant their students for the ministry the opportunity to come before a
 2315 classis after they have completed two years of study in the M.Div. degree, in order to
 2316 seek permission to speak an edifying word;
- 2317 5.1.2 That this permission or licensure be granted under the following conditions:
- 2318 5.1.2.1 That the student present a letter to classis from the Canadian Reformed
 2319 Theological Seminary (CRTS) that he has successfully completed two years
 2320 of studies in an approved M.Div. program;
- 2321 5.1.2.2 That the student sustain an appropriate ecclesiastical exam and supply
 2322 whatever documents the classis may require;
- 2323 5.1.2.3 That the student desire to enter gospel ministry, if called to such by the
 2324 churches;
- 2325 5.1.2.4 That in the summer immediately following classical permission or
 2326 licensure— whether this be after either the student’s second or third year of
 2327 studies—the student must follow a summer internship during which he will
 2328 work under a particular minister or ministers who will serve as his mentor or
 2329 mentors and will approve his practice sermons prior to delivery (i.e., the
 2330 licensure is initially not to be regarded as a broad permission to access all
 2331 pulpits or to provide pulpit supply to vacant churches, but first of all to
 2332 undergo practical training);
- 2333 5.1.2.5 That the mentor write a report for the Professor of Ministry and Mission at
 2334 CRTS regarding the student’s progress and his suitability for ministry, while
 2335 the elders, as well as any minister or seminary professors present for the
 2336 student’s practice preaching, submit evaluations of the student’s preaching
 2337 and leading of the worship services to the Professor of Ministry and Mission
 2338 at CRTS;
- 2339 5.1.2.6 That the license to speak an edifying word be valid for 12 months, with the
 2340 possibility of one or two 12-month renewals, if a written request is made by
 2341 the student to the same classis which granted him licensure, before the 12-
 2342 month period elapses;
- 2343 5.1.2.7 That during the academic year that follows a summer internship, CRTS
 2344 students who have received permission to speak an edifying word be
 2345 expected to discuss with their mentors on the CRTS faculty whether and how
 2346 much to honour requests from the churches to lead the worship services and
 2347 speak an edifying word (so that their mentor at CRTS may assist them with
 2348 advice towards maintaining school and family obligations);

NOT FINAL

2349 5.1.2.8 That all other regulations remain in place, such as that new practice sermons
 2350 made outside of the internship periods and before a student graduates from
 2351 CRTS be subject to approval by the Professor of Ministry and Mission at
 2352 CRTS, or by a minister recommended by the Senate and appointed by the
 2353 Board of Governors;

2354 5.1.3 That General Synod mandate the Committee for Pastoral Training Program
 2355 Funding:

2356 5.1.3.1 To continue with its present mandate by funding one full-summer internship
 2357 for each M.Div. student of CRTS who aspires to ministry in the CanRCs,
 2358 whether the internship occurs after the second or third year of a student's
 2359 studies at CRTS.
 2360

ADOPTED

Article 86 – OPC (Orthodox Presbyterian Church)

1. Material

- 2364
 2365 1.1 Report of the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA)
 2366 regarding the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) (8.2.3.1)
 2367 1.2 Letter from the following CanRC: Attercliffe (8.3.2.6)

2. Observations

- 2368 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 61) decided:
 2369 [4.1] To thank the LORD for the way in which the Orthodox Presbyterian Church
 2370 (OPC) actively provides a faithful Reformed witness to the gospel;
 2371 [4.2] To mandate the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America
 2372 (CCCNA) to continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the OPC under the
 2373 adopted rules.
 2374
 2375 2.2 In 2016 and 2018, committee members attended the General Assembly of the OPC and
 2376 brought fraternal greetings. A fraternal greeting was sent by letter in 2017. A meeting
 2377 with the CEIR was held in 2016.
 2378 2.3 At the meeting with the CEIR at NAPARC 2016 the CanRC highlighted the decisions
 2379 of the CanRC Synod 2016. A discussion took place on the Synod's decision not to enter
 2380 into EF with the RPCNA. The OPC brothers informed the CCCNA that they are eager
 2381 to identify a missionary doctor who would be able to labour in Uganda. They also
 2382 inquired as to what oversight in the mission work in Papua New Guinea looks like.
 2383 2.4 At the meeting with the CEIR at NAPARC 2017 a substantive discussion took place on
 2384 the following items:
 2385 2.4.1 The CanRC mentioned that they have encouraged awareness of the Grand Forks
 2386 OPC, ND that the Bismarck OPC, ND is overseeing.
 2387 2.4.2 The dismissal of a member of the ICRC can only be initiated by a member
 2388 church of ICRC based on a decision by their major assembly. The OPC brought
 2389 this motion during the ICRC 2017. The CanRC expressed thanks for the work of
 2390 the OPC at the ICRC, while the OPC expressed thanks for CanRC work on the
 2391 matter and for supporting their motion at ICRC.

- 2392 2.4.3 The OPC asked if the CanRC could cross-pollinate their inter-church relations
2393 committees (CRCA and CCCNA) to make it easier for our inter-church relations
2394 committees to function together.
2395 2.4.4 The Canadian churches in the OPC are expected to form a presbytery in the near
2396 future.
2397 2.4.5 The OPC are in the process of updating their rules for EF so that in situations of
2398 non-contact they can scale back a relationship from EF to corresponding
2399 relationships.
2400 2.5 The OPC informed the CCCNA via a letter in January of 2018 that they had updated
2401 their rules for EF.
2402 2.6 The OPC informed the CCCNA via a letter in August of 2018 that their 85th General
2403 Assembly had decided to elect a committee to propose specific linguistic changes to the
2404 doctrinal standards of the OPC.
2405 2.7 The church of Attercliffe wishes to stress that the CCCNA should continue discussions
2406 on points of doctrine where we continue to differ on, and continue to build each other
2407 up.

2408 **3. Considerations**

- 2409 3.1 The CCCNA has fulfilled its mandate regarding the OPC.
2410 3.2 The actions taken by the OPC confirm their allegiance to the Word of God and the
2411 Reformed confessions.
2412 3.3 The presence of an OPC presbytery in Canada could give opportunity for our classes to
2413 send delegates to their meetings.
2414 3.4 The CCCNA has already interacted with the OPC on the matters raised by the church at
2415 Attercliffe. GS 2016 Art. 59 Cons. 3.4 should also be kept in mind.

2416 **4. Recommendations**

2417 That Synod decide:

- 2418 4.1 To continue ecclesiastical fellowship (EF) with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church
2419 (OPC) under the adopted rules.
2420 4.2 To mandate the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA):
2421 4.2.1 To send a delegation to the general assemblies of the OPC at least once every three
2422 years;
2423 4.2.3 To encourage neighbouring classes to interact with the new presbytery in Canada
2424 when it is formed;
2425 4.2.4 To submit its report to the churches 5 months prior to the convening of the next
2426 general synod.
2427

2428 **ADOPTED**

2430 **Article 87 – IRB (Reformed Churches in Brazil)**

2431 **1. Material**

- 2432 1.1 Report of the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad – Reformed Churches in
2433 Brazil (IRB) (8.2.2.1)
2434 1.2 Letter from the Attercliffe CanRC (8.3.1.9).

2. Observations

2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 88) decided concerning the Reformed Churches in Brazil (IRB):

[4.1] To express gratitude for the continued growth evident in the Reformed Churches in Brazil;

[4.2] To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Reformed Churches in Brazil (IRB) under the adopted rules;

[4.3] To mandate the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) to use every opportunity to have contact with the IRB and provide in encouragement to these churches.

2.2. From the CRCA report the following:

2.2.1. The CRCA was very active in their contact with the IRB, they received the acts from 27th, 29th, and 30th Concilio. The CRCA sent a letter with contact information and a description of the CRCA work to the IRB, including GS 2016 Art. 88.

2.3. The CRCA had frequent interactions with the IRB and attended the 30th Concilio of the IRB.

2.4 At the 30th Concilio of the IRB, two candidates for the Ministry of the Word were examined. There was much joy seeing both candidates declared eligible for call. The joy was tempered somewhat by the grief of going through the process of dismissing Pr. Thiago A. Lins from his call. Even though the IRB is a very young federation, they showed great care and love in how they had dealt with this brother over a three-year period.

2.5. The IRB is a young federation and is excited about the Reformed faith. They place very high value on the confessions, seeing these as very important to know and to live by as churches. They consider themselves very young and look to the CanRC as a much older and wiser federation which has been blessed with the confessions that came out of the Reformation. They look to the CanRC for guidance (as for example in the approach to take with the RCN) and we can look to the IRB to be reminded of our rich heritage, to value it, and to hold on to it so that the CanRC remain a faithful federation. It is good to remember that the IRB has EF with only two federations: the CanRC and the RCN.

2.6. There are three specific concerns the IRB has in which we as CanRC continue to give assistance.

1. The training of men for the ministry of the Word and the training of men for the office of elder and deacon are mostly beyond the ability of the IRB at this time. They are too small to have the men and the resources able to do this. They are assisted in this work by the sending churches of Aldergrove and Hamilton largely through the work of their seminary, the John Calvin Institute.

2. Financially, the IRB is a very poor federation. They desire assistance in supporting ministers of the Word, in paying for buildings to worship in, in looking after a seminary, in providing ministers with funds to buy books, and in their outreach efforts.

3. Because the IRB is a young federation with many new believers, there continues to be a lot for these believers to learn. This is being worked on by the CanRC sending churches and the mission workers by way of regular teaching in various forms.

2480 **3. Considerations**

2481 3.1. The CRCA has fulfilled its mandate regarding the IRB.

2482 3.2 In view of the needs in the IRB it is important to make every effort to maintain direct
2483 contact with them and to encourage the churches and their leaders.

2484 **4. Recommendations**

2485 That Synod decide:

2486 4.1 To express gratitude for the continued desire of the Reformed Churches in Brazil (IRB)
2487 to grow in knowledge and faithfulness;

2488 4.2 To continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the IRB under the
2489 adopted rules;

2490 4.3 To mandate the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA):

2491 4.2.1 To use every opportunity to have contact with the IRB and to provide
2492 encouragement to this federation of churches;

2493 4.2.2 To visit the IRB at least twice prior to the next general synod;

2494 4.2.3 To work in consultation and cooperation with the Aldergrove CanRC and
2495 Hamilton-Cornerstone CanRC (and their supporting churches), given their
2496 mission work in Brazil;

2497 4.2.4. To submit its report to the churches 6 months prior to the convening of the next
2498 general synod.

2499

2500 **ADOPTED**

2501

2502 **Article 88 – GKv - Letter to the individual congregations and to synod**

2503 Committee 5 presented draft 1 of a letter to the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (GKv) as
2504 per the decision recorded in GS 2019 Art. 41. The text of the letter was read and then discussed.
2505 The committee took the letter back for refinement.

2506

2507 **Article 89 – Closing Devotions**

2508 A few housekeeping matters were addressed.

2509 The Rev. Wielenga led in evening devotions. He read Psalm 121 and spoke some words of
2510 meditation. He had those present sing Ps. 121:1,4. He then led in prayer.

2511

2512 *Synod adjourned until 9:00am the next day.*

2513

2514 **Day 6 — Morning Session**

2515 **Tuesday, May 21, 2019**

2516 **Article 90 – Reopening**

2517 Synod reopened in plenary session. The chairman read Psalm 119:32-40, spoke some words, led
2518 in prayer, and had those present sing Psalm 119:13,14,15. He noted all synod members were
2519 present.

2520 Some announcements were made regarding housekeeping matters, among others that the official
2521 photo shoot would be at 10:00am.

2522

2523 **Article 91 – Adoption of Acts**

2524 Prepared articles of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

2525
2526 *Synod adjourned until 3:30pm for committee work.*

2527
2528 **Day 6 — Afternoon Session**
2529 **Tuesday, May 21, 2019**

2530 **Article 92 – Reopening**

2531 Synod reopened in open plenary session. The chairman had the meeting sing Psalm 139:1,2. He
2532 noted all synod members were present. He made a comment about confidential materials needing
2533 to be destroyed.

2534
2535 **Article 93 – Appeal of J. & M. de Boer re: RSW 2017 Art. 5 (marriage after divorce)**

2536 **1. Material**

- 2537 1.1 Appeal of br. and sr. John and Margaret de Boer against a decision of Regional Synod
2538 West 2017 (RSW) Article 5 (including appendices)

2539 **2. Observations**

- 2540 2.1 The appellants are of the conviction that any remarriage after divorce erodes what the
2541 Bible and the Form for the Solemnization of Marriage teaches about the permanence of
2542 marriage. They are of the opinion that their Consistory should not condone such
2543 marriages by asking God for his blessing in a public worship service. They request
2544 General Synod to decide that:

2545 2.1.1 The solemnization of remarriage after divorce should not be performed in a public
2546 worship service;

2547 2.1.2 Asking for a blessing over remarriages after divorce should not find a place in
2548 public prayers. They reason this should not be done to avoid burdening the
2549 conscience of and putting a stumbling block in the way of members “who hold to
2550 the biblical view of marriage as always has been confirmed by the Churches.”

- 2551 2.2 The appellants requested RSW 2017 to:

2552 2.2.1 declare the decision of Classis Pacific West (CPW) as unsubstantiated and
2553 therefore void [4.1]; and

2554 2.2.2 point out to the Consistory of Langley CanRC (Langley) that in the case of a
2555 remarriage Article 63 CO applies and that solemnization of second marriages can
2556 be done privately and that praying over these marriages can be limited to this
2557 private ceremony [4.2].

- 2558 2.3 In answering the appeal of br. and sr. de Boer, RSW 2017:

2559 2.3.1 Judged that Classis sufficiently interacted with the grounds the appeal is based on
2560 by referring to the exegesis done by the Langley Consistory (CPW article 7 Obs.
2561 2.4 & 2.5, Cons. 3.1).

2562 2.3.2 Agreed with Langley when it said: “Brother, we do not judge you for coming to a
2563 different conclusion. Others in this church, in the Canadian Reformed Churches
2564 and in the church universal have come to the same conclusion as you. We respect
2565 this position and those who hold it.”

2566 2.3.3 Stated that Article 63 CO “does not allow for a consistory to condone marriages
2567 contrary to Scripture, regardless of whether they are solemnized in a worship
2568 service or a private ceremony. The consistory is to ensure that marriages take place
2569 ‘only in the Lord’ (1Cor. 7:39). Therefore, CO article 63 does not speak to the

2570 issue of congregational prayer for weddings. Further, it is in the freedom of the
2571 consistory to determine whether – and, if so, how – to pray for individual
2572 marriages in the worship services, so as to promote harmony and unity in the
2573 church (cf. Romans 14 and 15). This is also the position of the Langley CanRC
2574 consistory, for it said: ‘We will continue to pray for God’s blessing for marriages
2575 that conform to God’s will as laid out in His Word.’ (letter dd. March 22, 2016).”

2576 3. Considerations

- 2577 3.1 It is not clear from the submission to General Synod that the appellants have been
2578 wronged by the decision of RSW 2017. In their appeal, the appellants repeat many of
2579 the grounds they raised with and which were answered by their Consistory, Classis, and
2580 Regional Synod West.
- 2581 3.2 The concern raised by br. and sr. de Boer that the Langley Consistory’s interpretation of
2582 the “exception clause” caters to the attempts of the church to be relevant in our present
2583 culture is incorrect. The position taken by Langley, as explained in its letter of Feb 20,
2584 2016, is consistent with what has been defended by faithful churches of Christ ever
2585 since the time of the Reformation. Langley’s response is similar to that of John Calvin,
2586 Martin Bucer and the authors of the Westminster Confession of Faith, to name a few.
2587 Therefore, it was not wrong for RSW 2017 to agree with the conclusions of Classis.
- 2588 3.3 General Synod considers the conclusions of RSW 2017, as quoted above in Observation
2589 2.3.3, to be a sufficient answer to the appellants’ second request. Although the
2590 appellants express their disagreement with the conclusions of the Consistory and the
2591 responses of the broader assemblies, they do not prove that they have been wronged by
2592 these decisions.
- 2593 3.4 Although the appellants are to be commended for their desire to uphold what the Bible
2594 teaches regarding these matters, it is clear that the appellants and the Consistory
2595 (supported by Classis and RSW 2017) have come to different conclusions in their
2596 interpretation of the Biblical texts on divorce and remarriage. In this matter we can
2597 leave room for exegetical freedom and agree to disagree as brothers and sisters in the
2598 Lord.

2599 4. Recommendation

2600 That Synod decide:

- 2601 4.1 to deny the appeal of br. and sr. de Boer

2602
2603 **ADOPTED** with the following brothers abstaining from voting: Janssen, Moes, Poppe, Slaa,
2604 VanSpronsen, Wielenga.

2605

2606 **Article 94 – Appeal of S. Viersen re: RSW 2018 Art. 7 & 18 – confidential**

2607

2608 **Article 95 – Appeal of Neerlandia-(North) re: RSW 2018 Art. 7 & 18 – confidential**

2609

2610 *Synod adjourned until 7:00pm for committee work.*

2611

2612 **Day 6 — Evening Session**

2613 **Tuesday, May 21, 2019**

2614 **Article 96 – Reopening**

2615 Synod reopened in open plenary session. The chairman had the meeting sing Hymn 77. He called
2616 the roll and noted all synod members were present.

2617

2618 **Article 97 – Motion to change already adopted acts of GS 2019**

2619 The following was moved by the Rev. Holtvlüwer and seconded by the Rev. Janssen:

2620 **A.** To insert into Article 66 an additional recommendation as follows (numbered 4.3.4. with
2621 the understanding that the old 4.3.4 becomes 4.3.5):

2622 *4.3.4 To appoint one of its members to validate and submit to the treasurer of the*
2623 *General Fund all expenses being submitted for committee work.*

2624 **B.** To insert into Article 46 an additional recommendation as follows (numbered 4.3 with the
2625 understanding that the old 4.3 becomes 4.4):

2626 *4.3 To appoint one of its members to validate and submit to the treasurer of the General*
2627 *Fund all expenses being submitted for committee work.*

2628 **Ground:** GS 2019 when dealing with the decision on the General Fund (Art. 45) decided
2629 this should be done.

2630 The motion was

2631

2632 **ADOPTED**

2633

2634 **Article 98 – Appeal of T. Bosma re: RSE May 2018 art. 7 - Confidential**

2635

2636 **Article 99 – Hamilton Blessings re: RSE Nov. 2018 (CO Art. 55)**

2637 Committee 3 presented draft 2 of a report on an appeal from the Hamilton-Blessings CanRC re:
2638 RSE Nov 2018 Art. 8 (8.6.8.1). The report was discussed. The committee took the report back
2639 for refinement.

2640

2641 **Article 100 – CNSF (Committee for Needy Students' Fund)**

2642

2642 **1. Material**

2643 1.1 Report from the Committee for Needy Students' Fund (CNSF) (8.2.11.1)

2644 1.2 Letter from the following CanRC: Willoughby Heights (8.3.6.1)

2645

2645 **2. Observations**

2646 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 108) decided to reappoint Grassie to administer the CNSF for the period
2647 of 2015-2017 and to mandate the CNSF to:

2648 [4.4.1] Review the current guidelines and procedures in light of [the concerns raised
2649 by Winnipeg-Redeemer, Willoughby Heights, and Abbotsford];

2650 [4.4.2] Assess the churches annually as per the number of communicant members in
2651 the current *Yearbook* based on the anticipated funding required for the year
2652 ahead;

2653 [4.4.3] Report Annually to each church of the federation on its activities and to
2654 report triennially to each General Synod on the same and to conclude their
2655 report to synod with appropriate recommendation.

2656 2.2 The CNSF reports the following:

2657 2.2.1 Students eligible for assistance apply through the CRTS website;

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- 2658 2.2.2 Upon receipt of budget requests for aid, visits are scheduled for each student to
 2659 ensure that giving is conducted in a spirit of humility and brotherly love;
- 2660 2.2.3 Thirteen (13) individual students were supported during the reporting time period;
- 2661 2.2.4 Churches are assessed annually based on projected student enrollment and
 2662 anticipated fees;
- 2663 2.2.5 Rates per communicant member have decreased from \$12.00 to \$3.00 during the
 2664 reporting time period.
- 2665 2.3 The CNSF reviewed the 2013 Support Guidelines and updated the guidelines to better
 2666 reflect the function of the CNSF in its responsibility to balance the need for aid with
 2667 sound financial stewardship. The churches were advised of these changes by means of a
 2668 letter complete with amended Support Guidelines in April 2017.
- 2669 2.4 Willoughby Heights finds it confusing that the term “committee” is used both for the
 2670 committee appointed by General Synod (being the Council of Covenant) and the
 2671 committee appointed by the Council of Grassie Covenant to administer the day to day
 2672 affairs of the fund.
- 2673 2.5 The CNSF made legal inquiries to ensure that the collection and disbursement of funds
 2674 on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches are in compliance with the Income Tax
 2675 Act (ITA) and the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA).
- 2676 2.6 Grassie is of the opinion that to be in compliance with ITA, Grassie *must own the*
 2677 *activity of the CNSF.*
- 2678 2.7 To be in compliance with ITA and the CRA, Grassie recommends that GS 2019:
- 2679 2.7.1 Request Grassie (or any other church) to administer the CNSF with a provision
 2680 that provides Grassie council the autonomy to find an alternate church if council
 2681 determines not to take on the charitable activity of the CNSF, or
- 2682 2.7.2 Appoint one or two churches as alternates to Grassie, given the same conditions
 2683 exists wherein Grassie council determines not to take on the charitable activity of
 2684 the CNSF.
- 2685 2.8 Willoughby Heights is not convinced that an issue exists as a result of the legal counsel
 2686 received by Grassie concerning the compliance matter of ITA and CRA.
- 2687 2.8.1 Willoughby Heights posits that CO article 20 states that “the churches ... [shall]
 2688 extend financial aid to [students of theology] who are in need of it.” As the
 2689 churches have decided to do this via the route of general synod, CO article 75
 2690 becomes relevant. When general synod passes property of the churches in common
 2691 into the hands of an individual church serving as a committee to general synod, it
 2692 [i.e. general synod] still retains “ownership of the activity.”
- 2693 2.8.2 Willoughby Heights is of the opinion, that “In view of the (legal or fiscal)
 2694 confusion that is caused by the fact that a *church* is called upon to serve as a
 2695 committee of general synod, rather than an appointed group of individuals, the
 2696 general synod of the churches should consider appointing committees in the
 2697 regular way for matters that involve the flow of funds.”
- 2698 2.8.3 Willoughby Heights suggests that “the churches (through general synod) could
 2699 centralize the flow of funds and mandate the (incorporated) committee
 2700 administering the general fund to act in accordance with the directives of
 2701 authorized committees (which could then still be churches) when it comes to the

2702 use of funds. This would be a manner similar to how the Committee on Relations
2703 with Churches Abroad receives funding.”

2704 3. Considerations

- 2705 3.1 The Committee has completed its mandate and has done its work faithfully.
- 2706 3.2 The amended guidelines have responded to the concerns expressed by churches at
2707 Winnipeg-Redeemer, Willoughby Heights and Abbotsford.
- 2708 3.3 The CNSF would be well served by distinguishing the terminology employed for its
2709 overall task and from that of its internal committee.
- 2710 3.4 The CNSF is to be commended for making legal inquiries to ensure that the collection
2711 and disbursement of funds on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches are in
2712 compliance with the Income Tax Act (ITA) and the CRA.
- 2713 3.5 GS 2019 does not have the legal and accounting competence to judge Grassie’s opinion
2714 that to be in compliance with ITA and the CRA, in that Grassie *must own the activity of*
2715 *the CNSF*.
- 2716 3.6 The CNSF needs to consider if in “*owning the activity of the CNSF*” it remains in
2717 compliance with the Church Order Articles 20 and 75.
- 2718 3.7 Willoughby Heights is correct in its position that CO article 20 states that “the
2719 churches ... [shall] extend financial aid to [students of theology] who are in need of it.”
2720 As the churches have decided to do this via the route of general synod, CO article 75
2721 becomes relevant. When general synod passes property of the churches in common into
2722 the hands of an individual church serving as a committee to general synod, it [i.e.
2723 general synod] still retains “ownership of the activity.”
- 2724 3.8 GS 2019 does not agree with Willoughby Heights’ suggestion to make it possible to
2725 appoint a group of individuals instead of a church to serve as the CNSF. The CNSF is
2726 not just an administrative fund but their mandate specifies dealing sensitively with
2727 seminary students and their families.

2728 4. Recommendations

2729 That Synod decide:

- 2730 4.1 To thank the Grassie-Covenant CanRC for their work as the Committee for the Needy
2731 Students’ Fund (CNSF);
- 2732 4.2 To discharge the CNSF for the duties completed during the period January 1, 2015 –
2733 December 31, 2017;
- 2734 4.3 To instruct the CNSF to seek advice, and if need be, propose bylaw amendments, to
2735 ensure that they remain in compliance with the Income Tax Act and the Canada
2736 Revenue Agency;
- 2737 4.4 To reappoint the Grassie-Covenant CanRC as the CNSF to look after extending
2738 financial aid to those students of theology who are in need of it;
- 2739 4.5 To mandate the CNSF:
- 2740 4.5.1 to assess the churches annually as per the number of communicant members in the
2741 current Yearbook based on the anticipated funding required for the new year
2742 ahead;
- 2743 4.5.2 to report annually to each church of the federation on its activities, and to report
2744 triennially to each General Synod on the same and to include appropriate
2745 recommendations in this report to Synod.
- 2746

2747 **ADOPTED**

2748

2749 **Article 101 – RCK (Reformed Churches in Korea)**

2750 **1. Material**

2751 1.1 Report of the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) regarding the
2752 Reformed Churches in Korea (RCK) (8.2.2.1)

2753 1.2 Letters from the following: the Smithville CanRC (8.3.1.4), the RCK (8.2.2.8), the
2754 CRCA (8.2.2.9).

2755 **2. Observations**

2756 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 106) decided:

2757 [4.1] To encourage the CRCA to continue contact with the RCK where possible.

2758 2.2 Rev. S.C. VanDam and br. Jerome Lee (elder in Surrey-Maranatha), for whom Korean
2759 is his native language, met with representatives of the RCK at the Korean Theological
2760 Seminary in Cheonan in September 2017. Rev. VanDam gave a lecture on the early
2761 chapters of Jeremiah, after which an edifying interchange occurred.

2762 2.3 A CRTS graduate (Sungwoon Yoon) accepted a call to a RCK congregation (Gwangju
2763 Reformed Church).

2764 2.4 There has been no reconciliation between the RCK and KPCK.

2765 2.5 In 2015, one congregation led by Rev. Dong Sup Song was suspended from the
2766 federation; it is unclear exactly what the difficulty was.

2767 2.6 Since 2008, the number of congregations in the RCK has decreased from eight to two;
2768 the reasons for this are unclear.

2769 2.7 Smithville notes that while the RCK does not have the resources to continue official
2770 contact with the CanRC, the CanRC has been blessed with resources to maintain contact
2771 with these churches, even though they may be unable to reciprocate. Smithville
2772 encourages Synod “to renew the mandate to the CRCA to continue contact with the
2773 RCK where possible”.

2774 2.8 Rev. Sungwon Yoon, member of the RCK’s Committee on Relations with Churches
2775 Abroad, wrote a letter correcting some errors in the CRCA report:

2776 2.8.1 Concerning church government, “From the beginning, we followed the revised
2777 Dort Church Order and never have followed Episcopalianism in our federation.
2778 Due to our small number, we don’t have a General Synod, but we have regular
2779 Classis to deal with church matters.”

2780 2.8.2 Concerning the lack of reconciliation between the RCK and KPCK, “They [the
2781 CRCA] wrote that our federation originated mainly from difficulties with the
2782 KPCK, and presumed that we are separated from that church. But that’s not true.
2783 When we established our federation, there were five churches and of those five
2784 only one minister and few members had a KPCK background. Most of the
2785 ministers and members have different backgrounds, not KPCK. So, we are not
2786 mainly from the KPCK.”

2787 2.8.3 Concerning the number of churches, “They reported our churches decreased from
2788 8 to 2 churches. It’s true that now we have only two churches, but as I mentioned
2789 when we established our federation, there were five churches. And we have never
2790 been above that number. Also it’s true that one church left our federation. But in
2791 other cases, other ministers asked their consistories for release from office and the

2792 consistories accepted their requests. After that, members of those churches joined
2793 existing RCK churches near them. Also there was one minister who retired
2794 because of age, and after that its members also joined the nearest RCK church. So
2795 their report can cause confusion about our situations.”

2796 2.9 The CRCA replied to the RCK’s committee, apologizing for the errors and indicating
2797 that the CanRC have taken note of the corrections.

2798 3. Considerations

2799 3.1 The committee has completed its mandate with respect to the RCK.

2800 3.2 It is of concern that reconciliation with the KPCK has not been reached.

2801 3.3 Although there are only two congregations left in the RCK, we may still be a source of
2802 encouragement to them, perhaps when delegates travel to Korea.

2803 4. Recommendations

2804 That Synod decide to mandate the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA):

2805 4.1 To continue contact with the Reformed Churches in Korea (RCK) where possible.

2806 4.2 To submit its report to the churches six months prior to the convening of the next
2807 general synod.

2808 ADOPTED

2809 Article 102 – IRCK (Independent Reformed Church in Korea)

2810 1. Material

2811 1.1 Report of the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) regarding the
2812 Independent Reformed Church in Korea (8.2.2.1)

2813 1.2 Letters from the following CanRC: Smithville (8.3.1.3), Hamilton-Cornerstone (8.3.1.7
2814 [8.3.1.8])

2815 2. Observations

2816 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 107) decided:

2817 [4.1] To encourage the CRCA to continue contact with the IRCK where possible.

2818 2.2 Rev. S.C. Van Dam and br. Jerome Lee (elder in Surrey-Maranatha), for whom Korean
2819 is his native language, visited the IRCK Theological Academy in Anyang (greater Seoul
2820 area). At the invitation of Rev. Heon Soo Kim, he gave a lecture on the theme of father
2821 in the early chapters of Jeremiah. This was well received and led to upbuilding
2822 conversation and fellowship.

2823 2.3 Rev. Kim indicated that the IRCK is not seeking EF with the CanRC due to a shortage
2824 of manpower on their side.

2825 2.4 The IRCK is actively involved in publishing reformed materials, including translations
2826 of CanRC authors (e.g.: Dr. Van Dam’s book *The Elder*).

2827 2.5 A student of the CRTS (Daniel Shin) is giving guest lectures at the IRCK Theological
2828 Academy.

2829 2.6 Smithville notes that while the IRCK does not have the resources to continue official
2830 contact with the CanRC, the CanRC has been blessed with resources to maintain contact
2831 with these churches, even though they may be unable to reciprocate. Smithville
2832 encourages Synod “to renew the mandate to the CRCA to continue contact with the
2833 IRCK where possible”.

- 2836 2.7 Hamilton-Cornerstone suggests that the CRCA’s recommendation “to end official
 2837 contact” is based on incomplete information:
 2838 2.7.1 In recent years several professors of CRTS Hamilton have given guest lectures at
 2839 the Theological Academy (TA) of the ICRK in Seoul (Drs. Van Dam, De Visser,
 2840 Van Vliet).
 2841 2.7.2 There is a Memorandum of Understanding between CRTS Hamilton and the TA
 2842 Seoul that is intended to facilitate exchange of students and lecturers. Further,
 2843 two students (Sungmin Hong, Jaeyong Jung) of the TA Seoul are currently
 2844 studying at CRTS Hamilton, and with their families, are members of Hamilton-
 2845 Cornerstone.
 2846 2.7.3 Rev. Heon Soo Kim (Principal of the TA Seoul) intends to send more students to
 2847 CRTS Hamilton in the future.
 2848 Hamilton-Cornerstone, therefore, requests Synod to mandate the CRCA “to continue
 2849 some form of contact with the IRCK.”

2850 **3. Considerations**

- 2851 3.1 The committee has completed its mandate with respect to the Independent Reformed
 2852 Church of Korea (IRCK).
 2853 3.2 It is clear that the IRCK values contact with the CanRC, evident from the invitations
 2854 over the years to CanRC ministers and professors to give lectures at the IRCK
 2855 Theological Academy, books by CanRC authors have been translated into Korean and
 2856 published by their publishing house (Sungyak (Holy Covenant) Press), and the presence
 2857 of Korean students at the CRTS.
 2858 3.3 For practical reasons, the IRCK is not seeking EF with the CanRC. While it is edifying
 2859 to have contact with the IRCK, it is not necessary to maintain this on an official level.

2860 **4. Recommendations**

2861 That Synod decide to mandate the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA):

- 2862 4.1 To continue contact with the Independent Reformed Church of Korea (IRCK) where
 2863 possible.
 2864 4.2 To submit its report to the churches six months prior to the convening of the next
 2865 general synod.
 2866

2867 **ADOPTED**

2869 **Article 103 – KPCK (Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea)**

2870 **1. Material**

- 2871 1.1 Report of the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) regarding the
 2872 Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea (8.2.2.1).

2873 **2. Observations**

- 2874 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 81) decided:
 2875 [4.1] To continue EF with the Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea (KPCK) under the
 2876 adopted rules;
 2877 [4.2] To continue to work cooperatively with the GKv and the FRCA in exercising our
 2878 relationship with the KPCK in meaningful ways and continue to visit the annual
 2879 General Assembly in turn;

-
- 2880 [4.3] To maintain regular communication with the KPCK as well as meet with their
2881 delegates at ICRC 2017.
- 2882 2.2 The Rev. S.C. Van Dam and br. Jerome Lee (elder in Surrey-Maranatha), for whom
2883 Korean is his native language, visited the KPCK GA in September 2017, at which Rev.
2884 Van Dam brought greetings on behalf of the CanRC.
- 2885 2.3 From documents obtained for the KPCK GA 2017 (translated by br. Lee), the CRCA
2886 ascertained that the KPCK desires to be a faithful church of Jesus Christ.
- 2887 2.4 At GA 2017, a meeting held between our delegates, the KPCK foreign relations
2888 committee, and delegates from GKSA and GKv, the matter of the GKv decision to open
2889 the offices to women as well as recent developments in the KPCK were discussed. An
2890 extensive meeting was held the next day between our delegates, the KPCK foreign
2891 relations committee, the GKv delegate, and representatives from the KPCK in NA. The
2892 main topic of discussion was how to respond to the GKv decision to open the offices to
2893 women. Our serious objections were indicated, echoed by the other delegates, and were
2894 well received by the KPCK foreign relations committee members. Rev. Van Dam gave
2895 an interview with the KPCK newspaper, and invitations were exchanged.
- 2896 2.5 Some interaction between CanRC and the KPCK delegates was held at the ICRC 2017.

2897 3. Considerations

- 2898 3.1 The committee has completed its mandate with respect to the Kosin Presbyterian
2899 Church in Korea (KPCK).
- 2900 3.2 EF with the KPCK is maintained since they are a faithful church of Jesus Christ.
- 2901 3.3 With increased globalization, it is good to maintain EF with the KPCK to support each
2902 other as South Korea is rapidly becoming secularized.
- 2903 3.4 We have opportunity to have some impact for good. The KPCK is a very large
2904 federation and we learned that there are some ministers in the KPCK who thought that
2905 the GKv decision to open up the offices to women would be worth investigating for
2906 their own situation. To be able to clearly state our reasons for disagreeing with the GKv
2907 decision was beneficial in this context.
- 2908 3.5 It is desirable to monitor how the KPCK responds to the GKv decision to open the
2909 offices to women, in line with the expectation that the churches in EF shall inform each
2910 other of their broadest assemblies.

2911 4. Recommendations

2912 That Synod decide:

- 2913 4.1 To continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Kosin
2914 Presbyterian Church in Korea (KPCK) under the adopted rules;
- 2915 4.2 To mandate the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA):
- 2916 4.2.1 To continue to work cooperatively with sister churches who have relations with the
2917 KPCK in exercising our relationship with KPCK in meaningful ways, and to take
2918 turns visiting the KPCK's annual General Assembly;
- 2919 4.2.2 To send a delegation to their assemblies at least once every three years;
- 2920 4.2.3 To maintain regular communication with KPCK as well as meet with their
2921 delegates at the ICRC 2021;
- 2922 4.2.4 To monitor the KPCK response to the GKv decision to allow women in all offices;
- 2923 4.2.3 To submit its report to the churches 6 months prior to the convening of the next
2924 general synod.

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ADOPTED

Article 104 – GKv - Letter to the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands

The following text was adopted for a letter to be sent to all the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (GKv) and brought in person to their synod 2021. The second clerk was instructed to ensure a Dutch translation is made of both the letter and the decision found in GS 2019 Art. 41.

To all the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (liberated) (GKv)

Re: Decision on Ecclesiastical Fellowship (Sister-Church Relationship)

May 21, AD 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ,

It is with profound sadness and heavy hearts that as Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches held in Edmonton 2019 we write directly to you—each congregation in the federation of Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (liberated). We are taking this unusual step because of the distressing situation that has developed within your churches over the last years leading to the most recent decision of your General Synod Meppel 2017 to allow women to serve in any of the special offices. Not only has this development brought about a disruption of our long-standing and deeply cherished sister-church relationship, but, most importantly, it is offensive and disobedient to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The purpose of our letter is to explain our decision as Synod regarding your federation of churches, to offer a final word of exhortation, and to encourage the faithful among you to take necessary action.

As you may be aware, for more than twelve years we as churches have expressed growing disquiet with decisions made by your synods which have increasingly put our relationship as sister-churches under strain. Our General Synods 2007 and 2010, through an appointed committee, communicated to your synods of that time period serious concerns about the faithfulness of your federation to the Word of God in particular matters. To our dismay, those concerns were not alleviated but instead grew worse. Our General Synod 2013 took matters a step further by writing a letter of admonition directly to your General Synod 2014, clearly warning against the underlying faulty method of interpreting Scripture (i.e. hermeneutics) which was evident among you. Our Synod pointed out how those hermeneutics resulted in your Synod failing to maintain faithfulness to the Word of God in several matters. Once again, there was no change in the direction of your churches. Our General Synod 2016 then decided to suspend certain formal rules of fellowship with your federation in the hope that this more drastic measure would arouse your next synod to reverse course. Our Synod 2016 also appointed a committee to send a letter directly to each congregation in your federation to, as much as possible, make all consistories aware of the great seriousness of the issues and to warn against the very real threat that our ecclesiastical fellowship would be severed if there was no genuine repentance evidenced in the decisions of your next synod. With great sorrow, our General Synod 2019 received a thorough report from the appointed committee showing that not only was the warning of Synod 2016 not heeded, but Synod Meppel 2017 carried forward the hermeneutical trajectory of your previous synods and decided that the Bible permits women to serve in the offices of deacon, elder, and minister. In the address by the fraternal delegates sent to our Synod 2019 by Synod Meppel 2017, nothing was said that contradicted the findings of this report. For reasons outlined in the report and presented in our Synod Edmonton

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2971 2019 decision (see attached), this action is a clear violation of the Word of God and has forced us
2972 to terminate our ecclesiastical fellowship with you, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands
2973 (liberated).

2974 Brothers and sisters, we do not write any of the above with a sense of superiority or self-
2975 righteousness but rather in humility and awareness of our own sins and shortcomings. We too are
2976 susceptible to error and we pray that the Lord will open our eyes should we become delinquent in
2977 doctrine or in conduct. Daily we also need to repent as the Holy Spirit pricks our conscience. Our
2978 fervent desire is that by means of this letter, by means of the many admonitions expressed to you
2979 by us and many of your sister churches, that you as a federation of churches will also be pricked
2980 in your conscience and return to a faithful walk with the Lord in obedience to the plain teaching
2981 of His word. Please know that as General Synod Edmonton we have prayed for this very thing and
2982 rest assured that this will be the ongoing prayer of our churches for you as well. May this Word of
2983 God stimulate us all in these matters: “Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners
2984 in the way. He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way” (Ps. 25:8–9).

2985 We also are aware that many individuals and more than a few consistories have all along
2986 shared our concerns and have been praying and working for a return to faithfulness to God’s Word
2987 at the synod level. We want to encourage all such individuals, consistories, and congregations that
2988 you do not stand alone and that we wish to support you as best we can in this troublesome time.
2989 By means of this letter we would like to urge all members and consistories to “contend for the faith
2990 that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3) by calling your next synod to repent and
2991 return to the Scriptures, to the Reformed confession we have historically shared together. If in time
2992 that process does not produce the desired result, we would then urge you to consider your place in
2993 the federation. As we confess in the Belgic Confession, when a church federation no longer
2994 consistently maintains the marks of the true church, it is time to come out of it and seek
2995 membership in a true church: “. . . it is the duty of all believers, according to the Word of God, to
2996 separate from those who do not belong to the church and to join this assembly wherever God has
2997 established it” (BC Art. 28). We recognize that this process will not be easy and undoubtedly will
2998 be filled with many challenges but we believe it is necessary for the glory of the Lord, the
2999 preservation of his church, and the salvation of many souls. As a church federation we will support
3000 all such efforts with prayer, encouragement, and whatever other assistance we may be able to
3001 render. We encourage you to take up contact with our Committee on Relations with Churches
3002 Abroad in order to seek whatever help you may need (crca@canrc.org).

3003 Dear brothers and sisters, please receive our letter in the spirit in which it was written, the
3004 spirit of brotherly love and concern. May the Lord give you grace, wisdom, and strength as you
3005 reflect on these things and find your way forward.

3006 Yours in Christ Jesus our Lord,

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3008 On behalf of General Synod Edmonton 2019,

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3010 Rev. Douwe Agema
3011 (Chairman)

Rev. Peter H. Holtvlüwer
(Second Clerk)

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3013 **Article 105 – NAPARC (North American Presbyterian And Reformed Council)**

3014 **1. Material**

3015 1.1 Report from the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA) —
3016 North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) (8.2.3.1)

3017 **2. Observations**

3018 2.1 GS 2016 gave the following mandate to the CCCNA concerning NAPARC:

3019 [4.2] To approve the changes made to the revised constitution and bylaws of NAPARC

3020 [4.3] To mandate the CCCNA:

3021 [4.3.1] To continue to represent the CanRC at NAPARC and to continue its active
3022 involvement in it;

3023 [4.3.2] To convey to NAPARC the approval of the changes made to the revised
3024 Constitution and Bylaws of NAPARC;

3025 [4.3.3¹] To raise in discussion at NAPARC, the application of the “Golden Rule”
3026 Comity Agreement” and the “Agreement on Transfer of Members and
3027 Congregations” as a reminder for the Member Churches;

3028 [4.3.4] To assist the local churches when asked about conflicts with the “Golden
3029 Rule’ Comity Agreement” and the “Agreement on Transfer of Members and
3030 Congregations”

3031 [4.3.5] To address NAPARC about the lack of definition for the terms “Member
3032 Church” and “Unit Vote” in the revised Constitution of NAPARC.

3033 2.2 [Re 4.3.1] The CCCNA participated in the annual meetings held each November in
3034 2016, 2017, and will do so again, D.V. in November 2018. Four delegates were sent to
3035 each meeting. Currently no other federations are applying for membership in NAPARC.
3036 At the invitation of NAPARC, the Protestant Reformed Church and the Bible
3037 Presbyterian Church have sent observers the past number of years.

3038 2.3 [Re 4.3.2] The CCCNA secretary conveyed the decision of GS 2016 (approve the
3039 revised Constitution and Bylaws) to the NAPARC secretary in a letter dated July 6th,
3040 2016.

3041 2.4 [Re 4.3.3] The CCCNA indicated its plan to raise in the plenary sessions of the
3042 November 2018 of NAPARC, concerns about the application of the “Golden Rule”
3043 Comity Agreement” and the “Agreement on Transfer of Members and Congregations”
3044 as per the mandate above. No explanation is offered why this could not already be
3045 raised at NAPARC 2016 or 2017.

3046 2.5 [Re 4.3.4] The CCCNA received one letter seeking advice on the “Golden Rule”
3047 Comity Agreement, to which a response was sent. In addition, the CCCNA sent a letter
3048 to Guelph-Emmanuel seeking detailed information regarding their concern of the
3049 “Golden Rule” Comity Agreement and the Agreement on Transfer of Members and
3050 Congregations. No detailed response was received from Guelph-Emmanuel.

3051 2.6 [Re 4.3.5] The CCCNA is of the opinion that understandable and reasonable
3052 terminology is used in the constitution and bylaws.

3053 2.7 The CCCNA continues to see the benefit of being involved in NAPARC, both to derive
3054 insights and to contribute to the Reformed witness of it. Besides participating in the
3055 meeting of NAPARC, the CCCNA has used the occasion to hold meetings with the

¹ The numbering in the original Acts has been corrected.

3056 Inter-church Relations Committees of the ERQ, OPC, RCUS, RPCNA annually and the
3057 KPCA triennially.

3058 2.8 The CCCNA also brings to the attention of Synod that for them to adequately fulfill
3059 their mandate, for example recommendations 4.2.3 and 4.2.5, it would be most helpful
3060 if Synod 2016 had provided more information to the committee in order to address the
3061 concern(s) raised.

3062 **3. Considerations**

3063 3.1. The CCCNA has completed its mandate concerning NAPARC.

3064 3.2 It would indeed be more helpful if more information would be provided to the CCCNA
3065 in order to deal with any concern(s) that exist.

3066 3.3 It is regrettable that the CCCNA did not bring up the requested concerns at the 2016 or
3067 2017 meetings of NAPARC.

3068 **4. Recommendations**

3069 That Synod decide:

3070 4.1 To discharge the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA)
3071 from the mandate given it by GS 2016;

3072 4.2 To mandate the CCCNA to continue to represent the CanRC at NAPARC and to
3073 continue its active involvement in it;

3074 4.3 To submit its report to the churches 5 months prior to the convening of the next general
3075 synod.

3076 **ADOPTED**

3078 **Article 106 – Closing Devotions**

3079 A few housekeeping matters were addressed.

3080 The Rev. VanSpronsen led in evening devotions. He had those present sing Psalm 110:3,4, read
3081 Hebrews 7:22-8:2 and spoke some words of meditation in connection with Ascension Day next
3082 week. He had those present sing Hymn 42:4,5,6. He then led in prayer.

3083
3084 *Synod adjourned until 9:00am the next day.*

3085 3086 **Day 7 — Morning Session** 3087 **Wednesday, May 22, 2019**

3088 **Article 106 – Reopening**

3089 Synod reopened in plenary session. The chairman welcomed students from the Parkland
3090 Immanuel Christian School. He read Psalm 119:41-48 and spoke some words. Prior to prayer,
3091 the chairman expressed condolences to Elder Schouten, whose mother had passed away earlier in
3092 the night. He then led in prayer, following which those present sang Psalm 119:16,17,18. He
3093 called the roll and noted all synod members were present.

3094 3095 **Article 107 – Adoption of Acts**

3096 Prepared articles of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

3097
3098

3099 **Article 108 – FRCSA (Free Reformed Churches in South Africa)**

3100 **1. Material**

3101 1.1 Report of the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) regarding the
3102 Free Reformed Churches in South Africa (FRCSA) (8.2.2.1).

3103 **2. Observations**

3104 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 81) decided:

3105 [4.1] To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Free Reformed Churches in
3106 South Africa (FRCSA);

3107 [4.2] To mandate the CRCA to send a delegation to the next synod of the FRCSA;

3108 [4.3] To encourage the CRTS to support the FRCSA in the training of their theological
3109 students, because of the unique circumstances of the FRCSA theological training
3110 program.

3111 2.2 In August 2018, br. O. Bouwman, member of the CRCA, along with Dr. A.J. deVisser
3112 attended the FRCSA synod Soshanguve North (near Pretoria) as fraternal delegates. A
3113 report of that visit was shared in *Clarion*, and correspondence was received from the
3114 FRCSA mission deputies asking us to consider funding some of their mission work in
3115 light of their anticipated budget shortfalls.

3116 2.3 The CanRC has had EF with the FRCSA since 1954, with numerous close ties –
3117 ecclesiastical, operational, and personal – between the FRCSA and CanRC.

3118 2.4 Over the past three years the CRTS has been supporting the FRCSA in the training of
3119 their theological students through videos of class instruction. A recent CRTS graduate,
3120 Rev. J. Bruintjes, accepted a call from the church in Cape Town and began his ministry
3121 there in 2017. The South African delegate to synod advised us that a number of students
3122 from the FRCSA are preparing for studies for the ministry at CRTS.

3123 2.5 The CanRC have financially supported the burgeoning Reformational Study Centre near
3124 Pretoria, and in connection with this, the Rev. R.J. Kampen is fulfilling a “special
3125 ministerial task” under the oversight of the church in Dunnville for this project.

3126 2.6 Although FRCSA did not require financial assistance at GS 2016, the topic of financial
3127 need has come up again. The financial needs of the FRCSA are and can be expected to
3128 continue to be substantial and merit attention.

3129 **3. Considerations**

3130 3.1 The committee has completed its mandate with respect to the Free Reformed Churches
3131 in South Africa (FRCSA).

3132 3.2 With thankfulness to the Lord, the FRCSA shows in confession and practice to be a
3133 church federation seeking to serve the Lord according to His Word.

3134 3.3 There is good reason to continue EF with the FRCSA.

3135 3.4 Given the brotherhood of the communion of saints around the globe, the current
3136 circumstances of the FRCSA make it desirable for the CanRC to be willing to assist to
3137 the degree we can. Churches possessing the means and desire to assist the FRCSA need
3138 to know that there are Canada Revenue Agency regulations regarding the need for
3139 charitable organizations which send money overseas to retain “direction and control”
3140 over how these funds are disbursed.

3141 **4. Recommendations**

3142 That Synod decide:

- 3143 4.1 To continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Free Reformed
 3144 Churches in South Africa (FRCSA) under the adopted rules;
 3145 4.2 To mandate the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA):
 3146 4.2.1 To send a delegation to the next synod of the FRCSA;
 3147 4.2.2 To recommend the FRCSA to the churches as worthy of continued and increased
 3148 prayerful and financial assistance, to help them with their extensive mission work
 3149 as well as the compassionate pursuits among the disadvantaged;
 3150 4.2.3 To submit its report to the churches 6 months prior to the convening of the next
 3151 general synod.
 3152

3153 **ADOPTED**

3154 **Article 109 – GGRI (Reformed Churches in Indonesia)**

3155 Committee 3 presented draft 1 of a report on the GGRI. The report was discussed. The
 3156 committee took the report back for refinement.
 3157
 3158

3159 **Article 110 – GGRC (Reformed Calvinist Churches [in Indonesia])**

3160 Committee 3 presented draft 1 of a report on the GGRC. The report was discussed. The
 3161 committee took the report back for refinement.
 3162

3163 **Article 111 – PCA (Presbyterian Church in America)**

3164 **1. Material**

- 3165 1.1 Letter from the Flamborough-Redemption CanRC (8.3.2.9)

3166 **2. Observations**

- 3167 2.1 Flamborough-Redemption requests Synod to establish contact and engage in dialogue
 3168 with the Presbyterian Churches in America (PCA):

3169 2.1.1 The CanRC currently have no official contact or dialogue with the PCA.

3170 2.1.2 The CanRC is a member of NAPARC together with the PCA.

3171 2.1.3 The CCCNA report is silent on a direct relationship with the PCA.

3172 2.1.4 The PCA has 24 churches in Canada: 5 in British Columbia, 5 in Alberta, 8 in
 3173 Ontario, 3 in New Brunswick, and 3 in Nova Scotia. Seventeen of the 24 PCA
 3174 churches in mainland BC, Alberta, and Ontario, are in close proximity to CanRC
 3175 churches.

- 3176 2.2 The CanRC have not received a formal invitation from the PCA for establishing contact.

- 3177 2.3 From public literature it is known that the PCA is a theologically diverse church.

3178 **3. Consideration**

3179 A similar request was made by the Hamilton-Cornerstone CanRC to GS 2013 (Art. 81), and
 3180 Synod’s Consideration stated:

3181 While Hamilton-Cornerstone’s suggestion may have merit, it would be appropriate and
 3182 also helpful for Hamilton (or some other congregation so inclined) to first investigate the
 3183 PCA further. If after investigation and evaluation of the PCA there is an apparent potential
 3184 for fruitful ecclesiastical contact, the issue should be brought from the minor assemblies to
 3185 the broader, where it may be placed on the agenda of the CCCNA for its attention. This
 3186 course of action would be similar to that taken, e.g., by the church of Aldergrove with

3187 respect to the Free Reformed Churches of North America (see *Acts of Synod Fergus* 1998,
3188 Article 98, Consideration III.A).

3189 **4. Recommendations**

3190 That Synod decide that the above consideration serves as answer to Flamborough-Redemption.
3191

3192 **ADOPTED**

3193

3194 **Article 112 – HRC (Heritage Reformed Congregations)**

3195 **1. Material**

3196 1.1 Report of the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA)
3197 regarding the Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC) (8.2.3.1).

3198 1.2 Letters from the following CanRC: Lincoln-Vineyard (8.3.2.3), Toronto-Bethel
3199 (8.3.2.5), Attercliffe (8.3.2.6).

3200 **2. Observations**

3201 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 49) decided concerning the CCCNA:

3202 [4.1.2] To investigate diligently all the requests received for entering into EF in North
3203 America;

3204 [4.1.3] To respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests to attend assemblies,
3205 synods, or meetings of other churches in North America;

3206 [4.1.4] To report on its findings with suitable recommendations to the next general
3207 synod and to present to the churches a report of its work six months prior to the
3208 convening of next general synod.

3209 2.2. The CanRC do not have EF with the HRC, but both are members of NAPARC.

3210 2.3 In 2016, two committee members attended the General Synod of the HRC and brought
3211 greetings on behalf of the churches. The committee met with the HRC Church
3212 Correspondence Committee in November 2016.

3213 2.4 In 2017, the committee received a notice from the HRC Church Correspondence
3214 Committee that their General Synod had instructed them to “contact the Canadian
3215 Reformed Churches to discuss the possibility of entering into official ecclesiastical
3216 fellowship” with the CanRC at their Level One Correspondence (Informal Contact):

3217 1. *This informal level allows relationships to develop with like-minded churches or*
3218 *denominations without requiring a formal tie. This level includes only informal*
3219 *communication with various churches and denominations around us, both in our*
3220 *local community as well as beyond.*

3221 2. *There is no obligation or commitment except for us to witness the Reformed*
3222 *Biblical truth to them.*

3223 3. *Meetings with their representatives are to be held by the Church Correspondence*
3224 *Committee in order to determine if there is sufficient ground to bring a request*
3225 *before Synod that this denomination/congregation ought to be considered eligible*
3226 *to move to the second level of correspondence. Synod must approve of this request*
3227 *before any other level of correspondence can be carried out. These meetings would*
3228 *seek to determine the doctrinal position of the denomination or congregation and*
3229 *whether or not they uphold the Three Forms of Unity and/or the Westminster*
3230 *Standards.*

- 3231 2.5 A meeting was held in November, 2017, in which their Synod’s instruction was
3232 discussed, and how we can at this stage cooperate in promoting the cause of our Lord
3233 Jesus Christ. Further discussion was planned at the NAPARC meeting in November,
3234 2018.
- 3235 2.6 In 2018, a committee member attended the General Synod of the HRC and brought
3236 greetings on behalf of the CanRC.
- 3237 2.7 The committee recommends that the CanRC accept the HRC’s invitation to enter Level
3238 One relationship with them.
- 3239 2.8 Lincoln-Vineyard is “fully supportive” of entering into a Level One relationship with
3240 the HRC.
- 3241 2.9 The Councils of Toronto-Bethel and the Aurora Heritage Reformed Churches had a
3242 “positive and fruitful” meeting in January 2019 to become more familiar with each
3243 other, and agreed to a follow-up meeting.
- 3244 2.10 Attercliffe agrees with the committee’s recommendation to enter a Level One
3245 relationship with the HRC.

3246 **3. Considerations**

- 3247 3.1 The committee has been diligent in completing their mandate.
- 3248 3.2 Engaging in contact and dialogue with the Heritage Reformed Church (HRC) is
3249 equivalent to HRC’s Level One correspondence.
- 3250 3.3 On the basis of the CCCNA report and the input from the churches it would seem right
3251 to accept the offer of a Level One relationship of the HRC.

3252 **4. Recommendations**

3253 That Synod decide:

- 3254 4.1 To accept the invitation of the Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC) to enter into
3255 their Level One correspondence;
- 3256 4.2 To mandate the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA):
- 3257 4.2.1 To explore further what we have in common with the HRC and to assess if and
3258 when a decision can be made regarding Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with this
3259 church;
- 3260 4.2.2 To keep the churches with which EF has already been established informed of our
3261 relationship with the HRC and consult with them concerning the HRC.
- 3262 4.2.3 To submit its report to the churches 5 months prior to the convening of next
3263 general synod.
- 3264

3265 **ADOPTED**

3266 **Article 113 – Guidelines**

3267
3268 Committee 5 presented draft 1 of a report on the Synod Guidelines report (8.2.1.1). The report
3269 was discussed. The committee took the report back for refinement.
3270

3271 **Article 114 - GGRI-T (Reformed Churches in Indonesia - Timor) – Letter**

3272 During the course of Synod a letter was received from the Reformed Churches in Indonesia –
3273 Timor (GGRI-T). The GGRI-T are the fruit of Smithville’s mission work in Timor. The GGRI-T
3274 expressed regret that they had been unable to send a delegation to GS 2019. The chairman ruled

3275 that the letter was to be distributed to all Synod members and that the executive would come
3276 with a proposal as to how to deal with the letter. (*See further article 118.*)

3277
3278 *Synod adjourned until 2:00pm for committee work.*

3279
3280 **Day 7 — Afternoon Session**
3281 **Wednesday, May 22, 2019**

3282 **Article 115 – Reopening**

3283 Synod reopened in plenary session. The chairman had the meeting sing Psalm 135:1,2. He noted
3284 all synod members were present. A housekeeping matter was dealt with. Students from the
3285 Parkland Immanuel Christian School were welcomed.

3286
3287 **Article 116 – Overtures RSW 2018 re: *Trinity Psalter-Hymnal***

3288 Committee 1 presented draft 1 of a report on overtures from RSW 2018 regarding the *Trinity*
3289 *Psalter-Hymnal* (8.4.1 & 8.4.2). The report was discussed. The committee took the report back
3290 for refinement.

3291
3292 **Article 117 – FRCA (Free Reformed Churches of Australia)**

3293 **1. Material**

3294 1.1 Report of the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) regarding the
3295 Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) (8.2.2.1)

3296 **2. Observations**

3297 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 21) decided:

3298 [4.1] To continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Free
3299 Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) under the adopted rules;

3300 [4.2] To express thankfulness and appreciation for the FRCA's ongoing support for and
3301 interest in the Theological Seminary, including their financial support;

3302 [4.3] To mandate the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA):

3303 [4.3.1] To maintain close contact with the various deputyships of the FRCA in
3304 matters of relations with sister-churches abroad and informing the FRCA of
3305 changes or developments in third party relationships;

3306 [4.3.2] To invite the various deputyships of the FRCA to seek direct contact with the
3307 corresponding CanRC committee committees (e.g., our Standing Committee
3308 for the publication of the Book of Praise (SCBP), the Subcommittee for
3309 Reformed churches in the Netherlands of the CRCA (CRCA-SRN), our
3310 committees in charge of reviewing the liturgical forms, committee on Bible
3311 Translations and perhaps others) in areas of mutual interest where the
3312 CRCA's mandate does not reach;

3313 [4.3.3] To send a delegation to the next FRCA synod in 2018.

3314 2.2 Synod Bunbury 2018

3315 2.2.1 Br. H. Schouten and Rev. A. Witten attended Synod Bunbury as fraternal delegates
3316 in June 2018.

3317 2.2.2 Synod Bunbury decided to continue sister church relations with the CanRC
3318 according to the established rules.

-
- 3319 2.2.3 Synod Bunbury decided that it is not feasible to establish a Free Reformed
3320 Theological Seminary at this time and mandated the Deputies:
- 3321 • To investigate the possibility of pursuing distance education with the CRTS;
 - 3322 • To participate in the ad hoc committee investigating the possibility of distance
3323 education;
 - 3324 • To report to the next synod with a strategic long-term plan for a future
3325 Australian theological seminary that will have the potential to serve our sister
3326 churches and other churches in the wider Reformed community in the Asia-
3327 Pacific region (e.g. the Philippines, New Zealand, Indonesia, Singapore, South
3328 Africa).
- 3329 Regardless of what future decisions may be taken, strong support for and
3330 appreciation of the CRTS remains.
- 3331 2.2.4 Synod Bunbury decided to adopt and produce an Australian version of the
3332 Canadian *Book of Praise* that will be called the “*Australian Book of Praise*:
3333 Anglo-Genevan Psalter.”
- 3334 2.2.5 Synod Bunbury decided to terminate the sister relationship with the GKv. The
3335 following grounds were given to support this decision:
3336 Ground 1 for the FRCAs decision to terminate relations with the GKv is inaccurate
3337 by virtue of being incomplete. Grounds 2 & 3 are reported accurately via direct
3338 quotes from Synod, but Ground 1 currently reads:
- 3339 [1.] “The relationship with the GKv has become untenable due to their use of the
3340 ‘New Hermeneutics’ – principles allowing the current cultural context to play
3341 a determining role in explaining scripture. This has allowed the GKv to turn
3342 away from the clear instruction in God’s Word.”
 - 3343 [2.] The evidence of ground one above is given particular expression in the recent
3344 decision of the GKv (Synod Meppel 2017) to allow women to the office of
3345 deacon, elder and minister.
 - 3346 [3.] There has been no adequate response, let alone repentance, to earlier
3347 admonitions:
 - 3348 [i.] Letter of admonition from Synod Armadale 2012 to GKv Synod Ede
3349 dated 22 April 2013 (Acts of Synod 2012, Appendix 5);
 - 3350 [ii.] Letter from Synod Baldivis 2015 to GKv Synod Meppel 2017 (Acts of
3351 Synod 2015, Appendix 2).
- 3352 2.2.6 Synod Bunbury 2018 decided to continue to monitor developments in both the DGK
3353 and the GKN and encourage these two federations to work towards unity with one
3354 another.
- 3355 2.2.7 FRCA Synod Armadale 2012 decided that “the [DGK’s] relationship with the
3356 Liberated Reformed Church of Abbotsford (LRCA) may be an impediment to a
3357 future sister church relationship with the [DGK].”
- 3358 2.2.8 Synod Bunbury 2018 gave deputies the task to encourage the GGRI in their
3359 efforts to work towards federative unity with the GGRC and the GGRI-Timor.
- 3360 2.2.9 Synod Bunbury 2018 decided:
- 3361 • To continue the sister church relationship with the First Evangelical
3362 Reformed Church of Singapore (FERC), Reformed Churches in Indonesia
3363 (GGRI), the Reformed Churches in New Zealand (RCNZ), the Kosin

- 3364 Presbyterian church of Korea (KPCK), and the Free Reformed Churches in
 3365 South Africa (FRCSA) (see also 2.2.2 above);
- 3366 • To investigate two churches in Australia, the Southern Presbyterian Church
 3367 and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church;
 - 3368 • To continue to liaise with the URCNA and to recommend to Synod 2021
 3369 whether to proceed in a sister church relationship;
 - 3370 • To establish contact with the OPC.

3371 3 Considerations

- 3372 3.1 From communications with the FRCA both in official contact and private conversations,
 3373 attendance of local worship services, and observations at Synod Bunbury, it is clear that
 3374 this sister church remains a faithful church. They abide by the Word of God as the only
 3375 rule for faith and life and adhere to adopted confessions and church order.
- 3376 3.2 The value of our relationship with the FRCA is evident particularly in the ongoing
 3377 cooperation in theological education and mission work.
- 3378 3.3 The CanRC can assist the FRCA in the production of an *Australian Book of Praise* and
 3379 exploring possibilities for distance education from CRTS.

3380 4 Recommendations

3381 That Synod decide:

- 3382 4.1 To continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Free Reformed
 3383 Churches of Australia (FRCA) under the adopted rules;
- 3384 4.2 To express thankfulness and appreciation for the FRCA's ongoing support for and
 3385 interest in the Theological Seminary, including their financial support;
- 3386 4.3 To encourage the board of governors and Senate of the Canadian Reformed Theological
 3387 Seminary (CRTS) to continue contact with the deputyship for theological education in
 3388 the FRCA in matters pertaining to their desire to have the first year CRTS program
 3389 available as distance education in the short term and their desire to establish a regional
 3390 seminary in Australia in the medium to long term;
- 3391 4.4 To mandate the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA):
- 3392 4.4.1 To maintain close contact with the deputyship of the FRCA in matters of relations
 3393 with sister churches abroad and to consult the FRCA concerning changes or
 3394 developments in third party relationships;
- 3395 4.4.2 To invite the various deputyships of the FRCA to seek direct contact with the
 3396 corresponding CanRC committees (e.g., our Standing Committee for the *Book of*
 3397 *Praise*, Committee on Bible Translations) in areas of mutual interest where the
 3398 CRCA's mandate does not reach;
- 3399 4.4.3 To send a delegation to the next FRCA synod in 2021;
- 3400 4.4.4 To submit its report to the churches 6 months prior to the convening of the next
 3401 general synod.

3402
 3403 **ADOPTED**

3405 Article 118 - GGRI-T (Reformed Churches in Indonesia) – Letter 3406 Recommendation of the chair:

- 3407 To have the chairman read only the greetings in the letter received from the Reformed
 3408 Churches in Indonesia-Timor (GGRI-T).

3409 To pass the whole letter on to both the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad
3410 (CRCA) and to the Smithville CanRC (as sending church for mission work in Timor)
3411 for them to take note of and deal with as they deem appropriate. (See also Article 114.)
3412

3413 **ADOPTED**
3414

3415 The chairman then read the opening lines and closing lines of the letter.
3416

3417 *Synod adjourned until 7:00pm for committee work.*
3418

3419 **Day 7 — Evening Session**
3420 **Wednesday, May 22, 2019**

3421 **Article 119 – Reopening**

3422 Synod reopened in plenary session. The chairman had the meeting sing Psalm 66:1,4. He noted
3423 all synod members were present.
3424

3425 **Article 120 – GGRC (Reformed Calvinist Churches [in Indonesia])**

3426 **1. Material**

- 3427 1.1 Report of the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) regarding the
3428 Reformed Calvinist Churches [in Indonesia] (GGRC) (8.2.2.1)
3429 1.2 Letters from the following CanRC: Smithville (8.3.1.5) and Lincoln-Vineyard (8.3.1.6)

3430 **2. Observations**

- 3431 2.1 GS 2016 (art. 116) decided:
3432 [4.1] At this time not to accept the offer of the Reformed Calvinist Churches in
3433 Indonesia (GGRC) to enter into a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF);
3434 [4.2] To mandate the CRCA:
3435 [4.2.1] To continue contact with the GGRC to encourage these churches to be
3436 faithful to the Reformed doctrine and church order;
3437 [4.2.2] To work in consultation and cooperation with the Smithville CanRC and the
3438 deputies of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA);
3439 [4.2.3] To encourage the GGRC to make use of the Reformed Theological School in
3440 Kupang (established by the Smithville CanRC) for the training for the
3441 ministry in their churches.
3442 2.2 From the CRCA report, we note the following observations:
3443 2.2.1 There are many historic and personal ties between the GGRC and the CanRC.
3444 Further, like the CanRC, the GGRC are concerned about developments in the
3445 GKv. Finally, they seek assistance from the CanRC in being Reformed in doctrine
3446 and practice and consider an EF relationship to foster this. This implies that the
3447 CanRC ought not to reject entering into a relationship of EF with the GGRC.
3448 Nevertheless, the geographical and cultural distance between Canada and
3449 Indonesia makes this a cumbersome relationship to maintain for the CanRC. It is
3450 prudent and proper for the CanRC to consult closely the FRCA, who are much
3451 better positioned to provide whatever assistance the GGRC require.
3452 2.2.2 The FRCA, given its current policy of one church in one country, has not entered
3453 into EF with the GGRC. The CanRC does not have this policy. Further, the

- 3454 URCNA already enjoys EF with the GGRC. It is more advisable for the CanRC to
3455 grant than to refuse the GGRC's request for EF.
- 3456 2.2.3 The GGRC earnestly strives for unity with other Reformed churches. Entering into
3457 EF with the GGRC is more likely to further this striving, as opposed to thwarting
3458 it. As Canadians we need to be sensitive to the environment and circumstances in
3459 which Indonesian churches find themselves (cf. CO article 50).
- 3460 2.3 Smithville writes that it does not intend to discourage a relationship with the GGRC, but
3461 urges Synod "to ensure that due diligence takes place before the next step is taken, and
3462 that all hesitation noted at Synod Dunnville is responded to sufficiently." Smithville
3463 notes the following:
- 3464 2.3.1 The nine churches resulting from its mission work have decided not to affiliate
3465 with the GGRC although Smithville initially encouraged this.
- 3466 2.3.2 The CRCA has found no evidence concerning the accusation that "the GGRC has
3467 a tendency to hierarchy and 'strong men,'" They should therefore interact with the
3468 GGRI-Timor to understand these concerns.
- 3469 2.3.3 The CRCA comments that "Seminary training is an internal matter not regulated
3470 by Rules for EF; it belongs to the minor points of church order and practice for
3471 which churches abroad shall not be rejected." We must understand that while the
3472 typical North American theological student has enjoyed an upbringing in a
3473 Reformed home, has received six or more years of catechetical instruction, and has
3474 attended a college or university (and so has reached the age of 21 or 22), the
3475 typical theological student of the GGRC (and GGRI and GGRI-T) is commonly at
3476 best a high school graduate (and approximately 18 years of age). In that context,
3477 giving space to students to attend non-Reformed institutions is scarcely "a minor
3478 point."
- 3479 2.4 Lincoln-Vineyard objects to the recommendation of the CRCA to extend Ecclesiastical
3480 Fellowship to the GGRC.
- 3481 2.4.1 "The report from the CRCA does not present evidence that the concerns regarding
3482 the GGRC and their adherence to the Church Order, presented to GS 2016 and
3483 leading to the decision not to accept the offer of the Reformed Calvinist churches
3484 in Indonesia (GGRC) to enter into a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship, have
3485 been addressed. Rather, a continued relationship of assistance and guidance is
3486 appropriate until these issues have been notably resolved."
- 3487 2.4.2 Like Smithville, Lincoln-Vineyard is of the opinion that the issue of some men of
3488 the GGRC receiving ministerial training at a non-Reformed institution is
3489 questionable, having "a bearing on the Reformed character of the preaching and
3490 teaching ministry and of the federative life of the GGRC."
- 3491 2.4.3 Lincoln-Vineyard mentions that "it has consistently been the stated position of
3492 Smithville since the inception of our mission project that the work would occur in
3493 cooperation with the GGRC and that any established churches would seek unity
3494 with the GGRC. Further, it was not our intention to establish a new federation in
3495 Indonesia. We acknowledge that our stated purpose and the outcome are very
3496 different." This "was in no way a deliberate rejection of our stated intention but
3497 was rather the consequence of the inability of the Canadian Reformed Churches
3498 over several Synods to recognize the GGRC as faithful churches of the Lord and to

3499 establish sister relations between the federations, an eventuality we did not foresee
3500 at the inception of our mission work.”

3501 2.4.4 Lincoln-Vineyard goes on to state that “Granting EF to the GGRC would cause
3502 them to feel as if they are now on the same ‘level’ as the CanRC churches and that
3503 there is no longer room for growth or brotherly admonition from the CanRC. This,
3504 in turn, puts the GGRI-T in danger of following with the practices of the GGRC,
3505 i.e. slack on following the church order, because the GGRC are seen as
3506 ‘legitimate’ by the CanRC churches.”

3507 2.5 An extract from concerns listed by GS 2016 in regard to the GGRC can be found in
3508 Article 116:

3509 2.5.1 [2.2.2] “Neither GGRI-NTT nor the GGRC have shown much interest in
3510 cooperating with STAKRI which is supported by the Smithville CanRC.”

3511 2.5.2 [2.2.3] “Over time, however, the Canadian Reformed Churches got to know the
3512 GGRC quite well, but in the meantime several difficulties and divisions within the
3513 GGRC made the Canadian Reformed Churches reluctant to enter into such a
3514 relationship. This situation continues and over the past three years the CRCA has
3515 not seen much positive change in this situation.”

3516 2.5.3 [2.2.4] “Ministers are being ordained within the GGRC who did not come from
3517 STAKRI but from other seminaries in Indonesia. The way in which they were
3518 called and ordained is not in agreement with the intention of the Church Order.
3519 The GGRC do not send their students for the ministry to STAKRI, as they had
3520 committed to during their synod in 2011 and 2012. Also the unity with the GGRI-
3521 NTT is something that seems to disappear into the background more and more.”

3522 3. Considerations

3523 3.1 With thankfulness to the Lord, the CRCA concluded that the GGRC evidences in
3524 confession and practice to be churches seeking to serve the Lord according to His Word.

3525 3.2 As to the accusation of “hierarchy and ‘strong men,’” and in particular the perception
3526 that the GGRC are dominated by one person, the CRCA reported to Synod, “As far as
3527 the CRCA could observe – in discussions, during ecclesiastical assemblies, and during
3528 less formal occasions – the GGRC practice mutual accountability between churches and
3529 between office bearers.”

3530 3.3 As to seminary training, according to information provided by Rev. Yonson Dethan,
3531 seven ministers in the GGRC were trained at the Reformed Seminary of the GGRI-NTT
3532 in Sumba. One has since gone to be with the Lord. The GGRC has sent four students to
3533 STAKRI but been disappointed in not seeing them graduate with degrees from that
3534 institution. Two completed three years of instruction at STAKRI, while two others
3535 completed the entire program. Two are currently serving as ministers and two are
3536 serving as evangelists in the GGRC.

3537 Another minister student graduated from a Reformed Seminary on the island of Bali,
3538 and one graduated from SALEM, an interdenominational seminary.

3539 3.4 As to a perceived unwillingness on the part of the GGRC or the GGRI-NTT to send
3540 students to STAKRI, aside from the practical issue noted above, there is also another
3541 matter to consider. In our relations with other churches around the globe, the CanRC do
3542 not tell other churches where they ought to send their future ministers for training. We

NOT FINAL

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- 3543 also would not appreciate other churches directing us where to send our students. It is
3544 inconsistent for the CanRC to deal differently with the churches of Indonesia.
3545 From our distance in Canada, we are geographically and culturally too far removed to
3546 be able to weigh responsibly the “issues” any given church may have concerning the
3547 theological training of their ministers. It is in step with the Lord’s instruction in
3548 Matthew 18 that any issues a church may have with an organization such as STAKRI
3549 needs to make work of sorting that out on the local level.
- 3550 3.5 It is clear from Lincoln-Vineyard’s letter, that the fact that the CanRC have not
3551 recognized the GGRC as faithful churches of the Lord has contributed to the mission
3552 churches in Timor forming their own federation with a view to joining the national
3553 GGRI. Meanwhile, they now form a third group of churches next to the GGRI and the
3554 GGRC.
- 3555 3.6 Using the statement that “there is a strong hierarchical structure in Indonesia” would
3556 raise the question whether it is possible to enter into EF with any churches there. Even if
3557 it can be proven that this aspect of Indonesian culture has an impact on church life, one
3558 only has to look back in the history of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands in past
3559 centuries to see parallels, caused by a lack of sufficient education on the part of many
3560 church members who were obliged to look to their educated leaders for guidance. The
3561 GGRC have sought to remedy the lack of education by establishing Reformed schools,
3562 as noted in point 3.4 above.
- 3563 3.7 The GGRC do not consider themselves to be strong in every respect, which is why for
3564 eighteen years they have been asking the CanRC to help them.
- 3565 3.8 The fear expressed by Lincoln-Vineyard that “granting EF to the GGRC would cause
3566 them to feel as if they are now on the same ‘level’ as the CanRC churches and that there
3567 is no longer room for growth or brotherly admonition from the CanRC” is a supposed
3568 future that is not in line with how the GGRC have presented themselves during the
3569 years of their contact with the CanRC and it conflicts with observations noted by the
3570 CRCA in its current report and in years past.
- 3571 3.9 As CanRC we have been looking to the FRCA for direction in regard to how to deal
3572 with the GGRC. As indicated in the CRCA report to Synod Edmonton 2019, a
3573 complicating factor is that the FRCA’s approach has been shaped by the view that they
3574 can only be sister churches with one church in one country. Since the FRCA already is a
3575 sister church of the GGRI, the focus of the FRCA’s contact with the GGRC has been to
3576 encourage them to pursue federative unity with the GGRI.
- 3577 3.10 Meanwhile we should also keep in mind that our sister church in Indonesia, the GGRI-
3578 NTT, has had a sister relationship with the GGRC since 1991. In the interest of
3579 promoting unity among the Reformed Churches in Indonesia and offering further help
3580 to the various parties, it makes sense to equalize the “playing field” by offering EF to
3581 the GGRC just as the GGRI-NTT did almost two decades ago, rather than indirectly
3582 calling that sister relationship into question by continuing to delay establishing EF with
3583 the GGRC.
- 3584 3.11 After eighteen years of contact between the GGRC and the CanRC in formal and
3585 informal ways, continuing to show reluctance to enter into EF with the GGRC on the
3586 basis of vague statements concerning their character has become very questionable and
3587 also threatens to perpetuate the divisions between the GGRC and the GGRI-Timor,
3588 founded by the mission work of Smithville.

3589 3.12 Entering into EF with the GGRC acknowledges the history and legitimacy of this
 3590 federation of churches. A sister church relationship between the GGRC and CanRC will
 3591 provide a heightened mode of interaction that allows for addressing each other with
 3592 respect to matters that pertain to doctrine, worship, and governance, also where church
 3593 unity with other Reformed Churches is concerned.

3594 **4. Recommendations**

3595 That Synod decide:

- 3596 4.1 To enter into Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Reformed Calvinist Churches [in
 3597 Indonesia] (GGRC);
- 3598 4.2 To mandate the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA):
- 3599 4.2.1 To send a delegation to the next synod of the GGRC, planned for 2019, informing
 3600 them of this decision;
- 3601 4.2.2 To work in consultation and cooperation with the Free Reformed Churches of
 3602 Australia (FRCA) and United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA) as
 3603 they encourage and support the churches of the GGRC in their efforts to grow in
 3604 Reformed doctrine and polity;
- 3605 4.2.3 To work in consultation and cooperation with the Smithville CanRC given their
 3606 mission work in Timor;
- 3607 4.2.4 To encourage the GGRC to foster and promote church unity among Reformed
 3608 churches in Indonesia;
- 3609 4.2.5 To submit its report to the churches 6 months prior to the convening of the next
 3610 general synod.

3611 **ADOPTED**

3614 **Article 121 – GGRI (Reformed Churches in Indonesia)**

3615 **1. Material**

- 3616 1.1 Report of the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) regarding the
 3617 Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRI) (8.2.2.1).
- 3618 1.2 Letter of greetings from the GGRI (8.2.2.11).

3619 **2. Observations**

- 3620 2.1 GS 2016 (art. 115) decided:
- 3621 [4.1] To continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Reformed
 3622 Churches in Indonesia – Nusa Tenggara Timor (GGRI-NTT) under the adopted
 3623 rules;
- 3624 [4.2] To mandate the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA):
- 3625 [4.2.1] To discuss our rules for EF with the Committee on Relations of the GGRI
 3626 and to gather as much information as is needed to come to a good
 3627 recommendation to General Synod 2019 regarding a relationship of EF with
 3628 the GGRI;
- 3629 [4.2.2] To gather and evaluate information regarding the GGRI-KalBar and the
 3630 GGRI-Papua in order to prepare a proposal as to how to deal with the GGRI
 3631 as a national federation instead of dealing exclusively with the GGRI-NTT,
 3632 which has become part of this larger federation of churches;

- 3633 [4.2.3] To try to ensure that a delegation of two brothers is sent to Indonesia to
3634 represent the CanRC at a synod of the GGRI;
- 3635 [4.2.4] To work in consultation and cooperation with the deputies of the Free
3636 Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) to encourage and support the
3637 churches of the GGRI in their efforts to grow in the Reformed doctrine and
3638 church polity;
- 3639 [4.2.5] To encourage the GGRI to seek cooperation with the Reformed Theological
3640 School in Kupang (established by Smithville);
- 3641 [4.2.6] To encourage the GGRI to seek closer contact and cooperation with the
3642 Calvinist Reformed Churches (GGRC) and to monitor the progress of the
3643 dialogue between the GGRI and the GGRC.
- 3644 [4.3] To pass on the letter of the Toronto-Bethel CanRC to the CRCA for consideration.
- 3645 2.2 From the CRCA report, we note the following observations:
- 3646 2.2.1 There are many historic and personal ties between the GGRI and the CanRC.
3647 Further, like the CanRC, the GGRI are concerned about developments in the GKv.
3648 This implies that the CanRC ought not to discontinue its relationship of EF with
3649 the GGRI. Nevertheless, the geographical and cultural distance between Canada
3650 and Indonesia makes this a cumbersome relationship to maintain for the CanRC. It
3651 is prudent and proper for the CanRC to maintain this relationship in close
3652 consultation with the FRCA, who are much better positioned to provide whatever
3653 assistance the GGRI require.
- 3654 2.2.2 The CRCA has found no evidence substantiating the allegation that the GGRI-
3655 KalBar is compromising its commitment to the Reformed faith; rather, the CRCA
3656 witnessed the GGRI- KalBar testify that it would not do so.
- 3657 2.2.3 The CRCA has found no evidence that the GGRI-Papua is unreformed in its
3658 practice of church polity. The approach taken by the GGRI-Papua to structure its
3659 communication with the government is Biblical and appropriate in the civil context
3660 of the GGRI-Papua.
- 3661 2.2.4 The GGRI, pointing to the harmony and unity at its national synod, requests the
3662 CanRC to receive the GGRI as a whole as sister churches (NS-GGRI-2016
3663 decision 9.1). Further, the GGRI as a whole has been received by the ICRC as
3664 member, and the FRCA and GKv have extended their relationship of EF to cover
3665 the whole GGRI.
- 3666 2.2.5 The FRCA extended EF to the GGRI as a national federation in 2012. Subsequent
3667 to this, because of a request for more information, both in 2015 and 2018, the
3668 General Synods mandated the deputies to “as yet report to the churches with a
3669 clearer picture of the GGRI Papua and the GGRI Kalimantan Barat that have
3670 united and formed one federation with the GGRI-NTT in February 2012,
3671 confirming their Reformed character and the implications of this union.”
- 3672 2.2.6 Nevertheless, GS 2018 stated in Article 105, Grounds “1. The GGRI shows
3673 faithfulness to the Word of God, maintaining the Reformed confessions. 2. Our
3674 rules for sister church relations indicate that the churches need to mutually care for
3675 each other that they do not depart from the Reformed faith in doctrine, church
3676 polity, discipline and liturgy. The deputies express confidence about the Reformed
3677 faithfulness of the federation. At the same time, they do indicate that there are
3678 concerns, and it is important that we monitor these things.”

3679 2.3 In the letter of greetings from the GGRI to the CanRC, mention is made of the first
3680 National Synod of the GGRI held in February 2012, in Papua. There the Reformed
3681 Churches of Papua, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) and West Kalimantan become one
3682 federation. A National Synod is to be held every four years. A second National Synod
3683 was held in 2016. In that Second National Synod, they decided to request the CanRC to
3684 accept the whole federation, not only the churches in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). This
3685 request is repeated in their letter of greetings to GS 2019.

3686 **3. Considerations**

- 3687 3.1 With thankfulness to the Lord, the GGRI evidences in confession and practice to be a
3688 church seeking to serve the Lord according to his Word.
- 3689 3.2 Since the GGRI in the provinces of NTT, KalBar, and Papua now see themselves as a
3690 single federation, we also have to see them as such. There is no reason brought forward
3691 to discontinue our EF with the GGRI-NTT, and not to extend EF to the GGRI as a
3692 whole.
- 3693 3.3 The FRCA knows the GGRI-NTT well from frequent interactions with them on the
3694 field, and so has mandated deputies to “support the GGRI with the intention of building
3695 up the Reformed character of these churches.”
- 3696 3.4 The FRCA also wants to get to know the GGRI KalBar and Papua better in order to
3697 assist them properly according to the terms of EF. Observations 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 above
3698 may help address their concerns.
- 3699 3.5 Given that the FRCA is closer to Indonesia than the CanRCs, it is responsible that our
3700 CRCA work in close conjunction with the FRCA allowing the Australians to take
3701 primary responsibility for the direction of the contacts in Indonesia. It would therefore
3702 be helpful if the respective committees would share information on their observations
3703 and activities in Indonesia.
- 3704 3.6 The GGRI, as a federation of federations, could prove to be an effective vehicle to foster
3705 church unity among the various groups of Reformed churches in Indonesia.

3706 **4. Recommendations**

3707 That Synod decide:

- 3708 4.1 To extend ecclesiastical fellowship (EF) to the Reformed Churches Indonesia (GGRI)
3709 as a whole, being the federations of the churches in Kalimantan Barat (GGRI-KalBar),
3710 the churches in Nusa Tenggara Timur (GGRI-NTT), and the churches in Papua (GGRI-
3711 Papua);
- 3712 4.2 To mandate the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA):
- 3713 4.2.1 To try to send a delegation of brothers to Indonesia to represent the CanRC at the
3714 next national synod of the GGRI, planned for 2020;
- 3715 4.2.2 To work in consultation and cooperation with the Free Reformed Churches of
3716 Australia (FRCA) in encouraging and supporting the churches of the GGRI in their
3717 efforts to grow in Reformed doctrine and polity;
- 3718 4.2.3 To work in consultation and cooperation with the Smithville CanRC given their
3719 mission work in Timor;
- 3720 4.2.4 To encourage the GGRI to foster and promote church unity among Reformed
3721 churches in Indonesia;
- 3722 4.2.5 To submit its report to the churches 6 months prior to the convening of the next
3723 general synod.

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ADOPTED

Article 122 – Guidelines

1. Material

1.1 Synod Guidelines Report by the executive committee of GS 2016 (8.2.1)

2. Observations

2.1 The report indicates that the authors analyzed the submission of the Dunnville CanRC, convening church of GS 2016, which made a number of suggestions on how to improve the Guidelines.

2.2 The report concludes that two changes to the GS Guidelines are advisable as follows:

2.2.1 **Re: submitting hard copies to general synod.** The current guideline reads “All material for Synod should be received by the convening Church (in digital format and five paper copies) not later than six weeks prior to the convocation of General Synod.” The report takes up the suggestion of Dunnville that five paper copies are not necessary and so suggests dropping that requirement completely. The report indicates that the one paper copy needed for the archives of general synod can be printed out by the convening church.

2.2.2 **Re: submitting digital copies to general synod.**

2.2.2.1 Since submissions came to GS 2016 in a variety of digital formats creating unnecessary extra work for the convening church, Dunnville suggested that a guideline be added indicating that “All scanned submissions should be in .pdf, .doc, or .docx file format.” The executive committee consulted a brother whose profession is in “IT security.” He suggested that submissions to synod be limited to PDF and that these should not be in picture PDF (which are not searchable) but in text PDF (which are searchable).

2.2.2.2 Concerning authenticating submissions, Dunnville suggested the addition of the following guideline: “Proper electronic signatures will be accepted as a suitable means of verifying the authenticity of a submission.” The brother consulted considered that this would not be practicable as most submitters will not have the necessary software. He also suggested it would not be necessary in our church community as “there are other ways to verify whether a letter is authentic or fraudulent.” The executive committee recommends “that the convening church ensure all agenda items for a synod are in text PDF format. We further recommend that the convening church and synod decide for themselves how to verify the authenticity of a submission.”

2.2.3 **Re: Separate Submissions for Separate Topics.** Dunnville suggested and the executive committee agreed that “If at all possible and feasible submitters should stick to one topic in each of their submissions.” However, this is not that simple in practice since a church may at times deal with a Committee Report (e.g., CCCNA) which itself covers more than one topic. They conclude that while the convening church can make this request of those who submit items, “the convening church will still need to check the contents of a letter to see whether it covers more than one topic.”

2.2.4 **Re: General.** The executive committee believes that “the suggestions from Dunnville actually only require one minor change to the Guidelines [see above 2.2.1]. For the rest, Dunnville’s concerns can be decided upon by the convening church itself. Thus the report recommends adding the following to Guideline I.A.:

The convening church is free to undertake whatever measures are needed to improve the operations of a synod. Such measures include, but are not limited to, standardizing file formats to text PDF; standardizing file names to include the agenda item number, the topic, the source, and the date; verifying the authenticity of submissions.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The authors of the report are to be commended for carefully analyzing and interacting with the submission of Dunnville, even conducting further research, and providing useful recommendations to GS 2019.
- 3.2 There seems to be no reason to require submitters to produce five written copies alongside of the digital format. On the other hand, for submitters to send in one written and duly signed copy will serve two useful purposes: it will serve to authenticate the digital submission that it accompanies and it will serve as the copy needed for the archives for general synod. Having this as a guideline will alleviate the convening church from having to make at least one hard copy of all digital submissions for the purpose of the archives of general synod.
- 3.3 Having searchable text PDF documents (as opposed to picture PDF) for synod delegates is very important since synod members need to both search through the text of the submissions as well as “copy and paste” when it comes time to formulate advisory reports. Thus it is advisable for this expectation to be laid out in the Guidelines for Synod and that the convening church ask churches (and other submitters) for searchable text PDF documents in order to avoid as much unnecessary work as possible for the convening church. When such a submission proves unfeasible on the part of the submitter, the convening church shall endeavour, as much as feasible, to provide a searchable text PDF of the submission.
- 3.4 It will be useful for the convening church to ask the churches (and other submitters) to send in submissions on one topic per document. In the event that more topics are sent in under one submission, the convening church is free to decide how best to handle it and where to place it on the proposed agenda.
- 3.5 The addition to Guideline I.A. as suggested in the report is helpful in that it clarifies for the convening church that it has the necessary flexibility in handling the practical affairs related to receiving, organizing, and distributing submissions to general synod.

4. Recommendations

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To express gratitude to the four brothers for their helpful report.
- 4.2 To change the following Guidelines to read:

4.2.1 Guideline I.A.

The convening Church shall set the date on which Synod shall meet (cf. Art. 49, CO). The convening church shall publish the date along with the rule:

All material for Synod should be received by the convening church in paper or digital format (searchable text PDF as much as feasible) no later than six

3813 *weeks prior to the convocation date of general synod. Those submitting*
3814 *material shall ensure that one signed copy is available for the archives of*
3815 *General Synod. Material received after this date shall ordinarily not be*
3816 *added to the agenda unless Synod is satisfied that the reasons given for later*
3817 *arrival are reasonable.*

3818 4.2.2 **Guideline I.E**

3819 *All material for Synod should be received by the convening church in paper or*
3820 *digital format (searchable text PDF as much as feasible) no later than six weeks*
3821 *prior to the convocation date of general synod. Those submitting material shall*
3822 *ensure that one signed copy is available for the archives of General Synod.*
3823 *Material received after this date shall ordinarily not be added to the agenda unless*
3824 *Synod is satisfied that the reasons given for later arrival are reasonable.*

3825 4.3 To add to **Guideline I.A.** the following:

3826 *The convening church is free to undertake whatever measures are needed to improve*
3827 *the operations of a synod. Such measures include, but are not limited to, standardizing*
3828 *file formats to text PDF; standardizing file names to include the agenda item number,*
3829 *the topic, the source, and the date; verifying the authenticity of submissions.*

3830 4.4 To send a copy of the updated Guidelines to the convening church of the next general 3831 synod to assist in their preparations.

3832 **ADOPTED**

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3834
3835 During discussion, the following **amendment** had been moved, seconded and **adopted**:

3836 To replace in recommendations 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 the words:

3837 *All material for Synod should be received by the convening Church (in digital*
3838 *format (searchable text PDF as much as feasible) and one signed paper copy for*
3839 *the archives of general synod) no later than six weeks prior to the convocation*
3840 *date of General Synod.*

3841 with the words:

3842 *All material for Synod should be received by the convening church in paper or*
3843 *digital format (searchable text PDF as much as feasible) no later than six weeks*
3844 *prior to the convocation date of general synod. Those submitting material shall*
3845 *ensure that one signed copy is available for the archives of General Synod*
3846

3847 **Article 123 – CPTPF (Committee for Pastoral Training Program Funding)**

3848 **1. Material**

3849 1.1 Report from the Committee for Pastoral Training Program Funding (CPTPF) (8.2.8)

3850 **2. Observations**

3851 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 64) decided:

3852 [4.1] To express gratitude to the Guelph-Emmanuel CanRC and its committee for the
3853 work it has done;

3854 [4.2] To reappoint Guelph-Emmanuel as the Committee for Pastoral Training Program
3855 Funding (CTPTF) with the following mandate:

3856 [4.2.1] To look after all internship-related funding matters;

- 3857 [4.2.2] To assess the churches each year based on the anticipated funding required
3858 for a particular summer;
3859 [4.2.3] To report about its activities to the next general synod, which report shall be
3860 sent to all the churches at least six months prior to the next general synod.
3861 2.3 The Committee reports which students were funded by the program in the summers of
3862 2016, 2017, and 2018.
3863 2.4 The Committee reports that in 2016, 2017, and 2018 its books were audited, and its
3864 records were found to be in good order.

3865 **3. Consideration**

- 3866 3.1 The Committee has done its work with dedication and accountability and the funding
3867 program has worked well.

3868 **4. Recommendations**

3869 That Synod decide:

- 3870 4.1 To express gratitude to the Guelph-Emmanuel CanRC and its committee for the work it
3871 has done;
3872 4.2 To reappoint Guelph-Emmanuel as the Committee for Pastoral Training Program
3873 Funding (CTPTF) with the following mandate:
3874 4.2.1 To look after all internship-related funding matters;
3875 4.2.2 To assess the churches each year based on the anticipated funding required for a
3876 particular summer;
3877 4.2.3 To report about its activities to the next general synod, which report shall be sent
3878 to all the churches at least 6 months prior to the next general synod.
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3880 **ADOPTED**

3882 **Article 124 – DGK (The Reformed Churches [in The Netherlands])**

3883 **1. Material**

- 3884 1.1 Report from the Subcommittee Reformed churches in The Netherlands of the
3885 Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA-SRN) regarding The Reformed
3886 Churches (DGK) (8.2.2.2)
3887 1.2 Letters from the following CanRC: Flamborough-Redemption (8.3.1.1.2), Attercliffe
3888 (8.3.1.10)
3889 1.3 Letter from Deputies Contact Churches Abroad of De Gereformeerde Kerken (8.2.2.12)
3890 1.4 Letter from DGK Mariënberg (8.2.2.6)

3891 **2. Observations**

- 3892 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 117) decided:
3893 [4.1] To maintain contact with The Reformed Churches (DGK) and continue to monitor
3894 developments within this federation, paying special attention to the relationship
3895 between the DGK and the Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford (LRCA)
3896 2.2 The Subcommittee for Relations with the Netherlands (SRN) maintained contact with
3897 the DGK through correspondence and a face-to-face meeting. The subcommittee
3898 reiterated the position of GS 2013 and GS 2016 that the EF which the DGK has with the
3899 LRCA remains an impediment to closer contact. The DGK had attempted to set up a
3900 three-way meeting between themselves, the LRCA and the SRN, but the LRCA

- 3901 declined to participate. At a two-way meeting between the DGK and the SRN, the SRN
3902 pressed upon the DGK that the picture the LRCA gives of the CanRC is not correct.
3903 Further, the SRN laid out that under the banner of the Lord's church-gathering work our
3904 sister churches do not need to have precisely the same practices as we have on topics as
3905 fencing the Lord's Supper table or members' commitment to the confessions; these are
3906 instead the sort of topics that continue to be discussed as fitting opportunities present
3907 themselves.
- 3908 2.3 At their 2018 Synod the DGK decide to maintain their sister church relationship with
3909 the LRCA. Of significance, though, is that this Synod instructed deputies for contact
3910 with the LRCA to engage that sister-church in a discussion about the catholicity of the
3911 church. Whereas in the past the DGK had been critical of the Westminster Confession
3912 (and so of churches embracing this Confession), it appears that the DGK now no longer
3913 considers this Confession to be unfaithful or not in harmony with Scripture.
- 3914 2.4 The SRN conveyed to the DGK the CanRC's concerns with the GKv. The DGK were
3915 heartened by the SRN's analysis and the CanRC's position concerning the GKv. As a
3916 result of their 2018 Synod their deputies attending the 2018 FRCA Synod expressed the
3917 wish of the DGK to have further talks with the CanRC.
- 3918 2.5 The SRN encouraged the DGK to engage in further discussions with the GKN with a
3919 view to working towards unity.
- 3920 2.6 The SRN considers it important that the CanRC maintain some form of contact with the
3921 DGK and recommend that we continue to monitor developments within this small
3922 federation even though they maintain their relationship with the LRCA.
- 3923 2.7 Deputies from DGK responsible for Contact Churches Abroad sent a letter of greetings
3924 to General Synod Edmonton 2019. In their letter they drew attention to a decision made
3925 at the very first DGK Synod Marienberg 2005 where they decided that they would "seek
3926 ecclesiastical unity with all who want to live on the foundation of Scripture, confession
3927 (which means the Three Forms of Unity and/or the **Westminster Confession**) and the
3928 Dort Church Order" (bolding theirs). They add: "This entails that churches with the
3929 Westminster Confession can be considered for a sister church relationship."
- 3930 2.8 Via a letter, "De Gereformeerde Kerk Marienberg e.o." advised Synod of injustices they
3931 feel happened to them at the hand of hierarchical decisions made by the DGK, resulting
3932 in their removal from that federation of churches. They suggest that the SRN report was
3933 incorrect when that report states that this church "placed itself outside the federation."
3934 As a result of their experiences, they also urge caution upon us in our contacts with
3935 DGK.
- 3936 2.9 The church in Flamborough desires GS 2019 to instruct the CRCA to communicate
3937 clearly to the DGK that their relationship with the LRCA remains an obstacle for the
3938 CanRC entering into a relationship with them.
- 3939 2.10 The Attercliffe CanRC draws attention to the disappointment the DGK expressed
3940 concerning "the lack of discussion between our two church federations on the matter of
3941 fencing the table of the Lord and confessional membership, and the decision of Synod
3942 Dunnville to state that there is no longer need to talk about these issues." Attercliffe
3943 expresses her conviction that these matters were never discussed, or if they were, they
3944 have not been reported to the churches. On the other hand, Attercliffe does support the
3945 recommendation that contact should be maintained and suggests that further discussions
3946 on the points mentioned above would be beneficial.

3. Consideration

- 3.1 The development within the DGK to be more receptive to the Westminster Confession (and so to have a greater eye for the world-wide church gathering work of the Lord) is to be noted with gratitude.
- 3.2 The relation the DGK have with the LRCA continues to be an impediment to increased relations between the CanRC and the DGK because the LRCA broke away from the CanRC precisely because of their opposition to our sister relationships with churches of Presbyterian identity.
- 3.3 The letter concerning perceived hierarchical activities within the DGK can be received for information, without prejudice to its accuracy.
- 3.4 GS 2016 (Art. 49, Cons. 3.3) addressed Attercliffe's concern.

4. Recommendations

That Synod decide:

- 4.1. To thank deputies for their work and discharge them;
- 4.2. To maintain contact with The Reformed Churches (DGK) and mandate the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) to continue to monitor developments within this federation, paying special attention to the relationship between the DGK and the Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford (LRCA).

ADOPTED

Article 125 – GKN (Reformed Churches The Netherlands)

1. Material

- 1.1 Report from the Subcommittee Reformed churches in The Netherlands of the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA-SRN) regarding Reformed Churches The Netherlands (GKN) (8.2.2.3)
- 1.2 Supplemental Report from the CRCA-SRN re GKN sister church request (8.2.2.5)
- 1.3 Letter from the following CanRC: Flamborough-Redemption (8.3.1.1.4)

2. Observations

- 2.1 GS 2016 decided
- [4.1] To maintain contact with the Reformed Churches The Netherlands (GKNvv) and continue to monitor developments within this federation (Acts Art 118)
- 2.2 The SRN maintained contact with the GKN (modified acronym) through correspondence and a face-to-face meeting. In the latter meeting the brothers of the GKN expressed appreciation for the opportunity to meet and provided an update on 1. The developments in the GKN and 2. Their discussions with the DGK.
- 2.2.1 The churches of this young federation (2009) were quite independent, with a loose and problematic cooperation between the churches. This has now changed so that the federation is structured in accordance with the Church Order of Dort. Due to their size they have no classes or regional synods, but they meet in General Synod twice a year. Their recent GS reflected improved harmonious cooperation. This small federation consists of 7 instituted churches and 6 preaching points. Among its ministers are two who in time past have served in the CanRC.

- 3990 2.2.2 There were some initial positive steps toward improved contact and discussions
3991 between the GKN and the DGK. However, this contact was terminated from GKN
3992 side because writings with the DGK appeared to label the GKN as schismatic.
3993 Efforts are underway to open up this contact again.
3994 The GKN wishes to focus its inter-church relations on Europe plus the former
3995 sister churches, ie, the FRCA, CanRC and the FRCSA. They have already
3996 requested a sister church relationship with the FRCA and hope to make a similar
3997 request to the CanRC at their next Synod.
- 3998 2.3 The SRN expresses understanding for “the difficulties that may exist in a small
3999 federation as well as the need for a soundboard,” and recommends that “some form of
4000 contact be maintained with the GKN.”
- 4001 2.4 In a supplementary report to GS 2018, the SRN advises that the GKN have requested
4002 that a sister church relationship be established between the CanRC and the GKN. After
4003 digesting the request, the SRN recommends that Synod Edmonton not establish sister
4004 relations with the GKN on grounds that the ecclesiastical situation in the Netherlands is
4005 still too fluid. The SRN:
- 4006 • Expects more people to leave the GKv in the coming years,
 - 4007 • Sees wisdom in awaiting the outcome of discussions between the GKN and the
4008 DGK,
 - 4009 • Mentions that exercising patience on this matter is in line with the decision of
4010 the FRCA.
- 4011 The SRN recommends that this request be referred to the CRCA for further
4012 consideration.
- 4013 2.5 The church in Flamborough recommends that Synod mandate the CRCA to “initiate
4014 greater communication and dialogue with the GKN with the intent to establish a
4015 relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with them.” They make this recommendation
4016 because the GKN “appears to be a faithful church of Jesus Christ, with similar
4017 theological positions and practices to the CanRC.”

3. Consideration

- 4018 3.1 The development within the GKN in relation to adherence to the Church Order of Dort
4019 is to be noted with gratitude.
- 4020 3.2 The efforts to open up avenues of communication with the DGK is to be noted with
4021 gratitude.
- 4022 3.3 Given the fluidity of the ecclesiastical situation in the Netherlands, the request to
4023 establish sister church relations with the GKN is premature.
- 4024 3.4 Being available for further dialogue is one way in which we can provide assistance to
4025 this small federation as they seek to find their way forward after their departure from the
4026 GKv.
4027

4. Recommendations

4028 That Synod decide:

- 4029 4.1 To maintain contact with The Reformed Churches The Netherlands (GKN)
- 4030 4.2 To instruct the CRCA:
- 4031 4.2.1 To monitor developments within the GKN;
 - 4032 4.2.2 To consider the request from the GKN to establish sister relations;
 - 4033 4.2.3 To be available for dialogue with the GKN when needed.
- 4034

4035 4.2.4 To submit its report to the churches six months prior to the convening of the next
4036 general synod.
4037

4038 **ADOPTED**
4039

4040 **Article 126 – URCNA (United Reformed Churches in North America)**

4041 Committee 5 presented draft 1 of a report on the URCNA. The report was discussed. The
4042 committee took the report back for refinement.
4043

4044 **Article 127 – CWeb (Committee for the Official Website)**

4045 Committee 3 presented draft 1 of a report on the Official Website. The report was discussed. The
4046 committee took the report back for refinement.
4047

4048 **Article 128 – CRCA (Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad) - general**

4049 **1. Material**

- 4050 1.1 Report of the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (8.2.2.1)
4051 1.2 Letters from the following Churches: Burlington-Rehoboth (8.3.1.9), Attercliffe
4052 (8.3.1.10)

4053 **2. Observations**

- 4054 2.1 The Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) completed its mandate
4055 with the involvement of seven individuals and one mission board: Rev. J. de Gelder
4056 (New Zealand), Rev. Dr. A. deVisser (South Africa), br. J. Lee (Korea), br. J.
4057 Vanderstoep (Scotland), br. H. Ludwig (Brazil), Rev. A.J. Pol (Indonesia), and Rev. H.
4058 Versteeg (Indonesia), Smithville CanRC Timor Mission Board.
4059 2.2 Br. J. VanLaar has served the CRCA for nine years.
4060 2.3 Correspondence was received by churches that were not included in the CRCA's
4061 mandate: Independent Evangelical-Reformed Church (Germany), Reformed
4062 Presbyterian Church of Central and Eastern Europe (Hungary & area).
4063 2.4 GS 2013 (Art. 81, Cons. 3) suggests that proposals for relationships with the CanRC
4064 must come via our minor assemblies (referring to GS 1998, Art. 98, Cons. III.A). The
4065 CRCA observes that our way of receiving and processing requests for relationships is
4066 rather puzzling to churches abroad.
4067 2.5 With The Netherlands returning to the responsibility of the CRCA, the workload of the
4068 CRCA will increase.
4069 2.6 The CRCA requests access to submissions from CanRC in response to CRCA reports to
4070 synods because they find it helpful to know the thinking of the churches.
4071 2.7 Burlington Watertown-Rehoboth does not agree to send submissions from CanRCs in
4072 response to reports to synods. It contends if these letters are passed on to the committee,
4073 they could begin to live a life of their own and the CRCA will start its work on ideas
4074 from the churches with which Synod did not agree. Burlington Watertown-Rehoboth
4075 also contends that letters from the churches addressing matters pertaining to the CRCA
4076 are addressed to Synod, not the committee.

4077 **3. Considerations**

- 4078 3.1 The CRCA has diligently carried out its mandate.

- 4079 3.2 The logical point of contact with the CanRC for a church abroad is often the CRCA, not
4080 a local CanRC.
- 4081 3.3 If a foreign church contacts the CanRC through the CRCA, it is proper for the CRCA to
4082 respond.
- 4083 3.4 It is improper for the CRCA to proceed towards intensifying this contact towards
4084 Ecclesiastical Fellowship without having an explicit mandate from the churches via
4085 synod to do so.
- 4086 3.5 In view of the increased workload it is advisable to increase the CRCA from 6 to 7
4087 members, as the 4-member CRCA-SRN has been dissolved.
- 4088 3.6 It can be beneficial to the CRCA to have access after Synod to the responses from the
4089 churches to their report addressed to Synod in order to better understand particular
4090 points made.

4091 **4. Recommendations**

4092 That Synod decide:

- 4093 4.1 To thank the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) and those who
4094 assisted the committee in its work.
- 4095 4.2 To thank br. J. VanLaar for his work and release him from the committee.;
- 4096 4.3 To expand the CRCA to seven members.
- 4097 4.4 To give the CRCA approval to request relevant documentation per Consideration 3.6
4098 from the church responsible for the archives of general synods.
- 4099 4.5 To mandate the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA):
- 4100 4.5.1 To continue its contact with the churches abroad that synod has approved;
- 4101 4.5.2 To report on any contact received from a church that seeks contact with the
4102 CanRC;
- 4103 4.5.3 To appoint one of its members to validate and submit to the treasurer of the
4104 General Fund all expenses being submitted for committee work;
- 4105 4.5.4 To submit its report to the churches 6 months prior to the convening of the next
4106 general synod.

4107 **ADOPTED**

4108 **Article 129 – SCBP (Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise*)**

4109 Committee 1 presented draft 1 of a report on the Official Website. The report was discussed. The
4110 committee took the report back for refinement.

4111 **Article 130 – Hamilton Blessings re: RSE Nov. 2018 (CO Art. 55)**

4112 **1. Material**

- 4113 1.1 Appeal of the Hamilton-Blessings CanRC concerning the decision of RSE Nov. 2018 in
4114 regard to CO Article 55 (8.6.8.1)
- 4115 1.2 Letters from the following churches: Grand Rapids (8.6.1.1); Lincoln-Vineyard
4116 (8.6.1.2); Chilliwack (8.6.8.1.3); Winnipeg-Redeemer (8.6.1.4); Guelph-Emmanuel
4117 (8.6.8.1.5).

4121 **2. Admissibility**

- 4122 2.1 Grand Rapids urges Synod to declare this submission inadmissible on the grounds that it
4123 was received “very late, only 7 days before the cut off date for material to be submitted
4124 to Synod. This request involves a substantial change to the Church Order. The
4125 consistory of Grand Rapids could not deal with this in a thorough manner, nor, do we
4126 believe, could any of the other churches.” The Guelph-Emmanuel church echoes the
4127 same complaint about not having enough time to consider the material properly.
- 4128 2.2 Chilliwack believes that the desire of Hamilton-Blessings to see Article 55 of the
4129 Church Order amended does not constitute an appeal but is actually an overture and
4130 should therefore have been sent to the churches via Regional Synod 5 months prior to
4131 GS 2019.
- 4132 2.3 GS 2019 notes that the proposed amendment did come to RSE Nov. 2018 from Classis
4133 Central Ontario, where it was denied. By appealing this decision to GS 2019, Hamilton-
4134 Blessings is simply continuing the discussion in the ecclesiastical way. Since this is an
4135 appeal against a decision of RSE Nov. 2018, and it was submitted within the given
4136 deadline, Synod deems this appeal admissible.

4137 **3. Observations**

- 4138 3.1 Regional Synod East (November 14, 2018) received the following overture from Classis
4139 Central Ontario (September 6–7, 2018), originating from the Fellowship Canadian
4140 Reformed Church of Burlington:
- 4141 “Classis Central Ontario overtures the 2018 Regional Synod East to overture the 2019
4142 General Synod to amend article 55 of the Church Order to read: *The 150 psalms shall
4143 have the principal place in public worship. The metrical psalms and hymns adopted by
4144 General Synod, as well as songs approved by consistory that faithfully reflect the
4145 teaching of the Scripture as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity, shall be sung in
4146 public worship.*”
- 4147 3.2 RSE Nov.14 2018 did not adopt the overture.
- 4148 3.3 Hamilton-Blessings objects to the considerations brought forward by RSE Nov. 2018 as
4149 follows:
- 4150 [1.] In coming to its decision, RSE–Nov.18 considered: “The overture fails to address
4151 the historical reasons for why the churches have made the choice of songs for
4152 worship a matter for the churches in common” (Consideration 2).
- 4153 a) RSE–Nov.18 underscores an absence of historical research into the rationale for
4154 status quo but does not indicate why this research is pertinent.
- 4155 b) RSE–Nov.18 erroneously concludes that the overture denies that the choice of
4156 songs for worship is a matter for the churches in common. The overture clearly
4157 affirms a role for General Synod but not in a way to exclude consistorial
4158 freedom to select songs as well.
- 4159 [2.] In coming to its decision, RSE–Nov.18 considered: “General synod determines
4160 what the churches sing with input from all the churches, after hearing the advice of
4161 experts and only after careful deliberation. The proposed amendment would allow
4162 local consistories to add songs to what the general synod decides but it would be
4163 difficult for each local consistory to find access to both a panel of experts and wide-
4164 spread consultation. Out of mutual concern for one another as churches of one

- 4165 federation, it is better to honour the time-tested practice of cooperating together as
4166 churches in this matter” (Consideration 3).
- 4167 a) RSE–Nov.18 alleges that it would be difficult for each local consistory to find
4168 access to a panel of expert and widespread consultation but it does not prove
4169 why this lack of access would necessarily hinder churches. To make this case, it
4170 would need to be demonstrated that such a policy is impeding the ministry
4171 and/or worship of those churches who have it, e.g., the United Reformed
4172 Churches in North America and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (see the
4173 Overture Consideration 7).
- 4174 b) RSE–Nov.18 alleges that it is better to honour the “time-tested practice of
4175 cooperating together as churches in this matter” but erroneously concludes that
4176 offering consistories freedom to choose some songs necessarily excludes the
4177 possibility of mutual concern or cooperation (see 4b below).
- 4178 [3.] In coming to its decision, RSE–Nov.18 considered: “A number of churches
4179 correctly point out the subjective nature of several observations and considerations
4180 in the overture. Assertions that the Genevan tunes are “too difficult to sing well in
4181 corporate worship,” that “there is a growing disconnect between the younger
4182 generations and the Genevan settings of the psalms,” that “the Genevan tunes are
4183 losing their cultural relevance,” that “Genevan exclusivity is becoming a hindrance
4184 to missional activity and church planting” and that there is a “lacuna of hymns” in
4185 the Book of Praise on certain events in Christ’s ministry, are all poorly supported.
4186 Several churches offer their own observations and experiences to assert the
4187 opposite. Such personal accounts and assertions (from either direction) in the end
4188 prove little, because they are simply subjective opinions” (Consideration 4).
- 4189 a) By reducing the grounds of the overture to something “subjective,” RSE–Nov.18
4190 failed to interact with the objective research mentioned in Observation 2 of the
4191 overture, the objective difficulty church plants and missional churches are
4192 having (see the Overture Observation 9) and the objective fact that fewer and
4193 fewer Book of Praise songs are sung at Canadian Reformed weddings and
4194 funerals (see the Overture Observation 5).
- 4195 b) Further, RSE–Nov.18 failed to recognize that the overture did not intend to argue
4196 that everyone was unhappy with the Genevan tunes but that especially in
4197 missional churches (and other churches surveyed) some found many of them
4198 difficult to sing. The overture, in other words, nowhere disputes that the
4199 Genevan tunes are loved by some; it contends that the Genevan tunes are
4200 difficult to sing by others. Further, the overture does not seek to remove the
4201 approved songs in the Book of Praise (in which case the expressed affection of
4202 some is relevant); it seeks the liberty for consistories to select songs beyond
4203 those synodically approved (for which case the discontent of others is relevant).
- 4204 c) RSE–Nov.18 claimed that the alleged “lacuna of hymns” in the Book of Praise
4205 on certain events in Christ’s ministry “is poorly supported” when the overture’s
4206 assertion is self-evident.
- 4207 There are precious few hymns about the event of Christ’s birth and even fewer
4208 about the event of Christ’s death (compared to those about his resurrection [7
4209 hymns] and ascension [7 hymns]). There’s only one hymn about the event of
4210 Christ’s birth (Hymn 21), besides a pre- natal hymn (Hymn 20) and a post-natal

- 4211 (Hymn 22) hymn. Only one of the hymns (Hymns 23, 26, 43, 57, 75) that
 4212 mentions the cross is actually about the event of Christ’s death (Hymn 26).
 4213 The Trinity Psalter Hymnal, by comparison, has numerous hymns about both
 4214 events. RSE– Nov.18 also failed to acknowledge the objective fact that some
 4215 churches in Classis Central Ontario, in order to be able to sing many songs about
 4216 Christ’s birth and death, must have Christmas and Good Friday programs instead
 4217 of worship services (see Overture Observation 6).
- 4218 [4.] In coming to its decision, RSE–Nov.18 considered: “The overture observes that
 4219 local consistories exercise more authority over which Bible translations they use
 4220 than in choosing songs to be sung in worship services. However, the churches have
 4221 long cooperated in carefully evaluating and recommending Bible translations (via
 4222 general synod)” (Consideration 5).
- 4223 a) RSE–Nov.18 mentions the incongruence but fails to acknowledge its relevance
 4224 and in fact tries to diminish its import by indicating that churches still cooperate
 4225 in the matter of Bible translations.
- 4226 b) RSE–Nov.18 fails to recognize that the adoption of the overture could create a
 4227 protocol that exactly parallels that of Bible translations—namely, mutual
 4228 cooperation in the areas of song evaluation and recommendation but consistorial
 4229 freedom in the area of approval.
- 4230 [5.] In coming to its decision, RSE–Nov.18 considered: “The scriptural injunction to be
 4231 ‘singing a new song’ (Rev. 14:3) does not prove that new songs need to be
 4232 continually added to existing collections” (Consideration 6).
- 4233 a) Here RSE–Nov.18 seems to contradict Scripture outright by claiming that the
 4234 command to sing a new song does not prove that new songs should be sung (in
 4235 church at least). This begs the question: how then can this injunction be possibly
 4236 obeyed in terms of worship songs sung in church if new songs are not
 4237 continually added? It seems as if RSE–Nov.18 is recommending, at best,
 4238 occasional obedience to Scripture.
- 4239 b) Here RSE–Nov.18 ignores the observation that our churches, becoming
 4240 increasingly intercultural, are increasingly less populated by Dutch immigrants
 4241 for whom the songs of the Book of Praise are especially well-loved (see
 4242 Overture observation 4).
- 4243 [6.] In coming to its decision, RSE–Nov.18 considered: “Although singing from the
 4244 same song book does help give expression to our unity as churches, the deeper
 4245 concern is, as Lincoln puts it, ‘that we maintain faithfulness and unity and
 4246 uniformity in doctrine’ (emphasis added).”
- 4247 Hamilton-Blessings argues:
- 4248 a) Here RSE–Nov.18 fails to prove how a prescribed songbook ensures faithfulness
 4249 while consistorial freedom to choose songs for worship does not. There are
 4250 many unfaithful churches still singing faithful hymns as there are faithful
 4251 churches whose eldership are free to choose songs for worship. Further, RSE–
 4252 Nov.18 neglects the precise wording of the proposed amendment—namely, that
 4253 the songs approved by consistory must “faithfully reflect the teaching of the
 4254 Scripture as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity.”
- 4255 b) Finally, RSE–18 fails to recognize that a better safeguard for sound theology is
 4256 located in office-bearers who have signed the form of Subscription.

NOT FINAL

- 4257 [7.] In coming to its decision, RSE–Nov.18 considered: “The overture asserts that
4258 “various churches have lost confidence in the process” of having new songs
4259 approved. Between 2001 and 2013 a number of new hymns were approved by
4260 general synod for testing in the churches and at the end of that process 19 new
4261 hymns were added. Although for some the process may be too slow, the church of
4262 Lincoln notes that for others the speed may be too fast” (Consideration 9).
- 4263 a) Here RSE–18 unwittingly provides an argument for consistorial freedom in the
4264 selection of worship songs. The current process is judged to be too fast by some
4265 and too slow by others.
4266 By providing consistories liberty in area enables each congregation could
4267 proceed as slowly or as quickly as one likes.
- 4268 3.4 Hamilton-Blessings concludes its appeal in the form of two questions.
- 4269 [1.] We therefore ask General Synod Edmonton-Immanuel (2019) to judge that
4270 Regional Synod East — November 14, 2018 erred in its decision to deny the
4271 overture from Classis Central Ontario— September 6–7, 2018 regarding amending
4272 Church Order Article 55.
- 4273 [2.] We ask, secondly, that General Synod Edmonton-Immanuel (2019) weigh the
4274 Observations and Considerations of the overture from Classis Central Ontario-
4275 September 6-7, 2018 and that General Synod "amend article 55 of the Church Order
4276 to read: The 150 psalms shall have the principal place in public worship. The
4277 metrical psalms and hymns adopted by General Synod, as well as songs approved
4278 by consistory that faithfully reflect the teaching of the Scripture as expressed in the
4279 Three Forms of Unity, shall be sung in public worship."
- 4280 3.5 Grand Rapids indicates its agreement with the decision of RSE Nov. 2018 and is of the
4281 opinion that many of the arguments Hamilton-Blessings has brought forward are
4282 subjective.
- 4283 3.6 Lincoln-Vineyard does not object to adding new hymns to the *Book of Praise*, but is of
4284 the opinion that Hamilton-Blessings does not prove this necessitates a change to Article
4285 55. To agree to their appeal would be a move “in the direction of congregationalism.”
4286 Mutual concern for each other should mean recognizing the need to work together so
4287 that all the churches would be better equipped to be “missional.” The letter from the
4288 Winnipeg-Redeemer church points in the same direction, while also suggesting that “the
4289 adoption of the *Trinity Hymnal* would allow for a much broader song selection, as
4290 Blessings appeals for and as the overture proposes, but with the greater benefit of being
4291 adopted for use in all the churches of the federation, thereby continuing to promote both
4292 unity of song and doctrine in our worship service singing.”
- 4293 3.7 Lincoln-Vineyard explains that some Psalms are not often sung can be because of the
4294 content rather than that the melodies are difficult.
- 4295 3.8 Lincoln-Vineyard notes that if the text and tune do not correspond to each other, the
4296 problem “is not addressed or solved by having the congregation sing songs approved by
4297 the consistories.” There is a protocol for changes.
- 4298 3.9 Lincoln-Vineyard deems the argument that consistories are free to choose Bible
4299 translations as irrelevant, since those have “been reviewed by the churches, and have
4300 been judged to be trustworthy translations. There is no such provision in this overture
4301 with respect to the songs which would be approved by local consistories.”

-
- 4302 3.10 Grand Rapids states that the claim that Article 55 undermines the Church Order is an
4303 assertion without proof. Lincoln-Vineyard elaborates, “Article 55 does not cede
4304 consistorial authority to General Synod. Hamilton-Blessings asserts that “the current
4305 practice in the Canadian Reformed Churches is not in line with the historic use of
4306 psalms in worship, or passages like Colossians 3:16,” but this misrepresents the
4307 provision of Article 55.
- 4308 3.11 Lincoln-Vineyard notes that frustrations with the process for changing the Book of
4309 Praise do not require a change in the Church Order and that the process and the pace of
4310 adopting additional hymns are driven by the churches themselves. The concern is not
4311 “to develop and preserve liturgical uniformity for its own sake.” The concern as
4312 reflected in Article 55 of the Church Order is to “maintain faithfulness and unity and
4313 uniformity in doctrine.” In this regard, Lincoln-Vineyard also notes that the preaching
4314 and teaching of a pastor are not only subject to the consistory but are “also subject to the
4315 judgment of the broader assemblies.”

4316 4. Considerations

- 4317 4.1 Hamilton-Blessings indicates that RSE-Nov. 18 should have shown why historical
4318 arguments for the status quo in regard to Article 55 are relevant. This shifts the burden
4319 of proof to the wrong party. Someone who wishes to argue for change should be the one
4320 to investigate the grounds for the current situation and show why change is needed.
- 4321 4.2 As Article 55 indicates, the churches have agreed to determine together what songs are
4322 to be used in the public worship services. Giving freedom to consistories to select songs
4323 next to the adopted Psalms and approved Hymns by route of an appeal instead of an
4324 overture does not give the churches sufficient time to process such a change according
4325 to Article 76, CO.
- 4326 4.3 Hamilton-Blessings assumes that the different approach taken by the URCNA and the
4327 OPC in this matter (greater freedom locally) is superior, using their assumption as proof
4328 for why Article 55 should be changed. However, they do not show how it might be
4329 superior.
- 4330 4.4 While Hamilton-Blessings states that “offering consistories freedom to choose some
4331 songs” would include “the possibility of mutual concern or cooperation,” they do not
4332 demonstrate that the current structure of collaboration as agreed to by common consent
4333 in Article 55 is inconsistent with Scripture.
- 4334 4.5 Changing Article 55 of the Church Order as suggested by Hamilton-Blessings opens the
4335 way for less balanced, less well-considered choices than would happen by a deliberative
4336 body representing the churches together.
- 4337 4.6 The argument based on the freedom of local consistories to choose between various
4338 Bible translations does not prove the point Hamilton-Blessings is trying to make, since
4339 Synods give prior attention to Bible translations.
- 4340 4.7 Hamilton-Blessings objects to Consideration 6 of RSE–Nov.18 that “The scriptural
4341 injunction to be ‘singing a new song’ (Rev. 14:3) does not prove that new songs need to
4342 be continually added to existing collections” (Consideration 6). Revelation 14:3 is not
4343 an “injunction,” but a description of the singing of the redeemed in heaven. New phases
4344 in redemptive history are reflected in Bible passages that refer to or that call for the
4345 singing of a “new song.” Although the Consideration of RSE-Nov. 18 could have been

- 4346 worded better, it cannot be sustained that RSE Nov. 2108 is recommending occasional
4347 obedience to Scripture, as Hamilton-Blessings suggests.
- 4348 4.8 Hamilton-Blessings contends that “RSE–Nov.18 fails to prove how a prescribed
4349 songbook ensures faithfulness while consistorial freedom to choose songs for worship
4350 does not.” As Hamilton-Blessings points out, neither of the two approaches can
4351 guarantee faithfulness. However, their argument leaves untouched the fact that a
4352 collective approach by a larger body such as synod can provide a safeguard against local
4353 decisions concerning which “new” songs to sing that may not be well thought out.
- 4354 4.9 The addition of only 19 new hymns between 2001 and 2013 as indicated by Hamilton-
4355 Blessings is indeed a pace that is not satisfactory for various churches in our federation.
4356 However, this does not by definition suggest a need to change the Church Order.
4357 Rather, thought could be given to creative ways to address the needs expressed by the
4358 churches within the parameters of Article 55, which until now has proven to work well
4359 for the churches.

4360 5. Recommendation

4361 That Synod deny the appeal from Hamilton-Blessings.

4362 **ADOPTED**

4363 **Article 131 – Closing Devotions**

4364 A few housekeeping matters were addressed.

4365 The Rev. Slaa led in evening devotions. He read Isaiah 40:27-31 and spoke some words of
4366 meditation. He had those present sing Hymn 13 and led in prayer remembering the Indonesian
4367 churches, the Dutch churches, and our singing during worship.

4368 Before adjourning the Rev. Yonson Dethan spoke some words of gratitude on behalf of the
4369 GGRC.

4370 *Synod adjourned until 9:00am the next day.*

4371 **Day 8 — Morning Session**

4372 **Thursday, May 23, 2019**

4373 **Article 132 – Reopening**

4374 Synod reopened in plenary session. The chairman read Psalm 119:49-56, spoke some words, led
4375 in prayer, and had those present sang Psalm 119:20,21,22. He noted all synod members were
4376 present. Some housekeeping matters were dealt with.

4377 **Article 133 – Adoption of Acts**

4378 Prepared articles of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

4379 **Article 134 – Appeal of C. Sloots re: RSE May 2018 art. 7**

4380 Not published in draft form on the web

4381 **Article 135 – Overtures – RSW 2018 regarding Trinity Psalter-Hymnal**

4382 Committee 4 presented draft 2 of a report on overtures from RSW 2018 regarding the *Trinity*
4383 *Psalter-Hymnal*. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for refinement.
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NOT FINAL

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4392 **Article 136 – RCNZ (Reformed Churches in New Zealand)**

4393 **1. Material**

4394 1.1 Report of the CRCA – RCNZ (8.2.2.1)

4395 **2. Observations**

4396 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 17) decided:

4397 [4.1] To continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Reformed
4398 Churches of New Zealand (RCNZ) under the adopted rules;

4399 [4.2] To express appreciation for ongoing cooperation with the RCNZ in the mission in
4400 Papua New Guinea (PNG);

4401 [4.3] To mandate the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) to send a
4402 delegation to the next RCNZ Synod in 2017.

4403 2.2 Rev. J. de Gelder attended the RCNZ Synod in 2017. He was able to lead three church
4404 polity conferences in the RCNZ.

4405 2.3 The RCNZ has downgraded their relationship with the Christian Reformed Church of
4406 Australia from sister church to ‘ecumenical fellowship’.

4407 2.4 The RCNZ do not have a federation seminary. Students of the RCNZ attend the
4408 Reformed Theological Seminary in Geelong, Australia, or Mid-America Reformed
4409 Seminary.

4410 2.5 The RCNZ have been diligent and consistent in their ecclesiastical relations, both in
4411 maintaining and promoting unity with true and faithful churches and in raising concerns
4412 with sister churches. Unless there is repentance, RCNZ intends to terminate their sister
4413 church relationship with the GKv at their next synod.

4414 2.6 The fraternal delegate, br. Leo DeVos, expressed deep gratitude on behalf of the RCNZ
4415 for the good cooperation with the Toronto-Bethel CanRC and the Armadale FRCA in
4416 mission work in PNG.

4417 **3. Considerations**

4418 3.1 The relationship between the RCNZ and CanRC has been of mutual benefit in the area
4419 of missions, inter-church relations, and support of vacant churches.

4420 **4. Recommendations**

4421 That Synod decide:

4422 4.1 To continue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship (EF) with the Reformed
4423 Churches of New Zealand (RCNZ) under the adopted rules;

4424 4.2 To mandate the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA):

4425 4.2.1 To express appreciation for the ongoing cooperation with the RCNZ in the mission
4426 in Papua New Guinea;

4427 4.2.2 To send a delegation to the RCNZ Synod at least once every three years;

4428 4.2.3 To submit its report to the churches 6 months prior to the convening of the next
4429 general synod.

4430

4431 **ADOPTED**

4432

NOT FINAL

4433 **Article 137 – CRCA & CCCNA Combined Report**

4434 Committee 3 presented draft 1 of a report on the request from the CRCA and CCCNA for a study
4435 mandate. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for refinement.

4436

4437 **Article 138 – Appeal of Spring Creek re: GS 2016 Art. 103 (Confidentiality)**

4438 Synod went into closed session.

4439 Committee 3 presented draft 1 of a report on the appeal from the Spring Creek CanRC regarding
4440 the confidentiality of GS 2016 Art. 103. The report was discussed. The committee took the report
4441 back for refinement.

4442 Synod returned to open session.

4443

4444 **Article 139 – URCNA (United Reformed Churches in North America)**

4445 **1. Material**

4446 1.1 Report of the Committee for Church Unity – Coordinators (8.2.4.1), Report of
4447 Subcommittee for Liturgical Forms and Confessions (8.2.4.2), Report of Subcommittee
4448 for Theological Education (8.2.4.3).

4449 1.2 Letters from the following CanRC: Winnipeg (8.3.3.1), Barrhead (8.3.3.2), Attercliffe
4450 (8.3.3.3), Lynden (8.3.3.4)

4451 **2. Observations**

4452 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 77) decided regarding the URCNA:

4453 [4.1] That the Coordinators for the Committee of Church Unity (CCU-C) have
4454 completed their mandate given by GS 2013;

4455 [4.2] To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) (Phase 2) with the United Reformed
4456 Churches in North America (URCNA) under the adopted rules;

4457 [4.3] To encourage the churches to continue to foster relationships with local URCNA
4458 churches. These activities could include, but are not limited to, pulpit exchanges,
4459 joint community and mission projects, and joint study opportunities;

4460 [4.4] To reappoint the CCU-C, adding two additional coordinators, and mandating them;

4461 [4.4.1] To seek ways to facilitate the work of building unity on the local levels, as well
4462 as visiting churches and classes of the URCNA, particularly in the United
4463 States;

4464 [4.4.2] To discuss with CERCU how to make progress towards federative unity should
4465 Synod Wyoming mandate CERCU to pursue this;

4466 [4.4.3] To monitor any developments in the URCNA with respect to “doctrinal
4467 affirmations.”

4468 **2.2 Activities of the Coordinators**

4469 2.2.1 Rev. W. den Hollander and Rev. C.J. VanderVelde attended a breakfast meeting
4470 consisting of Niagara-area CanRC and URCNA ministers in Jordan, Ontario to
4471 discuss the decisions of GS 2016 pertaining to unity efforts, as well as to discuss
4472 what was on the agenda of Synod Wyoming 2016 of the URCNA pertaining to
4473 unity efforts. They also attended a few days of Synod Wyoming 2016, in which
4474 Rev. VanderVelde brought fraternal greetings.

4475 2.2.2 The four coordinators appointed by GS 2016 met for the first time after Synod on
4476 Sept 9, 2016 for a meeting together at Binbrook, Ontario. They reviewed their

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- 4477 mandate as coordinators for the CCU, reviewed the decisions of Synod Wyoming
4478 2016 and how they impacted their work as coordinators, discussed how to deal
4479 with invitations from URCNA classes, to send a fraternal delegate to their classes.
- 4480 2.2.3 One or more of the coordinators attended a variety of meetings in the effort to
4481 promote unity. This included the following: Classis Southwestern Ontario Sept
4482 21, 2016, held at Sheffield, CERCU on Nov 9, 2016 held in conjunction with
4483 NAPARC, Synod Wheaton of the URCNA, June 11-15, 2018, breakfast meeting
4484 with Rev. John Bouwers and Rev. Steve Swets, both members of the URCNA’s
4485 CERCU, at their invitation, and Rev. den Hollander and Rev. W.B. Slomp were
4486 scheduled to meet with CERCU at the occasion of the upcoming NAPARC
4487 meeting at Philadelphia in Nov, 2018.
- 4488 2.2.4. Several coordinators had opportunity to fill the pulpit in URCNA churches far from
4489 home and even to serve in an interim ministry in a URCNA congregation.
- 4490 2.3 **Other Developments.** Classis Manitoba of the CanRC was held concurrently with
4491 Classis Central US of the URCNA on April 3-4 at Christ Reformed Church in Sioux
4492 Falls, South Dakota. Classis Niagara of the CanRC did the same with Classis Ontario-
4493 East of the URCNA at Wellandport United Reformed Church. Classis Ontario West of
4494 the CanRC was scheduled to do the same with Classis Southwestern Ontario of the
4495 URCNA, but this was postponed.
- 4496 2.4 **Synod Wyoming on Unity Matters.** There were three important overtures on the
4497 agenda of Synod Wyoming 2016 in relation to unity efforts. In one or another, these
4498 overtures would significantly slow down the unity process, if not halt it altogether for
4499 the foreseeable future. The first and third overtures were defeated. The second overture
4500 coming from Classis Pacific Northwest Oct 14-15, 2014 asked Synod “to declare that
4501 the Proposed Joint Church Order is unusable for that purpose.” Synod Wyoming did
4502 not declare it “unusable” – as the overture requested – but that Synod took the hard edge
4503 off the overture by deciding that it “is in need of further revision.” This is a
4504 disappointing conclusion and shows that we are far away from agreement on some
4505 church polity matters. The coordinators note that since Synod London 2010, every
4506 successive URCNA Synod has taken steam out of merger efforts: all committees were
4507 gradually dismissed, it was decided to work with the OPC on a common songbook
4508 rather than with the CanRC, a decision was made to “table indefinitely” any
4509 encouragement for CERCU to move toward proposing to enter Phase 3A, and it was
4510 decided to have a breather of at least six years before CERCU makes a Phase 3A
4511 recommendation. It further notes: it is hard not to be discouraged by all these
4512 developments. And yet the coordinators are thankful that the less formal aspects of the
4513 unity pursuit continued to take steps forward. CanRC-URCNA brothers and sisters are
4514 involved with one another and working together at the local level in many places as
4515 evident for example from coordinated youth events, Christian education, outreach
4516 efforts and concurrent Classes taking place. The process of getting to know one another
4517 better continues and there has been much mutual encouragement.
- 4518 2.5 **Synod Wyoming on Other Matters.** Synod Wyoming 2016 unanimously adopted the
4519 proposed hymns to be the hymn portion of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* and this means
4520 the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* was ready to be published. It was published in 2018. Synod
4521 Wyoming made a number of decisions with respect to contact with churches abroad.

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4522 They agreed to the recommendation of the Committee for Ecumenical Contact with
4523 Church Abroad (CECCA) and decided to remain in Ecumenical Contact (Phase One of
4524 ecumenical relations) with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN), to enter
4525 into Ecumenical Contact with the Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRI-NTT) and
4526 the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (PCEA). They also agreed to enter into
4527 Ecumenical Fellowship (EF) (Phase Two) with the Calvinistic Reformed Churches in
4528 Indonesia (GGRC-NTT), the Reformed Churches of South Africa (GKSA) and the Free
4529 Church of Scotland Continuing (FCC).

4530 2.6 **Synod Wheaton on Unity and Other Matters.** Synod Wheaton 2018 of the URCNA
4531 met concurrently with the general Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In a
4532 combined meeting, the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* was presented, received joyfully, and the
4533 churches of both the URCNA and OPC were encouraged to make use of it. Synod also
4534 adopted a number of recommendations submitted by CERCU. Among them, Synod
4535 “encouraged local churches and classes to take advantage of the opportunity presented
4536 with the Canadian Reformed Committee for Church Unity being supplemented with
4537 more members who can help answer questions, speak at local churches and at classes,
4538 and promote the unity of our churches.” Rev. W. Den Hollander and Rev. W.B. Slomp
4539 were received as fraternal delegates and the address by the latter was well received.
4540 Synod Wheaton entered into Ecumenical Contact (Phase 1) with the African
4541 Evangelical Presbyterian Church as well as entered into Ecumenical Fellowship (Phase
4542 2) with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales (EPCEW.) It also
4543 decided to discontinue the relationship of Ecumenical Contact with the Reformed
4544 Churches in the Netherlands due to their decision to open all offices in the church to
4545 women, regardless of many and repeated admonitions. The same Synod, at different
4546 times, also paid attention to the work of mission (both domestic and foreign) executed
4547 by the respective federations of churches. Synod Wheaton also adopted without dissent
4548 the “Affirmations Regarding Marriage” as a doctrinal affirmation. No other doctrinal
4549 affirmations were adopted since the CCU report to GS 2016.

4550 2.7 **Considerations from CCU-C.** CCU-C requests GS 2019 to consider the following
4551 with a view to disbanding the CCU – including the coordinators, the subcommittees and
4552 related committees – and handing the URCNA portfolio over to the Committee for
4553 Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA).

4554 2.7.1 Synod Wyoming 2016 decided to enter into a breather of at least six years, during
4555 which CERCU will not propose entering into Phase 3A with the CanRC leading to
4556 merger. In its report to Synod Wheaton 2018, CERCU wrote the following: “Given
4557 this commitment, our interaction as CERCU with our Canadian Reformed
4558 counterparts has been reduced at the committee level. As matters stand, it appears
4559 to us that a Phase Three, Step A recommendation would also be unlikely by Synod
4560 2022. Of course, the Lord’s ways are not our ways, but we believe much would
4561 have to change before we could be confident of our churches’ readiness and
4562 willingness to take the next step on the path toward church union with the
4563 Canadian Reformed Churches. While we do see it as our task to encourage and
4564 assist the churches in the pursuit of our ecumenical calling toward greater unity,
4565 we have also become convinced through our years of engagement together that
4566 such unity must finally be given by God in a way that is clear to all the churches.

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- 4567 As such, when the churches are ready and enthusiastic about moving forward, we
4568 believe such a recommendation should come from the churches” (*Provisional*
4569 *Agenda*, p.138). This means that there will be four more years of breather, and
4570 probably longer. It also noteworthy that the CERCU reports says that the initiative
4571 to move along in the unity process in a formal way will have to come from the
4572 local churches – which suggests that things are not likely to happen soon.
- 4573 2.7.2 All URCNA sub-committees created to work toward church unity have been
4574 disbanded for some time already, with the last committee disbanded by Synod
4575 Wyoming 2016. Our sub-committees and related committees have no counterparts
4576 with whom to discuss matters.
- 4577 2.7.3 In the past two years since Synod Wyoming 2016, we as coordinators for the CCU
4578 have been largely idle, in the sense that invitations to come to churches and
4579 Classes of the URCNA for presentations have not been forthcoming.
- 4580 2.7.4 Giving the URCNA portfolio to the CCCNA will take the pressure off the URCNA
4581 in the sense that whatever talks will take place within that context will not have the
4582 pressure of being conducted by a CanRC committee created to achieve organic
4583 unity. In the end, this may prove to be beneficial to progress in our relationship as
4584 churches. The CCCNA can deal with the URCNA as a federation with which we
4585 are in Ecclesiastical Fellowship, and can raise the matter of church unity, as the
4586 occasion warrants.
- 4587 2.7.5 The URCNA never had a special committee devoted to the unity efforts with the
4588 CanRC, while the CanRC did have a special committee devoted to the unity efforts
4589 with the URCNA. Handing the URCNA portfolio to the CCCNA levels the
4590 playing field.
- 4591 **2.8 Recommendations from CCU-C.** They recommend
- 4592 [1.] That Synod Edmonton-Immanuel 2019 decide that the Coordinators for the
4593 Committee for Church Unity have completed their mandate given by Synod
4594 Dunnville 2016 to seek ways to facilitate the work of building unity on the local
4595 level, as well as visiting churches and Classes of the URCNA, particularly in the
4596 United States.
- 4597 [2.] That Synod Edmonton-Immanuel 2019 decide that the Coordinators for the
4598 Committee for Church Unity have completed their mandate given by Synod
4599 Dunnville 2016 to discuss with CERCU how to make progress towards federative
4600 unity should Synod Wyoming mandate CERCU to pursue this.
- 4601 [3.] That Synod Edmonton-Immanuel 2019 decide that the Coordinators for the
4602 Committee for Church Unity have completed their mandate given by Synod
4603 Dunnville 2016 to monitor any developments in the URCNA with respect to
4604 ‘doctrinal affirmations.’
- 4605 [4.] That Synod Edmonton-Immanuel 2019 decide to disband the Committee for
4606 Church Unity (CCU) – including the coordinators, the sub-committees, and related
4607 committees (Church Order, Theological Education, Common Songbook, and
4608 Creeds and Forms) – and to hand the URCNA portfolio over to the Committee for
4609 Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA).
- 4610 [5.] That if Synod Edmonton-Immanuel 2019 decides to maintain the Committee for
4611 Church Unity (CCU), Synod note that, after having served on the committee for

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nine years, Rev. William den Hollander and Rev. Clarence VanderVelde do not wish to be reappointed to the committee. There is no end-of-term date for any CCU members, but nine years is the usual term for other committees and Rev. den Hollander and Rev. VanderVelde would like to have that applied to them.

2.9 Winnipeg-Redeemer supports the CCU recommendations and requests Synod to indicate strongly that this does not mean that the Canadian Reformed Churches are abandoning their desire to proceed toward full and complete unity with the URCNA. Barrhead and Attercliffe also support the CCU recommendations. Lynden supports the CCU recommendations and requests GS 2019 to respect the decision of Synod Wyoming 2016 and take a breather of 6 years from unity talks.

2.10 **Subcommittee for Liturgical Forms and Confessions** received the following mandate from Synod Dunnville: “to be available to review and compare the Creeds, Confessions, Forms and Prayers of the CanRC and the URCNA with a view to merger.” The subcommittee learned the following from the Acts of the URCNA Synods. 1. Synod Wyoming 2016 adopted amendments to the wording of the Ecumenical Creeds, the Three Forms of Unity, the Liturgical Forms, and Prayers, as proposed by its Liturgical Forms Committee and variously amended at Synod. 2. Synod decided to publish the liturgical forms in a stand-alone book, distinct from the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*. 3. The Agenda of Synod Wheaton 2018 of the URCNA calls the new stand alone book on the liturgical forms their “Forms and Prayers Book.” 4. Unlike earlier Synods, Synod Wyoming 2016 and Synod Wheaton 2018 opted not to appoint committee that could liaise with Canadian Reformed counterparts as our committee. The Subcommittee was not consulted by a Liturgical Forms Committee of the URCNA on the developments described in the first three points above. Their analysis is: our experience supports the commendation made by the Committee for Church Unity with the URCNA that Synod Edmonton not appoint new committees such as theirs. And their recommendation is for Synod Edmonton not to appoint a subcommittee for Liturgical Forms and Confessions.

2.11 **Subcommittee for Theological Education** received the following mandate from GS2019: “To mandate the CCU-STE to re-examine and discuss with our brothers in the URCNA the possibilities of operating at least one theological seminary by and for the churches, to ensure that such a seminary is accountable to and properly governed by the churches. Further, that the committee promote adequate funding for such an institution(s) by means of assessment per communicant member.” Since neither Synod Wyoming 2016 nor Synod Wheaton 2018 of the URCNA reappointed a corresponding subcommittee, they did not convene, as they had no conversation partners. Therefore they report that no progress toward church unity has been made by this sub-committee.

3. Considerations

3.1 Synod agrees with the considerations provided by the CCU-C as provided above in observation 2.7. It does not make sense to reappoint coordinators for unity and subcommittees when the URCNA is taking a “breather” from these matters.

3.2. Synod agrees with the analysis provided by the Subcommittee for Liturgical Forms and Confessions as provided above in observation 2.10. The same applies to the Subcommittee for Theological Education.

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4656 3.3. Synod wishes to express that the CanRC remain committed to the pursuit of unity with
4657 the United Reformed Churches and are looking forward to reengaging in this discussion
4658 when the URCNA is ready.

4659 **4. Recommendations**

4660 That Synod decide:

- 4661 4.1 The Coordinators for the Committee for Church Unity have completed their mandate
4662 given by Synod Dunnville 2016 to seek ways to facilitate the work of building unity on
4663 the local level, as well as visiting churches and Classes of the URCNA, particularly in
4664 the United States.
- 4665 4.2 The Coordinators for the Committee for Church Unity have completed their mandate
4666 given by Synod Dunnville 2016 to discuss with CERCU how to make progress toward
4667 federative unity should Synod Wyoming mandate CERCU to pursue this.
- 4668 4.3 The Coordinators for the Committee for Church Unity have completed their mandate
4669 given by Synod Dunnville 2016 to monitor any developments in the URCNA with
4670 respect to ‘doctrinal affirmations.’
- 4671 4.4 To not reappoint the Committee for Church Unity (CCU – including the coordinators,
4672 the sub-committees, and related committees (Church Order, Theological Education,
4673 Common Songbook, and Creeds and Forms).
- 4674 4.5 To thank the coordinators and members of the various subcommittees for their work.
- 4675 4.6 To continue Ecclesiastical fellowship (phase 2) with the United Reformed Churches in
4676 North America under the adopted rules;
- 4677 4.7 To mandate the Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CCCNA):
- 4678 4.7.1 To send a delegation to the synods of the URCNA;
- 4679 4.7.2 To encourage the churches to continue to foster relationships with local URCNA
4680 churches. These activities could include, but are not limited to, pulpit exchanges,
4681 joint community and mission projects, and study opportunities.
- 4682 4.7.3 To submit its report to the churches 5 months prior to the convening of the next
4683 general synod.

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4685 **ADOPTED**

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4687 *Synod adjourned until 2:00pm for committee work.*

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4689 **Day 8 — Afternoon Session**
4690 **Thursday, May 22, 2019**

4691 **Article 140 – Reopening**

4692 Synod reopened in open plenary session. The chairman had the meeting sing Hymn 77. He noted
4693 all synod members were present. A housekeeping matter was dealt with.

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4695 **Article 141 – Appeal of C. Sloots re: RSE May 2018 art. 7 - Confidential**
4696

NOT FINAL

4697 **Article 142 – TPH overture**

4698 **1. Material**

- 4699 1.1 Letter from RSW Nov 2018 re:overtures (8.4.1.1), including: Overture Classis Pacific
4700 East TPH - originating in Aldergrove CanRC (8.4.1); Overture Classis Manitoba TPH -
4701 originating in Denver ARC (8.4.2). RSW includes letters from: Nooksack Valley ARC
4702 (8.4.1.2), Chilliwack CanRC (8.4.1.4), Lynden ARC (8.4.1.5).
- 4703 1.2 The following churches interacted with the overture: Dunnville CanRC (8.5.2), Elora
4704 CanRC (8.5.3), Fergus-North CanRC (8.5.4), Guelph-Living Word CanRC (8.5.5),
4705 Ottawa-Jubilee CanRC (8.5.6), Carman-West CanRC (8.5.7), Burlington-Ebenezer
4706 CanRC (8.5.8), Ancaster CanRC (8.5.9), Barrhead CanRC (8.5.12), Hamilton
4707 Cornerstone CanRC (8.5.13), Grand Rapids ARC (8.5.14), Toronto-Bethel CanRC
4708 (8.5.15), Calgary CanRC (8.5.16), Grassie-Covenant CanRC (8.5.17), Burlington-
4709 Fellowship CanRC (8.5.18), Glanbrook-Trinity CanRC (8.5.19), Lynden ARC (8.5.20),
4710 Orangeville CanRC (8.5.21), Neerlandia CanRC (8.5.22), Fergus-Maranatha CanRC
4711 (8.5.24), St. Albert CanRC (8.5.25), Edmonton-Immanuel (8.5.26).

4712 **2. Observations**

- 4713 2.1 RSW decided
- 4714 2.1.1 To overture GS 2019 (Edmonton-Immanuel) to approve, in addition to the adopted
4715 Book of Praise, the Psalms and Hymns of the Trinity Psalter Hymnal for use in
4716 public worship as per CO Article 55.
- 4717 2.1.2 To submit the texts of both overtures and all letters received by RSW to GS 2019
4718 for its consideration.
- 4719 2.1.3 To submit matters of interaction with the overtures and direction on the topic to
4720 GS 2019 for due consideration.
- 4721 2.2 Overture Classis Pacific East submitted to GS 2019 by RSW 2018:
4722 We recommend that Synod Edmonton 2019 approve the Psalms and Hymns of the
4723 Trinity Psalter Hymnal as adopted by the United Reformed Churches in North
4724 America and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church for use in public worship as per
4725 Article 55 of the Church Order.
- 4726 Grounds:
- 4727 2.2.1 In regard to the Psalm section of our Book of Praise: There is a measure of
4728 discontent in our congregations concerning the exclusive use of Genevan
4729 melodies in the singing of the Psalms. This discontent is expressed in home
4730 visits made by elders, in letters to Council, in discussions during group Bible
4731 Study and also in many informal settings. Discontent seems to revolve
4732 around the following points:
- 4733 (i) While the virtues of our current Psalm tunes are widely appreciated,
4734 church members desire a greater variety of musical style;
- 4735 (ii) Exclusive use of melodies originating from one short period of
4736 church history and from one Reformed community seems inherently
4737 parochial; we should aspire to be more catholic in our expressions of
4738 praise to the God of the whole world. Singing melodies that are
4739 better known in the broader Christian world would help to guard us
4740 against unnecessary isolation.

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- 4741 (iii) Our churches frequently attract guests and new members. We are
4742 also increasingly engaged in the work of church planting. Both
4743 Christians who are being attracted to the Reformed faith as well as
4744 new converts often express difficulty in appreciating and singing the
4745 Psalms set to Genevan melodies. If a person has not been raised with
4746 these tunes, it can be difficult to learn to sing them let alone truly
4747 love them. For this reason, it would be a good thing to use in
4748 worship some of the Psalm-settings and melodies which are more
4749 broadly familiar in the Christian world.
- 4750 2.2.2 In regard to the Hymn section of our Book of Praise:
- 4751 (a) Having more common ground with our English-speaking sister
4752 churches in regard to hymnology, would serve to express and
4753 nurture church unity.
- 4754 (b) Having a broader selection of familiar hymns and spiritual songs
4755 would benefit us as we seek to be churches in which new Christians
4756 and 'inquirers' can find a church home.
- 4757 (c) As can be seen from various events at which believers from our
4758 churches gather, people find joy in singing hymns and spiritual
4759 songs which are not currently found in our Book of Praise. This is
4760 evident at funeral services, weddings and family gatherings as well
4761 as school events. It is not hard to sense a genuine desire in the hearts
4762 of many to sing some of these hymns and songs in public worship.
- 4763 (d) In the past, various churches in our federation have submitted fairly
4764 large selections of hymns for the consideration of the Standing
4765 Committee for the Book of Praise (SCBP). This shows that there is a
4766 desire for singing more than the current selection of hymns in our
4767 Book of Praise.
- 4768 (e) Synod Dunnville 2016 renewed the mandate of the SCBP to receive
4769 suggestions for more hymns for the hymn section of the Book of
4770 Praise (Article 122).
- 4771 2.2.3. In regard to the process of change:
- 4772 (a) In the past, changes to the Book of Praise happened at a glacial pace.
4773 Church members and church councils find the process of seeking
4774 change very daunting. In the past, some of our congregations have
4775 sent annotated lists of carefully selected hymns to the SCBP. Not
4776 many of these have become part of our current edition of the Book
4777 of Praise. At times, worthwhile suggestions seemingly get lost at the
4778 level of the SCBP. This causes frustration especially when no
4779 reasons are offered for not accepting recommendations.
- 4780 (b) Instead of mandating our SCBP to expand the hymn section of the
4781 Book of Praise, a process which will undoubtedly take a number of
4782 years, we have the option of availing ourselves of the work of our
4783 sister churches, the United Reformed Churches of North America
4784 and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

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- 4785 (i) In regard to the URCNA, we can point to a strong history of
4786 interaction between our respective federations in matters of
4787 liturgy. Until recently, our two church federations were
4788 working together on a new Psalter. This indicates that the
4789 CanRC were open at that time to significant changes to the
4790 Book of Praise. While our partnership with the URCNA in
4791 working to a new song book ultimately stalled (though not
4792 because of any reluctance on the part of our churches), the
4793 URCNA went on to work with the OPC to produce a new
4794 Psalter. This work was recently completed when the Trinity
4795 Psalter Hymnal (2017) was approved by the General
4796 Assembly of the OPC (2014, 2016) and the Synods of the
4797 URCNA (2014, 2016). It is expected that this new Psalter
4798 Hymnal will be published in early 2018.
- 4799 (ii) We have confidence that our Reformed brothers and sisters in
4800 the URCNA and the OPC have worked with good principles
4801 in putting together the Trinity Psalter Hymnal. In the process
4802 of evaluating and selecting songs for this new project, they
4803 were guided by the clear and sound 'Principles and
4804 Guidelines' adopted by Synod Calgary 2004 of the URCNA
4805 (see Appendix 1). The songs in the new Trinity Psalter
4806 Hymnal have been approved by Synods of the URCNA (2014
4807 and 2016) as well as by the General Assemblies of the OPC
4808 (2014, 2016). If we have confidence in our sister churches,
4809 such approval should carry much weight for us.
- 4810 (iii) The new Trinity Psalter Hymnal contains the full text of each
4811 Biblical Psalm in at least one primary version; in addition,
4812 there are secondary selections of some Psalms that contain a
4813 partial Psalm text (see the 'URCNA Psalter Hymnal
4814 Committee Report of April 2011' meeting available at the
4815 following website:
4816 <https://www.urnca.org/1651/custom/24189>). The Psalm
4817 settings come from a variety of traditions and include some
4818 contemporary versions.
- 4819 c) Adopting our proposal would not require any change in Article 55 of
4820 the Church Order. Furthermore, should our proposal be accepted,
4821 implementation of this decision would be a matter decided upon by
4822 each consistory.

4823 2.3 Overture Classis Manitoba submitted to GS 2019 by RSW 2018:

4824 To approve the Psalms and Hymns of the Trinity Psalter Hymnal (TPH) as adopted by
4825 the United Reformed Churches in North America (URC) and the Orthodox Presbyterian
4826 Church (OPC) for use in public worship as per Article 55 of the Church Order in
4827 addition to the Book of Praise. The purpose of this request is not to replace the Book of
4828 Praise but to enhance the unity in worship between our sister churches in North America
4829 by allowing the churches to also sing from the TPH.

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- 4830 The overture presents the following reasons:
- 4831 2.3.1 The promotion of uniformity and unity among the sister churches of Jesus Christ
- 4832 in North America. The use of the TPH would not only benefit the EARC
- 4833 particularly when we meet with sister churches for public worship on Days of
- 4834 Commemoration (Art 53 of the Church Order) but more broadly in view of the
- 4835 CanRC's close and regular contact with the URC and OPC, using the TPH may
- 4836 enhance uniformity in public worship.
- 4837 2.3.2 It could facilitate unity between the CanRC and URC in particular and other
- 4838 faithful churches in North America in general, along the lines of Christ's prayer in
- 4839 John 17. As sister churches and as Christians in North America we will need each
- 4840 other more and more in the environment we live in. The EARC in Denver is
- 4841 especially conscious of this need because of our unique history (more than 60% of
- 4842 the congregation do not have a CanRC background) and because of our location (a
- 4843 growing interdependency with the URC and OPC congregations in our area).
- 4844 2.3.3 The lack of familiar faithful hymns. As mentioned above, the membership of
- 4845 Emmanuel Church is gathered from diverse backgrounds. Those coming from
- 4846 other Christian traditions have had to overcome various challenges in order to join
- 4847 the EARC, but one challenge stands out: that they would seldom sing familiar
- 4848 Christian hymns in public worship and that most congregational singing would
- 4849 take considerable effort for some time. We believe that the use of the TPH would
- 4850 alleviate some of this challenge and provide new opportunities for outreach and
- 4851 evangelism.
- 4852 2.3.4 The challenge of some of the Genevan tunes. Again, especially noted by those
- 4853 from other Christian musical traditions, even after years of singing from the Book
- 4854 of Praise, some tunes and some note intervals remain difficult. The more
- 4855 demanding the tune, the more one's attention is drawn away from the words. The
- 4856 TPH offers alternative tunes for many of the Psalms.
- 4857 2.3.5 In light of the fact that our sister churches, the OPC and URC, have published the
- 4858 new Trinity Psalter Hymnal after a rigorous test of the psalms and hymns and
- 4859 music, we request that we apply their work to our benefit. We request that Classis
- 4860 propose to RSW to propose to Synod 2019 to approve the Trinity Psalter Hymnal
- 4861 for use in worship as per Art 55 of the Church Order.
- 4862 2.4 The Acts of RSW 2018 submitted to GS 2019 adds the following actions and
- 4863 considerations:
- 4864 2.4.1 RSW adopted and modified the overtures and interacted with the other materials in
- 4865 the following manner to give direction on this topic:
- 4866 2.4.2 Those letters which were submitted as appeals were received as letters of the
- 4867 churches interacting with the overtures.
- 4868 2.4.3 The overtures demonstrate a commonality in speaking about the Trinity Psalter-
- 4869 Hymnal (TPH) and its merits in addition to the Book of Praise (BoP).
- 4870 2.4.4 The purpose is not to replace the BoP but to enhance the unity in worship between
- 4871 us as sister churches in North America by allowing the churches to also sing from
- 4872 the TPH.
- 4873 2.4.5 The language of the overtures and the other materials received by RSW
- 4874 demonstrates that this is a topic that lives in our churches. In addition, the material

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- 4875 shows that some of the arguments either supporting or opposing these overtures
4876 are subjective.
- 4877 2.4.6 There is great value in maintaining the principle of a federative approach to
4878 corporate worship. While not wanting to make exceptions to the rule, RSW
4879 acknowledges the uniqueness of certain congregations in their circumstances.
- 4880 2.4.7 The SCBP's (Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise)
4881 evaluation process of suggestions for new hymns from the churches is perceived as
4882 not sufficiently responsive to what the churches through decisions of general
4883 synods have requested. It is debatable whether the SCBP is the appropriate forum
4884 to evaluate the TPH.
- 4885 2.4.8 In order to have the churches appreciate the quality of the TPH, the churches
4886 should have ample opportunity to interact meaningfully with its contents, as has
4887 happened in the past with the introduction of the Augment.
- 4888 2.5 Letters forwarded to GS 2019 by RSW and letters interacting with the overture
4889 submitted to GS 2019 from the churches:
- 4890 2.5.1 The Nooksack ARC states that the RSW overture proposes to bypass the work of
4891 the SCBP which previous synods have created precisely for the work of creating
4892 and establishing the music which the church sings. The 'grounds' used in the
4893 overture and the overture's reference to the 'glacial pace' of the SCBP are based on
4894 subjective and anecdotal arguments. The overture ignores the fact that Synod
4895 Chatham 2004 capped the number of hymns to be included in the Book of Praise
4896 (BoP) at 100 in an effort to continue to retain an acceptable balance between the
4897 number of Psalms and Hymns. Adoption of more than 400 hymns with such little
4898 reflection and deliberation is not in keeping with the spirit of decisions of Synod
4899 1968, 1971, 2004. Subjective arguments are used to suggest that the Genevan
4900 melodies of the BoP are a hindrance to visitors to the worship services. Nooksack
4901 does not believe that the CanRC have unnecessarily 'isolated' themselves from the
4902 rest of the Reformed and Presbyterian world, that we 'get in line' with other
4903 Reformed and Presbyterian churches when it comes to our music tradition in
4904 worship, and that adopting the TPH would formalize many of the songs already
4905 being sung at family gatherings, informal congregational meetings, or professional
4906 meetings such as teacher's conventions, where a wide variety of hymns are often
4907 used. Nooksack asks the question: 'is it actually true that the music often
4908 employed at CanRC informal meetings will in fact be the music found in the new
4909 Trinity Psalter Hymnal? . . . Over the years, the OPC and the publishers of the
4910 Trinity Hymnal have been removing overtly Arminian and otherwise non-
4911 Reformed hymns from this hymnal. It has gone through several revisions, each
4912 shorter than the one previous to it. Finally the United Reformed Churches and the
4913 OPC have created this psalter-hymnal, still with many more hymns than in the
4914 BoP. We look for expansion of our music selection while they have gone through
4915 editions of contraction. It is ironic. . . Ultimately, we fear the loss of Psalm
4916 singing....'
- 4917 2.5.2 The Chilliwack CanRC reminds that Synod Chatham 2004 limited the number of
4918 hymns to 100. The TPH far exceeds this limit. Adopting this overture would
4919 bypass a 'long standing and accepted process by the churches for approving Psalms

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4920 and Hymns for use in the worship services.' 'The overture from Aldergrove does
4921 not interact with any of the previous Synod decisions regarding this process or
4922 why we have a common Book of Praise that is to be used by all of the Canadian
4923 Reformed Churches.' Chilliwack disagrees that discontentment among the
4924 members is sufficient grounds for support of the overture as this is a subjective
4925 observation. Chilliwack disagrees with the grounds that suggest adopting the TPH
4926 will nurture church unity. They suggest that the opposite is true, as some churches
4927 will decide to use the TPH, while others will decide to continue using the BoP, this
4928 will cause unrest within the churches. Then they ask the question: 'Should we be
4929 pursuing further unity with sister churches at the expense of unity within our own
4930 federation?' 'The proposal states as grounds that people find joy in singing hymns
4931 and spiritual songs which are not currently found in our Book of Praise. Chilliwack
4932 questions whether a decision should be made based on people's feelings? Can we
4933 modify anything in our worship services simply because people find joy in it?'
4934 'The proposal states as grounds that changes to the Book of Praise happen at a
4935 glacial pace and that this causes frustration. Once again, these grounds are merely
4936 subjective. Chilliwack appreciates the careful and methodical approach taken by
4937 the SCBP and past synods when making changes to the Book of Praise'
4938 'Chilliwack questions whether we can simply adopt decisions of our sister
4939 churches because we have confidence in them' Chilliwack believes that 'using
4940 such a large Psalter Hymnal will cause a lack of familiarity with the songs,
4941 especially for the young children.'

4942 2.5.3 The Lynden ARC (8.4.2 and 8.5.21) requests that GS 2019 'appoint a committee
4943 with the specific mandate to complete an in-depth review of' the TPH, studying
4944 'the arguments of the churches that are both for and against' and provide a report
4945 and recommendations for GS 2022. Lynden does not believe the overture 'follows
4946 an orderly process for evaluating and adopting new music for use in the churches.'
4947 Since GS 2016 mandated the SCBP to monitor the development and give a sense
4948 of the TPH, 'the overture interferes with the process that has already been initiated
4949 for evaluation' of the TPH. Lynden further draws attention to the report of the
4950 SCBP to GS 2019 in which, according to Lynden, the SCBP 'expressed concerns
4951 that should be investigated further'. In the letter of Lynden to RSW, forwarded by
4952 RSW to GS 2019, Lynden draws attention to our 'history of carefully regulating
4953 the ratio of hymns to Psalms in our songbook. It would be imprudent to abruptly
4954 break this precedent with the adoption of a whole new songbook.'

4955 2.5.4 The Dunnville CanRC requests that GS 2019 proceed with caution and, referring
4956 to SCBP report 7.2, asks whether it would not be hasty to approve hymns that
4957 could be argued to have questionable theology or contain individualism and
4958 sentimentality. Dunnville urges GS 2019 to approve for public worship only
4959 material that has been analyzed and can be conclusively stated to be faithful to
4960 Scripture.

4961 2.5.5 The Elora CanRC states that singing in the worship is a very important part of how
4962 we worship, and any changes made to the choice of songs in corporate worship
4963 must be done carefully. If there is a strong desire as federation to add the TPH,
4964 then we should take due diligence and review the TPH. We therefore recommend

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- 4965 that synod form a committee to review the TPH and report their findings and
4966 recommendations to GS 2022.
- 4967 2.5.6 The Fergus-North CanRC notes that GS 2016 mandated the SCBP ‘To monitor the
4968 development of a joint OPC-URCNA songbook and when possible to provide the
4969 churches with a sense of this new song book’s composition, quality, and
4970 theological accuracy.’ Any review, regardless of the committee responsible,
4971 should be given specific timelines. Adoption of the TPH could cement federation
4972 relationships dramatically. However this should not trump theological accuracy
4973 and a personal ownership of the material used in one’s service to our Lord. The
4974 Genevan tunes are not equal to Scripture and should not be treated as such.
4975 Frustration with tunes is a reality in our churches, the same feelings would or
4976 could be voiced about the TPH. To rush into an approval of an alternative
4977 collection of songs based on the acceptance of our sister churches seems
4978 irresponsible. Adopting the TPH would mean immediate introduction of hundreds
4979 of versifications of the psalms and over 400 hymns. The path forward should
4980 include a full review by a committee separate from the SCBP.
- 4981 2.5.7 The Guelph-Living Word CanRC has a two-fold concern regarding the RSW
4982 recommendation: it seems rushed and does not allow the local churches to make an
4983 informed decision and does not give enough time to consider the implications this
4984 kind of change has for our federative unity as well as for our schools. Guelph
4985 states that we need to be on guard to the onslaught of the world and the devil and
4986 do well to consider things that may, in fact, promote disunity and fragmentation
4987 within our federation. Guelph asks GS 2019 to make sure that we consider
4988 carefully the impact a decision would have on our local congregation as well as the
4989 bond of fellowship we enjoy within our federation.
- 4990 2.5.8 The Ottawa-Jubilee CanRC expresses support for the RSW overture to approve, in
4991 addition to the adopted BoP, the TPH for use in public worship. They note that
4992 GS 1958 appointed deputies to prepare an English psalter together with
4993 appropriate hymns, using the CRC Psalter Hymnal, and possibly other Psalters.
4994 (Acts 1958, Art. 172 1.). The GS 1962 mandate states that deputies do not have to
4995 confine themselves to Mr. Dewey Westra’s Psalms or to the Genevan tunes. (Acts
4996 1962 Art.21 p.26). GS 1965 authorized the use of other melodies and authorized
4997 that by way of exception two different rhymes of the same Psalm (one on a
4998 genevan tune, one on a different tune). GS 1968 mandates include - To give
4999 preference to the Genevan tunes as melodies for the rhymed Psalms, with the
5000 understanding: 1. That identical tunes for different Psalms be avoided as much as
5001 possible. 2 that those tunes which are hard to sing be replaced by other melodies
5002 of . . . priceless of value (Acts 1968 English 88. Pg 30). A godly desire to sing a
5003 broader variety Christian hymns in the worship services is found in our local
5004 church. GS 2001 mandated the SCBP to increase the hymnary to include up to 100
5005 hymns. 18 years later we have increased the selection by 19 hymns and are still 15
5006 short of a hundred. Suggested is ‘please bring us back to the original vision of our
5007 churches, strengthen our federation and don’t harness us to a SCBP process that is
5008 not working’.

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- 5009 2.5.9 The Carman-West CanRC is of the opinion that allowing the use of the TPH as a
5010 whole would add too many psalms and hymns for use in our churches. Allowing
5011 this could come at the expense of our psalms, which we believe should be avoided.
5012 Additional hymns could be added to our present BOP and some possibly removed
5013 to allow for a more varied selection of better known songs, but that total number
5014 should be restricted. It is in the best interest of the churches that either the SCBP
5015 or another appointed committee should work on adding to the hymn section in our
5016 BoP. Attention should especially be paid to the songs presently in the TPH,
5017 particularly on those known in the broader Christian community. Carman-West
5018 states that we should maintain a common song book to be used within our
5019 federation.
- 5020 2.5.10 The Burlington-Ebenezer CanRC supports the decision of RSW for the reasons
5021 stated in the overtures from RSW 2018 as well as for the reasons stated in their
5022 own decision of April 16, 2018 (which Ebenezer appended) and in the letter which
5023 Ebenezer sent to the SCBP (also appended to Ebenezer’s letter to GS 2019).
5024 Among others, the following can be gleaned from Ebenezer’s writings: Ebenezer
5025 expresses confidence in the work of the OPC and URCNA and that since they are
5026 our sister churches, the ‘prevailing assumption must be that the songs [of the TPH]
5027 are acceptable for use in the worship service and theologically accurate.’ Ebenezer
5028 notes that the conviction that the singing of psalms should have priority in the
5029 worship service ‘is given expression, not in the composition of the psalter hymnal,
5030 but in the choosing of songs by the local minister and consistory.’ Ebenezer also
5031 writes: ‘The TPH has a larger selection of tunes, and many of them are more
5032 familiar and easier to sing and would contribute to an increase in the use of psalms
5033 in the worship service.’
- 5034 2.5.11 The Ancaster CanRC does not support the overture: Immediate adoption of the
5035 overture would go against our practice of careful review by the churches and
5036 bypasses the mandate given to the SCBP. Ancaster draws attention to the cautions
5037 about the TPH included in the report from the SCBP to GS 2019. Ancaster
5038 recommends denying the overture, appoint a separate committee to give a
5039 thorough examination of the TPH, and that committee would report its finding to
5040 the churches in a timely way before GS 2022.
- 5041 2.5.12 The Barrhead CanRC believes that ‘it is premature to give approval to the TPH
5042 prior to undertaking a comprehensive review which provides the churches with a
5043 good sense of the TPH.’ Barrhead does express ‘support for a thorough
5044 investigation’ of the TPH and advises to appoint a new committee which should
5045 ‘take into account the cursory review made by the SCBP’ while correlating and
5046 collaborating with the SCBP. Barrhead does express reservation about GS 2019
5047 granting the request of the SCBP that the SCBP not be involved in a review of the
5048 TPH.
- 5049 2.5.13 The Hamilton-Cornerstone CanRC suggests that instead of simply adopting the
5050 TPH it would be better to address the topic of adding more well-known hymns and
5051 psalms with alternate and well-known melodies by preparing an augment by the
5052 fall of 2020 for use in the worship services of the churches for a period of testing.
5053 Hamilton-Cornerstone observes that the URCNA and OPC have only recently

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5054 adopted the TPH to meet their specific needs, that we have different needs than
5055 they do because we already have a songbook with updated language in the psalm
5056 section, and so we are able to instruct the SCBP to add to the Book of Praise those
5057 hymns and psalms of alternate melodies which our churches specifically request.

5058 2.5.14 The Grand Rapids ARC does not support the overture at this time because they
5059 believe that it is necessary to act more slowly and cautiously, to mandate the SCBP
5060 to give a full evaluation of the TPH, and to give the churches an opportunity to see
5061 and evaluate the TPH. Grand Rapids argues that the reasons for denying a similar
5062 overture in RSE 2017 remain valid. They further point out that the federation is
5063 responsible to evaluate its own songbook. Since the URCNA and OPC do not
5064 have the equivalent of our Article 55 CO, it is necessary to wait longer before we
5065 can see how widely accepted and used it is within those federations. Since
5066 dissatisfaction with the BoP is the motivation for adopting the TPH, it could cause
5067 the hasty demise of modal Genevan tunes that have been in use in the churches for
5068 many centuries.

5069 2.5.15 The Toronto-Bethel CanRC supports the overture in all its parts but does not agree
5070 that it is necessary for the churches to interact with the TPH as happened in the
5071 past with the introduction of the Augment. They observe that after reviewing the
5072 TPH the SCBP 'did not recommend not adding the TPH'. Toronto states that the
5073 TPH does not need review by the CanRC because the review has already done by
5074 the OPC and URCNA and trusting their work shows and promotes unity. Toronto
5075 favors that the overture allows for flexibility concerning how the local churches
5076 decide to use the TPH. Many of the songs found in the TPH are already used at
5077 combined CanRC and URCNA events as well as weddings and funerals. All the
5078 churches in the federation are presently dealing with requests concerning the use of
5079 the TPH. A limited selection of songs for worship has led some congregations to
5080 replace the worship services on Christmas and Good Friday with a program to
5081 justify the use of songs outside the Book of Praise. The churches and synods must
5082 recognize and accept that although a matter may be considered as a matter for
5083 consideration by the churches in common, upon deliberation and consideration, it
5084 is possible that once decided by the churches when gathering in synods, uniform
5085 policy and practice do not necessarily follow if not mandated by Scripture or
5086 confession. Fear of singing different songs in different local congregations should
5087 not be a factor. GS 2016 (Article 87, Consideration 4.8) is cited; that 'Church
5088 Order Article 30 does not say that a matter for the churches in common is one in
5089 which uniformity of practice is demanded'.

5090 2.5.16 The Calgary CanRC recommends to not adopt the TPH. Calgary expresses
5091 concern that the overture does not address that GS 2004 limited the number of
5092 hymns to 100, which decision sought to maintain the centrality of Psalm singing in
5093 the churches. Calgary points out that the cursory evaluation of the SCBP 'found
5094 that some of the hymns [of the TPH] did not meet the criteria previously
5095 established by the churches.' Calgary expects that the promotion of the TPH in
5096 fostering unity with sister churches 'would be at the expense of unity within our
5097 own federation as some congregations choose to use the TPH and some do not.'

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- 5098 2.5.17 The Grassie-Covenant CanRC is concerned about ‘unintended consequences’ of
5099 the overture. Grassie states: ‘this overture side steps any due procedure for
5100 approving songs for use in the worship service’; ‘care should be taken to evaluate
5101 this publication’; ‘the current process ... is inadequate for this kind of proposal’.
5102 Grassie agrees with the SCBP that if GS 2019 would like a more in-depth
5103 evaluation of the TPH, ‘such a review be done by another committee’ which would
5104 be an ad hoc committee; this would prevent the SCBP from receiving conflicting
5105 mandates. ‘We would ask Synod to consider this overture carefully and perhaps
5106 conduct a thorough evaluation of the TPH.’
- 5107 2.5.18 The Burlington-Fellowship CanRC recommends (‘we strongly encourage’) that
5108 GS 2019 adopt the overture. Adopting use of the TPH ‘is an affirmative
5109 expression’ of unity with the URCNA and ‘it is unreasonable for the CanRC to
5110 assume that any federative unity with the URCNA will not also include the use of
5111 the TPH in combined federation.’ Fellowship highlights the North American
5112 context, including the early history and synod decisions (1958, 1962, 1965, 1968)
5113 of the CanRC, when the CanRC sought to create an ‘English Psalter (not
5114 exclusively Genevan) with an English Hymnary.’ Fellowship draws attention to
5115 what the Emmanuel ARC (Denver) writes in its initial proposal to CM about its
5116 particular context of contact with sister churches in which the TPH would have a
5117 beneficial function in public worship. And Fellowship (with Emmanuel ARC) sees
5118 that the use of the TPH would support the work of mission in the North American
5119 context.
- 5120 2.5.19 The Glanbrook-Trinity CanRC notes in relation to RSW’s overture that we have
5121 specifically decided that we will limit the number of hymns in the BoP to 100, it
5122 becomes a moot point whether those hymns are between the covers of the BoP or
5123 the covers of the TPH as they they would all be ‘in the pew’ and available for
5124 singing. The TPH and BoP total of hymns would be 480 which is almost 5x
5125 beyond the limit that we’ve agreed upon as churches. The URC has taken a
5126 breather on all unity discussions with CanRC for the foreseeable future, therefore
5127 the argument of RSW item 6.3 regarding possible unity, loses much of its force.
5128 Another argument from RSW deals with ‘mission churches’ standing to benefit
5129 from adopting the TPH, that argument is brief and somewhat vague. Much of
5130 church life, including the songs, will involve a big learning curve for new
5131 believers. Drawing lines of distinction between so called missional congregations
5132 and regular congregations and then potentially under-lining such a distinction with
5133 different congregations emphasizing different song books is fraught with the
5134 potential to fray the unity of our federation. Regarding ‘singability’ of the Genevan
5135 tunes remember that they were specifically composed to be sung by people who
5136 were not used to singing in corporate worship. We still have room to add fifteen
5137 more hymns such as ‘Abide with me’ [allusions to Ps 27,102 and 1Cor 15] suitable
5138 for worship and may well be helpful for newcomers because they are more widely
5139 known. Maintaining unity in our worship services ought to be a high priority. Note
5140 that RSE decided on the same topic in the opposite direction. We have the
5141 potential for disunity, something that no one wants. For accompanists the thought
5142 of being prepared to play well from a song collection of almost 900 tunes could be

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5143 overwhelming to some, especially in congregations that only have one or two
5144 accompanists. It would be unwise for GS to decide to allow congregations to put
5145 the TPH in their pews beside the BoP, even for ‘testing purposes’. The SCBP
5146 could put together a booklet of 10-15 additional hymns for testing in the churches
5147 with a view to possible eventual inclusion in the BoP. GS decisions should be
5148 seen to uphold the valuable and long-standing relationship we have as federation
5149 with the SCBP.

5150 2.5.20 The Orangeville CanRC does not support the overture at this time because the
5151 overture asks GS to approve the TPH sight unseen and skips the step of
5152 provisionally approving the TPH for testing in the churches, it is not a valid
5153 argument to equate trusting sister churches with adopting all their documents as
5154 our own; it is a subjective statement to conclude that adding the TPH to the BoP
5155 will enhance the unity in worship between us as sister churches in North America.
5156 The conclusions concerning the minimal value of the SCBP are subjective as
5157 indicated by the use of the words 'perceived' and 'debatable' in the overture; it is
5158 not a strong argument to adopt the TPH because many people want this and are
5159 already doing it, since we don't know how many people really want it, in what
5160 settings they are using the songs, the Word of God is standard not the number of
5161 people involved, the TPH is not known to be the solution; it has not been shown
5162 that the songs of the TPH will meet the needs of those who are new to the faith or
5163 those who come to us from other reformed church backgrounds. To suggest that
5164 the TPH will address the difficulty some experience in learning to sing and love
5165 the genevan melodies is not only subjective, but also an argument for abandoning
5166 the BoP and choosing only the songs that are in the TPH; wealth of choice will
5167 impoverish familiarity; the prominence of the psalms in worship will be put under
5168 pressure by the presence of 425 hymns. Therefore Orangeville recommends that
5169 GS 2019 does not adopt the overture and that if a committee be appointed to do a
5170 review of the TPH, such a committee should take note of the work of the SCBP
5171 leading up to the Synod Smithers 2007, when they reviewed more than 500 hymns
5172 as well as their preliminary evaluation of the TPH.

5173 2.5.21 The Neerlandia CanRC bring their concerns regarding the possible adoption of the
5174 TPH. They note that GS Chatham 2004 limited the number of Hymns for use in
5175 our worship services to 100 - this decision still stands. It becomes apparent that the
5176 URC and OPC were working together to come up with a psalm book that would
5177 foster unity among the congregations of their federations. They were moving away
5178 from using the CRC psalter hymnal - we as CanRC have already accomplished
5179 that in the Genevan Psalter - so why move towards losing something that can
5180 identify us and set us apart. To gain a broader form of unity the URC and OPC
5181 didn't adopt our BoP - therefore why do we think adopting the TPH will increase
5182 unity? A number of hymns that didn't make it from our latest Augment into the
5183 BoP are included in the TPH. What is gained when as a federation we take steps
5184 to make ourselves more attractive to others but alienate and neglect those within
5185 our own midst who still struggle with the last addition to our BoP and struggle
5186 with the idea of another hymn book? Remember the words of Romans 14:15
5187 '...do not destroy the one for whom Christ died.'

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5188 2.5.22 The Fergus-Maranatha CanRC requests that GS seriously consider not approving
5189 the overtures to adopt the TPH for use in our churches and asks that the following
5190 be considered: The argument that this is a topic that lives in our churches is very
5191 subjective. How can that be verified? They ask that GS not make decisions
5192 regarding such an important overture based on subjective arguments. GS
5193 Dunnville 2016 mandated the SCBP to monitor development of the joint URCNA
5194 and OPC songbook - the RSW overture clearly ignores and seeks to avoid this
5195 mandate. GS Chatham 2004 capped the number of hymns to be included in the
5196 BoP at 100 (Acts Art.115, 6.1.1.) the RSW overture is attempting to circumvent
5197 the spirit of the mandate given by GS 2004. We must assume that the decision of
5198 GS 2004 capped the number of Hymns at 100. Adopting the TPH would mean
5199 introducing more than 400 hymns putting aside our adopted practice of carefully
5200 choosing hymns via the diligent scrutiny of the SCBP. To suddenly rush forward
5201 with adopting a new collection of hymns without doing our own due diligence is
5202 both unwarranted and perhaps even irresponsible. They do not agree with
5203 approving the TPH for use in our churches.

5204 2.5.23 The St. Albert CanRC - agrees that there is great value in maintaining the
5205 principles of a federative approach to corporate worship - it is good to have
5206 consistency throughout the federation. And that the SCBP may not be an
5207 appropriate forum to evaluate the TPH. It seems that to adopt a new Psalter
5208 Hymnal without the same rigour - as has been put forward by the SCBP - which
5209 has been exemplary - would be a mis-step for the federation. GS could strike a
5210 committee to evaluate the TPH. It would be best for GS not to adopt the
5211 recommendation of RSW but instead strike a review committee to evaluate and
5212 bring a recommendation to a future GS.

5213 2.5.24 The Edmonton-Immanuel CanRC has not examined the content of the TPH but
5214 addresses the question of adoption of the TPH asking GS 2019 to consider the
5215 following points: TPH is a publication of the URCNA and OPC not including the
5216 CanRC, TPH has only recently been published in 2018 and is not well known
5217 among members of the CanRC, TPH has not been formally reviewed by the SCBP,
5218 Adoption of the TPH would at this time be premature - there has been no period of
5219 testing. RSE and RSW have come to different conclusions regarding the adoption
5220 of the TPH therefore there is a lack of consensus in the federation. GS should also
5221 consider what impact the adoption of the TPH may have when used in conjunction
5222 with the BoP in public worship. They recommend GS 2019 not to adopt the TPH
5223 for use in the Can/Am Ref Churches. And to task the SCBP or a new committee to
5224 undertake a thorough review of the TPH and report back to the next GS.

5225 2.6 The Standing Committee of the Book of Praise (SCBP) received the following mandate
5226 from GS 2016 (Article 127, 5.6.6): ‘to monitor the development of an joint
5227 OPC/URCNA songbook and when possible to provide the churches with a sense of this
5228 new song book’s composition, quality, and theological accuracy’. In the report to GS
5229 2019 the SCBP gives a review of the TPH:

5230 While the Committee received letters from a number of churches requesting that
5231 we comment on the suitability of the Trinity Psalter Hymnal for adoption by the
5232 churches, we feel that this exceeds our mandate. We have been asked by Synod to

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5233 provide a general sense of the book’s composition, quality and theological
5234 accuracy.
5235 With this in mind, we conducted a cursory study of the songs in the Trinity Psalter
5236 Hymnal, in the first place because our mandate did not ask for an in-depth study,
5237 and also in part because we were not able to obtain copies until August of 2018,
5238 and so were restricted in our ability to perform an in-depth analysis and still be
5239 ready to report to Synod 2019. We reviewed all of the Psalms, and took a sampling
5240 of about 80 Hymns in order to complete our mandate in regards to the Trinity
5241 Psalter Hymnal.
5242 As a result of our review, we provide the following observations:
5243 2.6.1 [7.2.1] General
5244 2.6.1.1. [7.2.1.1] The preface to the Psalter is very good. It clearly acknowledges
5245 that there is much new musical material in the book and provides
5246 helpful musicological instruction for congregations and musicians alike.
5247 2.6.1.2. [7.2.1.2] The book contains a wide variety of useful indexes
5248 2.6.2. [7.2.2]Psalms
5249 2.6.2.1 [7.2.2.1] Every Psalm has at least one complete rendering of the Psalm
5250 (either in one melody or split over multiple melodies).
5251 2.6.2.2 [7.2.2.2] On the whole, each rhymed Psalm is a faithful rendering of its
5252 corresponding biblical text.
5253 2.6.2.3. [7.2.2.3] We express special appreciation for the text renditions of the
5254 Psalms that were created by the OPC-URCNA Committee. Poetically
5255 they appear to be quite well done, and it is evident that much work has
5256 gone into ensuring faithfulness to the text of Scripture.
5257 2.6.2.4. [7.2.2.4] The text of the rhymed psalms includes the corresponding
5258 verse numbers from the Bible, a helpful addition.
5259 2.6.2.5 [7.2.2.5] We did note that some melody choices for the Psalms are jarring
5260 because:
5261 2.6.2.5.1 [7.2.2.5.1] they have strong associations with well-known hymns,
5262 or are melodies found in classical music (e.g. #30, #63A, #67B,
5263 #90A, #102A, #104A, #116A, #145C); or
5264 2.6.2.5.2 [7.2.2.5.2]. they are Genevan melodies that were repurposed for
5265 other Psalms (e.g. #52 uses Genevan 77, #119S uses Genevan
5266 110).
5267 2.6.2.6 [7.2.2.6] We observe that a number of the Psalms contain archaisms (e.g.
5268 #84C, #102B, #117C, #118B) and others retain the name Jehovah (e.g.
5269 #96, #98C, #117A, #117C).
5270 2.6.3. [7.2.3] Hymns
5271 2.6.3.1 [7.2.3.1] We found at least 30 hymns from the Book of Praise that have
5272 been used in the Hymn section of the TPH. Some of these have different
5273 melodies, or textual variations, while others are identical to the hymns
5274 in the Book of Praise.
5275 2.6.3.2 [7.2.3.2] We appreciate that there is a strong Christological emphasis in
5276 the hymn section.

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- 5277 2.6.3.3 [7.2.3.3] A benefit of the large number of hymns is that a broad range of
5278 topics is covered well.
- 5279 2.6.3.4 [7.2.3.4] Where the OPC-URCNA Committee contributed original texts
5280 to the hymns, these are generally well done (e.g. #296, #302, #401,
5281 #490).
- 5282 2.6.3.5 [7.2.3.5] The text of the hymns is taken from a broad range of time from
5283 the early Christian Church to modern times. The melody range appears
5284 to be largely from the 16th century to present day, with a preponderance
5285 of melodies from the 19th century.
- 5286 2.6.3.6 [7.2.3.6] While there are many worthy hymns, some of the Principles
5287 and Guidelines appear to be inconsistently applied:
- 5288 2.6.3.6.1 [7.2.3.6.1] - Guideline 1: some hymns could be argued to have
5289 questionable theology (e.g. #163, #452). Further, in some hymns
5290 direct lines are drawn from events described in the Bible, and
5291 applied to believers as if Christians today are participants in the
5292 event (e.g. #365, #505, #515).
- 5293 2.6.3.6.2 [7.2.3.6.2] - Guideline 7: some hymns are not free from
5294 individualism (e.g. #272), sentimentality (e.g. #309, #471) and
5295 artificiality (e.g. #450, #477).
- 5296 2.6.3.6.3 [7.2.3.6.3] Guideline 10: melodies for some of the hymns appear
5297 to be borrowed from music that suggests places and occasions
5298 other than the Church and the worship of God. For example, #422,
5299 #427, #532 are based on the symphonic melody ‘Finlandia’ by
5300 Jean Sibelius, #253 is based on the symphonic melody ‘Ode to
5301 Joy’ from Ludwig von Beethoven’s 9th Symphony, #67B, #226,
5302 and #241 are based on the melody ‘Thaxted’ found in the ‘Jupiter’
5303 movement of Gustav Holsts’s ‘The Planets’, and #403 is based on
5304 Joseph Haydn’s ‘Austrian Hymn’ (also used for ‘Deutschland,
5305 Deutschland über Alles’)
- 5306 2.6.3.7 [7.2.3.7] The size of the Hymn section will make it challenging for the
5307 churches to maintain their principle that the Psalms should have the
5308 principal place in the worship service (c.f. Art. 39 of the URCNA
5309 Church Order, and Principles and Guidelines #2).
- 5310 2.6.3.8 [7.2.3.8] Some hymns struck us as being better suited to individual
5311 worship than for use in corporate worship (e.g. #431, #500).
- 5312 2.6.3.9 [7.2.3.9] At least one hymn that was rejected by General Synod
5313 Burlington 2010 (Acts, Art. 138) is found in the TPH (#406 = August
5314 #16).
- 5315 2.6.4. The SCBP comes with the following conclusions:
5316 With this report completed, the Committee requests Synod to declare
5317 that we have fulfilled our mandate as it regards the Trinity Psalter
5318 Hymnal.2.6.4.2 [7.2.4.2] Further we request that if Synod would like a
5319 more in-depth evaluation of the Trinity Psalter Hymnal with a view to
5320 use in the Canadian Reformed Churches, such a review not be done by

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5321 the Committee because of tension between such a mandate and our
5322 existing mandate to maintain and promote the Book of Praise.

5323 **3. Considerations**

- 5324 3.1 The RSW 2018 overture, along with many individual churches, express the desire to
5325 have more Psalm renditions and additional Hymns available to the churches for use in
5326 public worship services. It is apparent that this is a topic that lives in the churches and
5327 that the churches want to act in harmony with one another (cf. Romans 15:5-6;
5328 Ephesians 4:1-6; Article 55 CO).
- 5329 3.2 The principles governing the decisions of the earliest synods of the churches (Synod
5330 1958, 1962, 1965, 1968), which envisioned the possibility of including Psalms with
5331 non-Genevan melodies in the songbook, can guide us today as we address the needs of
5332 an increasing number of members and visitors who are not familiar with the existing
5333 BoP and Genevan tunes. There are many Psalm renditions and Hymns in the broader
5334 reformed ecclesiastical context of North America that suit the diverse desires/needs of
5335 the different churches within our federation, and their use can give expression to the
5336 unity that exists between the CanRC and her sister churches.
- 5337 3.3 Simple adoption of the TPH as the original overtures of CPE and CM request, would
5338 seem to be a quick way to satisfy the desire for more Psalm renditions and a greater
5339 variety of hymns. However, the decision of GS 2004 to cap the number of hymns to
5340 100 on the ground that Psalms should have the predominant place in the liturgy of the
5341 Reformed churches, at this time limits the churches from adding the abundance of
5342 hymns that the TPH includes.
- 5343 3.4 Further, in the mandates, guidelines and principles given to the SCBP over the years and
5344 letters to GS 2019, the churches have shown the desire for careful study of the songs
5345 adopted for the worship services. The good work of the URCNA/OPC in the TPH is not
5346 questioned when we take time to investigate the value of the TPH content for the
5347 particular needs of the CanRC at this time.
- 5348 3.5 Since the TPH has only recently been published and the contents and melodies are
5349 largely unknown among the churches, it is necessary to give the churches an
5350 opportunity to interact meaningfully with its content in order to appreciate the quality of
5351 the TPH. (as per RSW consideration 2.1.7) The results of the cursory review of the TPH
5352 (cf. report of the SCBP to GS 2019) indicate that the TPH should be given further
5353 scrutiny before a final decision is made regarding its suitability for use in the churches.
- 5354 3.6 A number of churches are concerned about subjective influences in the matter of
5355 musical preferences. It is good to remember that even when there are clear principles
5356 and guidelines in place to pick the best songs, it is inevitable that subjective argument,
5357 opinion, and preference enter the decision-making process.
- 5358 3.7 Some churches are of the opinion that the overture bypasses an existing process,
5359 namely, that GS 2016 already mandated the SCBP to look at the TPH and report its
5360 findings to GS 2019. It is clear that the mandate for the SCBP was not intended to be a
5361 thorough review. Further, it is not necessary to conclude that since the SCBP received a
5362 TPH mandate, that the churches could not at the same time express their opinion by way
5363 of an overture to GS. The one path does not necessarily exclude the other.
- 5364 3.8 In light of the above, GS 2019 should not grant the specific request to approve the
5365 Psalms and hymns of the TPH for immediate use in the churches. However, GS 2019

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5366 does acknowledge the intent of the overture to add more Psalm renditions and a greater
5367 variety of Hymns for use in the worship services. To get to the goal of an enhanced and
5368 expanded selection of songs for the churches, GS 2019 recognizes the desire of many of
5369 the churches (cf. letters) who wish the process of selection to include diligent review by
5370 way of committee.

5371 3.9 The SCBP requests GS 2019 that it not be mandated to further review the
5372 TPH. However, the SCBP is the authorized body for the enhancement and expansion of
5373 the BoP. Having heard the request of the SCBP and the sentiments of the churches, GS
5374 2019 should appoint the SCBP with a clear mandate and an increased number of
5375 members for this project.

5376 **4. Recommendations**

5377 That Synod decide to

5378 4.1 Receive the overture submitted by RSW 2018 and;

5379 4.2 Mandate the SCBP :

5380 4.2.1 Concerning the Psalms:

5381 4.2.1.1 to seek input from the churches as to which non-Geneyan renditions of
5382 the Psalms could be added to enhance the Psalm section of the BoP.

5383 4.2.1.2 to compile a list of suitable additional Psalm renditions for possible inclusion
5384 in the *Book of Praise*, using the TPH as a primary resource.

5385 4.2.2. Concerning the Hymns:

5386 4.2.2.1 to seek input from the churches concerning replaceable and additional
5387 hymns for the 2014 *Book of Praise*, using the TPH as a primary resource;

5388 4.2.2.2 to compile a list of such hymns keeping in mind that at this time the final
5389 number of hymns in the *Book of Praise* should not exceed 100 (as per GS
5390 2004), and being flexible with the structural template (Apostle's Creed) of
5391 the hymn-section of the 2014 *Book of Praise*.

5392 4.2.3 To send, at least 18 months before the next general synod, an explanatory report to
5393 the churches together with a provisional list of songs for immediate testing, in the
5394 worship services if so desired, so there can be well-considered feedback to the next
5395 general synod.

5396 4.2.4 To receive feedback from the churches on the Committee's interim report and
5397 include its evaluation of that feedback along with actionable recommendations in
5398 its report six months before the next general synod.

5399

5400 **ADOPTED**

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5402 **Article 143 – Appeal RSE TPH decisions**

5403 **1. Material**

5404 1.1 Appeal from the Burlington-Rehoboth CanRC (8.6.3.1)

5405 1.2 Appeal from the Flamborough-Redemption CanRC (8.6.3.2)

5406 1.3 Appeal from the Burlington-Ebenezer CanRC (8.6.3.3)

5407 **2. Observations**

5408 2.1 The churches of Burlington-Rehoboth, Flamborough-Redemption and Burlington-
5409 Ebenezer request GS 2019 to judge that 'Regional Synod East Nov 2017 erred in its

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5410 decision to deny the overture and these churches request GS 2019 to allow the churches
5411 the freedom to immediately use the TPH in the worship services. Burlington-Ebenezer
5412 believes it was wronged by the decision of RSE 2017.

5413 **3. Considerations**

5414 3.1 The request of the churches of Burlington-Rehoboth, Flamborough-Redemption and
5415 Burlington-Ebenezer to allow the churches the freedom to immediately use the TPH in
5416 the worship services is answered in Article 142 where GS 2019 dealt with an overture
5417 from RSW 2018 to approve, in addition to the adopted Book of Praise, the Psalms and
5418 Hymns of the Trinity Psalter Hymnal for use in public worship as per CO Article 55.

5419 **4. Recommendation:**

5420 That the consideration above serves as an answer to the appeal/request of Burlington-Rehoboth,
5421 Flamborough-Redemption and Burlington-Ebenezer.

5422 **ADOPTED**

5423 **Article 144 – Appeal of Spring Creek re: GS 2016 Art. 103 (Confidentiality)**

5424 **1. Material**

5425 1.1 Appeal from church of Spring Creek (8.6.12.1)

5426 **2. Admissibility**

5427 2.1 Since the matter concerns an appeal of a decision of GS 2016 it is admissible.

5428 **3. Observations**

5429 3.1 GS 2016 declared Article 103 of the Acts “confidential” and hence did not make it
5430 available to all church members but only to consistories. No grounds were provided.

5431 3.2 Spring Creek CanRC in Tintern appeals this decision on the following grounds:

5432 3.2.1. GS 2016 did not provide grounds for declaring this Act confidential;

5433 3.2.2. Past synods have regularly published similar or sensitive decisions;

5434 3.2.3. Though the matter involved a discipline case, the behavior or beliefs triggering the
5435 discipline were in the public domain. Keeping Synod’s judgments on that behavior
5436 and/or beliefs does not assist elders in guiding the thinking and/or behavior of
5437 church members;

5438 3.2.4. Publicly-promulgated errors should be met with publicly-pronounced judgments.
5439

5440 **4. Considerations**

5441 4.1. When General Synod makes decisions on matters involving sensitive personal
5442 information that has never been made public and which, in view of the 9th
5443 commandment, ought not to be made public, these decisions are to be put into the
5444 confidential acts.
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5446 **5. Recommendation**

5447 Synod decide:

5448 5.1. To deny the appeal and thus the request to as yet publish GS 2016 Art 103 as an
5449 appendix to the Acts of GS 2019.
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Article 145 – SCBP (Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise*)

1. Material

- 1.1 Report of the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (SCBP) (8.2.5.1)
- 1.2 Letters from Willoughby Heights (8.3.7.1), Smithville (8.3.7.2), Lincoln (8.3.7.3), Carmen-West (8.3.7.4), Ancaster (8.3.7.5), Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.7.6), Aldergrove (8.3.7.7) and Winnipeg-Grace (8.3.7.8).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Dunnville 2016 mandated to SCBP:
 - [5.6.1] To foster an increased awareness of the *Book of Praise*, among others in the English-speaking world;
 - [5.6.2] To maintain contact with our Australian sister-churches to assist them in the possible publication of their own *Book of Praise*;
 - [5.6.3] To maintain its corporate status in order to protect the interest of the Canadian Reformed Churches in matters concerning the *Book of Praise*;
 - [5.6.4] To communicate with the churches regarding copyright issues concerning the *Book of Praise*;
 - [5.6.5] To maintain its archives and website;
 - [5.6.6] To monitor the development of a joint OPC-URCNA songbook and when possible to provide the churches with a sense of this new song book’s composition, quality, and theological accuracy;
 - [5.6.7] To receive, scrutinize and evaluate the contents of correspondence from the churches and to report to the next General Synod as to the validity of the suggestions made (as per GS 2016 Art. 122);
 - [5.6.8] To seek, receive, evaluate and recommend proposals for changes to the hymn section to be compiled for possible submission to a future Synod (as per GS 2016 Art. 122).
- 2.2 The SCBP has reinstated the wording of the Subscription Form in the third printing of the *Book of Praise* (Article 54, Recommendation 4.3, GS 2016).
- 2.3 The SCBP has continued to respond to requests for information regarding the *Book of Praise* and notes there remains considerable interest at home and abroad. It requests GS 2019 to continue the Committee’s mandate to foster an increased awareness of the existence of the *Book of Praise* in the English-speaking world.
- 2.4 The SCBP provided support to the Deputies of the Free Reformed Church of Australia (FRCA) including providing permission related to use and alteration of the *Book of Praise* as used in the FRCA. The SCBP notes that the FRCA Synod Bunbury 2018 has appointed a committee to develop an Australian version of the *Book of Praise*.
- 2.5 The SCBP has maintained its status as a corporation and requests GS 2019 to mandate it to maintain its corporate status for the purpose of protecting the interests of the Canadian Reformed Churches relating to the *Book of Praise*.

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- 5494 2.6 The SCBP has communicated with the churches in May 2017 and provided support to
5495 individual churches in matters relating to copyright, particularly around projection and
5496 live steaming.
- 5497 2.7 Rev. C. Bosch has been the archivist for the SCBP for many years and has asked to be
5498 relieved of this task. The SCBP requests that Rev. Bosch be formally thanked for his
5499 work on behalf of the SCBP. Dr. J. Smith has been found willing to take over this task.
5500 In addition, the SCBP has decided to implement triennial inspections of the archives in
5501 the September/October prior to a General Synod, and sr. Margaret Alkema has agreed to
5502 assist in these inspections. The first inspection report will be provided to Synod 2022.
- 5503 2.8 The SCBP continues to maintain its website (www.bookofpraise.ca) as part of its efforts
5504 for the promotion and awareness for the *Book of Praise*.
- 5505 2.9 The SCBP monitored developments regarding the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* (TPH), a joint
5506 project of the United Reformed Churches of North America (URCNA) and the
5507 Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC). The TPH committee requested and was granted
5508 the use of a number of psalms and hymns from the *Book of Praise*, subject to some
5509 limitations. The SCBP conducted a “cursory study” of the TPH, reviewing all of the
5510 Psalms and a sampling of about 80 hymns. It provided some feedback [see Committee
5511 report 7.2] and requests Synod to declare that it has fulfilled its mandate as given by GS
5512 2016 in Recommendation 5.6.6. It also requests that if Synod would like a more in-
5513 depth evaluation, that such evaluation not be done by the SCBP because of the “tension
5514 between such a mandate and our existing mandate to maintain and promote the *Book of*
5515 *Praise*.”
- 5516 2.10 In May 2018, the SCBP sent a letter to the churches inviting them to submit hymns for
5517 consideration to be included in a future edition of the *Book of Praise*. A number of
5518 letters were received but the Committee did not have any recommendations to make to
5519 GS 2019. It requests GS 2019 to mandate the Committee to “seek, receive, evaluate and
5520 recommend proposals for changes to the hymn section to be compiled for possible
5521 submission to a future Synod.” The SCBP has also received, and is evaluating,
5522 correspondence it received relating to Hymn 1.
- 5523 2.11 Since GS 2016, a third printing of the *Book of Praise* was authorized. The SCBP
5524 maintains a list of corrigenda for inclusion in the next print run.
- 5525 2.12 In executing the mandate received from GS 2016 to negotiate a contract renewal with
5526 Premier Printing with an expiry date of February 28, 2022, it became evident that “there
5527 is a tension between protecting the investment that our publisher makes in layout and
5528 publishing of the print and digital editions of the *Book of Praise*, and making this
5529 material available on-line.” To address this tension, the SCBP requests that it be
5530 authorized to negotiate a new contract with Premier Printing that moves the cost of
5531 layout and publishing from Premier Printing to the churches. The SCBP would need to
5532 be authorized to make use of funds from the General Fund to cover layout and
5533 publication costs when such work is required.
- 5534 2.13 Br. A. den Hollander has completed his term at the end of GS 2019. The SCBP
5535 recommends that GS 2019 formally thank br. den Hollander for his work as a member
5536 of the Committee. The SCBP recommends that its membership continue to be set at 4
5537 members and proposes that a member be appointed to replace br. den Hollander.

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- 5538 2.14 The SCBP proposes to replace the word ‘expiation’ in the first sentence of Belgic
5539 Confession, Article 34 to ‘propitiation’. The Committee provides a historical and
5540 exegetical basis for going back to this wording, which existed in the work leading up to
5541 the 1984 *Book of Praise*.
- 5542 2.15 The SCBP expresses gratitude for the contribution provided by Dr. W. Helder, Rev. G.
5543 Ph. Van Popta, Dr. J. Van Vliet, Rev. C. Bosch and sr. M. Alkema.
- 5544 2.16 Submissions were received from the following churches:
- 5545 2.16.1 Lincoln CanRC would like to see the *Book of Praise* content published online,
5546 where possible within the copyrights. It argues that this will serve our federation
5547 by providing members with free, digital access to the psalms and hymns. It also
5548 creates opportunities to share our psalms and hymns to a broader audience.
- 5549 2.16.2 Aldergrove CanRC recommends that GS 2019 instruct the SCBP to include a four-
5550 part harmony in future printings of the *Book of Praise*. This would promote the
5551 *Book of Praise* and the playing and singing of the psalms and hymns within the
5552 homes of church members.
- 5553 2.16.3 Willoughby Heights CanRC alerts synod to the need to be consistent in how
5554 committees draw on the General Fund. GS 2019 should ensure that the General
5555 Fund has sufficient liquidity and that annual assessments are fairly consistent. It
5556 suggests synod seek clarification from the SCBP regarding the costs their proposal
5557 could involve, and the General Fund as to how these costs would be met.
- 5558 2.16.4 Smithville CanRC recommends that GS 2019 conduct a more in-depth evaluation
5559 of the TPH and, as suggested by the SCBP, appoint a new committee to take on
5560 this task and report to the next Synod.
- 5561 2.16.5 Fergus-Maranatha CanRC requests that GS 2019 remove the word “seek” from the
5562 SCBP mandate “to seek, receive, evaluate, and recommend proposals for changes
5563 to the hymn section.” It makes this request to ensure that it remains the
5564 responsibility of the local churches to initiate further development of our *Book of*
5565 *Praise*. In support of its request Fergus Maranatha asks that GS 2019 consider the
5566 following:
- 5567 • Historically, seeking new hymns was the task of the churches, not of the SCBP.
5568 Churches sent suggestions for additional hymns directly to the committee with
5569 “reasons for their suitability” (Acts of GS 2001, Art. 97. Recommendation 5.2p.
5570 111).
 - 5571 • General Synods 2007 & 2013 continued to make the addition of new hymns to
5572 the *Book of Praise* the responsibility of the individual churches.
 - 5573 • GS 2016 added the word “seek” to the mandate of the SCBP without any
5574 explanation.
- 5575 2.16.6 Ancaster CanRC brings to the attention of GS 2019 the following:
- 5576 • Its support for an in-depth study of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* (TPH) with a view
5577 to adopting additional Psalms and Hymns for use in the Canadian Reformed
5578 Churches, since this would be in line with the way the federation has always
5579 approached changes to the songs we sing.
 - 5580 • Its agreement with the change to Belgic Confession Article 34.
 - 5581 • Its appreciation for the work of the Committee and its thankfulness for the
5582 contributions of the retiring members.

NOT FINAL

- 5583 2.16.7 Carman West CanRC is of the opinion that it would be good to conduct a survey
5584 among the churches to find out how often each of the hymns is used on average in
5585 a given year. The purpose of this survey would be to delete those hymns that are
5586 seldom used to make room for better selections. This would help alleviate the
5587 concerns some have that a substantial increase in the number of hymns could come
5588 at the cost of Psalm singing, which should continue to be treasured.
- 5589 2.16.8 Carman West requests GS 2019 to instruct the SCBP to give special (although not
5590 exclusive) consideration to the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*, when replacing or adding
5591 hymns to the *Book of Praise*.
- 5592 2.16.9 Winnipeg-Grace CanRC proposes the Apostles' Creed (in the section of
5593 Ecumenical Creeds as well as the entry in the Heidelberg Catechism L.D. 7 Q & A
5594 23) be changed to read "He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand"
5595 and that Hymn 1 be revised accordingly.

5596 **3. Considerations**

- 5597 3.1 GS 2019 acknowledges with thankfulness the work the SCBP in executing the mandate
5598 it received from GS 2016.
- 5599 3.2 GS 2019 gratefully acknowledges the work of br. A. den Hollander during his term on
5600 this Committee.
- 5601 3.3 Fergus-Maranatha interacts with the Committee's mandate from GS 2016 (Art 122,
5602 Rec. 5.6.8) which included the word "seek". Fergus-Maranatha incorrectly argues that
5603 historically it was up to the churches to make recommendations, that the addition of the
5604 word "seek" was added by GS 2016 without any explanation, and that GS 2013 and
5605 2007 continued to make the responsibility of addition new hymns to the *Book of Praise*
5606 the responsibility of the individual churches. GS 2019 notes that the word "seek" was
5607 included in GS 2010 Art. 142, Recommendation 4.1. As a result of appeals, GS 2016
5608 (Art 122) rescinded the decision of GS 2013 thereby returning to the text of the decision
5609 of GS 2010.
- 5610 3.4 GS 2019 endorses the request of Carman-West that the SCBP give special consideration
5611 to the TPH when replacing or adding hymns to the *Book of Praise*. Carman-West also
5612 recommends that the SCBP conduct a survey on the frequency of usage of each of the
5613 hymns with a view to deleting hymns that are not used very often. This recommendation
5614 does not adequately address the underlying reasons why some hymns might not be sung
5615 as often as others (e.g. seasonal consideration), and therefore this recommendation is
5616 not practical.
- 5617 3.5 The SCBP requests authorization to move the cost of layout and publishing from
5618 Premier Printing and use funds from the General Fund to cover these costs. Willoughby
5619 Heights cautions that GS 2019 should ensure that the General Fund has sufficient
5620 liquidity and that assessments are fairly consistent. The SCBP reports that of the 7,548
5621 copies of the *Book of Praise* distributed since GS 2016, 3,072 (40.7%) were
5622 "international" sales. The SCBP does not provide information on how the removal of
5623 these costs from Premier Printing will affect the price of the *Book of Praise*, and if the
5624 transfer of such costs to the General Fund would inadvertently result in members of the
5625 CanRC subsidizing international sales. As the SCBP does not provide an estimate of the
5626 costs or how this would affect the General Fund, GS 2019 cannot authorize the SCBP to
5627 implement this proposal at this time.

NOT FINAL

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- 5628 3.6 Aldergrove recommends that the SCBP be instructed to include a four-part harmony in
5629 future printings. Aldergrove notes that GS 2013, in Article 186 Consideration 3.6, finds
5630 the implication of having a version of the *Book of Praise* in four-part harmony to be
5631 “too daunting to be practical.” Aldergrove correctly notes that GS 2016, Art 127,
5632 Observation 3.6 stated that the SCBP website includes a resource section containing
5633 links to recommended harmonization of all the psalms and hymns in a digital format
5634 free of charge. The SCBP should evaluate the possibility of creating a version of the
5635 *Book of Praise* containing the four-part harmonies provided by br. D. Teitsma when the
5636 matters addressed in Consideration 3.4 (i.e., to move the cost of layout and publishing
5637 from Premier Publishing to the General Fund) are addressed.
- 5638 3.7 Lincoln would like the SCBP to publish content online as a means to serve members of
5639 the Canadian Reformed Churches and as a way to share the psalms and hymns with a
5640 broader audience. When the matters discussed in Consideration 3.4 are addressed, the
5641 SCBP should evaluate Lincoln’s recommendation.
- 5642 3.8 The SCBP proposes, after consultation with two professors at the CRTS, to amend the
5643 first sentence of Belgic Confession Article 34 by removing the word “expiation” and
5644 replacing it with “propitiation”. GS 2019 concurs with the grounds articulated by the
5645 SCBP (Report 12.1.1 – 12.1.3).
- 5646 3.9 The SCBP has completed “cursory study” of the TPH and requests that any further
5647 evaluation be completed by a committee other than the SCBP. The matter of further
5648 review of the TPH has been addressed in GS 2019 Art. 142.
- 5649 3.10 Winnipeg-Grace’s proposal to amend the Apostles’ Creed (in the section of Ecumenical
5650 Creeds as well as the entry in the Heidelberg Catechism L.D. 7 Q & A 23) to read “He
5651 ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand,” and that Hymn 1 be revised
5652 accordingly, is more than a linguistic change. This is evident from the fact that
5653 Winnipeg-Grace supports it using theological arguments. This letter should be given to
5654 the SCBP for its evaluation.

5655 **4. Recommendations**

5656 That Synod decide:

- 5657 4.1 To express gratitude to:
- 5658 4.1.1 br. A. den Hollander for his work as member of the SCBP;
- 5659 4.1.2 Rev. C. Bosch for his work as archivist of the SCBP;
- 5660 4.1.3 Dr. W. Helder, Rev. G. Ph. Van Popta, Dr. J. Van Vliet, and sr. M. Alkema for
5661 their contribution to the SCBP.
- 5662 4.2 To mandate the SCBP to:
- 5663 4.2.1 Foster an increased awareness of the existence of the *Book of Praise* in the
5664 English-speaking world;
- 5665 4.2.2 Maintain contact with the FRCA relating to matters of the *Book of Praise* and the
5666 development of an Australian *Book of Praise*;
- 5667 4.2.3 Maintain its corporate status for the purpose of protecting the interests of the
5668 Canadian Reformed Churches in matters concerning the *Book of Praise*;
- 5669 4.2.4 Maintain the archives and website;
- 5670 4.2.5 Seek, receive, evaluate and recommend proposals for changes to the hymn section
5671 to be compiled for possible submission to a future Synod (see also GS 2019 Art.
5672 XXXX for further instruction);

NOT FINAL

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- 5673 4.2.6 Serve Synod 2022 with a report regarding its proposal to move the costs of layout
5674 and publication, which will include a discussion of the financial implications to the
5675 General Fund. This should include an evaluation of the impact of creating an
5676 online version and a four-part harmony version (Considerations 3.5 and 3.6);
5677 4.2.7 Amend the first sentence of BC Article 34 by removing the word “expiation” and
5678 replacing it with “propitiation”;
5679 4.2.8 Review Winnipeg-Grace’s letter regarding the proposed change to the wording of
5680 the Apostles’ Creed and Hymn 1;
5681 4.2.9 To appoint one of its members to validate and submit to the treasurer of the
5682 General Fund all expenses being submitted for committee work;
5683 4.2.10 Submit its report to the churches 6 months prior to the convening of the next
5684 Synod.
5685 4.3 To authorize the SCBP to negotiate a temporary extension of the contract with Premier
5686 Printing Ltd past the current expiry date of February 28, 2022, in order to allow the
5687 Committee to complete the mandate in Recommendation 4.2.6.
5688

5689 **ADOPTED**

5690 **Article 146 – CWeb – Committee for the Official Website**

5691 **1. Material**

- 5692 1.1 Report of the CWEB (8.2.10.1).
5693
5694 1.2 Letters from the following CanRC: Burlington-Ebenezer (8.3.8.1), Barrhead (8.3.8.2),
5695 Toronto-Bethel (8.3.8.3), Grassie-Covenant (8.3.8.4), Burlington Waterdown-Rehoboth
5696 (8.3.8.5), Taber (8.3.8.6), London-Pilgrim (8.3.8.7), Orangeville (8.3.8.8).

5697 **2. Observations**

- 5698 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 49) gave the CWEB the following mandate:
5699 [4.3.1] To maintain the existing website and associated technical functions;
5700 [4.3.2] To revise the content of the website whenever necessary;
5701 [4.3.3] To continue the project of digitalizing Reports brought to past synods and to
5702 ensure that all reports for GS 2019 are available on the website before the next
5703 general synod;
5704 [4.3.4] To investigate the effectiveness of the website and to implement changes as
5705 considered necessary and desirable, focusing on the following matters: design and
5706 layout of the website, greater usability for smart phones and similar devices, menu
5707 structures, searching capabilities and greater use of graphics. The CWEB should
5708 also investigate whether or not it is possible to get permission for publishing links
5709 to the Psalms and Hymns of the *Book of Praise* on the website;
5710 [4.3.5] To use paid, professional services, if necessary, to complete 4.3.3 and 4.3.4 in a
5711 timely fashion;
5712 [4.3.6] To serve GS 2019 with a report to be sent to the churches at least six months
5713 before the beginning of Synod, including a financial statement and a proposed
5714 budget.

NOT FINAL

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- 5715 2.2 The committee members have kept in touch with each other through Slack, an online
5716 chat and collaboration system, and the committee also had seven online meetings using
5717 Skype to discuss and provide updates of projects and progress.
- 5718 2.3 Brs. Jeremy Koopmans, Jonathan Reinink, and Darryl Shpak looked after the technical
5719 side of the website and email functions, while Rev. T. Roukema helped maintain the
5720 website content, served as the main point of contact for emails received by the
5721 committee, and also served as convener for Skype meetings.
- 5722 2.4 The terms of brs. Jonathan Reinink and Darryl Shpak are completed. Br. Reinink has
5723 indicated that he is willing to remain on the committee for a second term. The CWEB
5724 recommends sr. Christie Hoeksema, member of Attercliffe, to be appointed to the
5725 committee.
- 5726 2.5 A significant part of the committee’s work involved regular maintenance of the existing
5727 website and associated technical functions, as well as the revision of website content
5728 whenever necessary.
- 5729 2.6 The CWEB reports that the canrc.org website receives significant traffic.
- 5730 2.7 The CWEB continued to provide canrc.org email services to the ministers, with an
5731 assessment of the current service (Observation 2.13).
- 5732 2.8 The churches of Guelph-Emmanuel and Guelph-Living Word are the last two churches
5733 that maintain their website on the canrc.org web servers.
- 5734 2.9 Through the work of Rev. Jon Chase, the CWEB completed the task of continued
5735 digitizing (scanning and OCRing) all past Synodical reports in searchable format, which
5736 are available on the federation website.
- 5737 2.10 The CWEB was mandated to significantly improve the federation website, which, based
5738 on the committee’s analysis, resulted in a complete rebuild of the website.
- 5739 2.11 While the new website has many new features and capabilities, the newer platform does
5740 not provide web hosting services for individual church websites, email addresses for
5741 ministers and others, and a ministerial email list.
- 5742 2.12 The CWEB communicated with the SCBP regarding hosting content of the *Book of*
5743 *Praise*. The SCBP advised the CWEB to include the prose section only on the website
5744 and indicated that they work further with the copyright holders of the Psalms and
5745 Hymns.
- 5746 2.13 The committee has historically offered email services to the churches, although the
5747 current implementation has not been satisfactory to most ministers. Over the years, the
5748 CWEB has noticed a decline in the usage of canrc.org email, and currently, very few
5749 ministers use canrc.org email accounts in favour of other email options such as Gmail or
5750 Hotmail as their ministerial email. Since the current implementation of email services is
5751 “old and simple”, the CWEB recommends “to pursue and, as soon as is feasibly
5752 possible, purchase an email service for the canrc.org emails that will reliably provide
5753 quality email service and usability.”
- 5754 2.14 The CWEB offers three possible solutions, maintain the current email service,
5755 discontinue the service and encourage ministers to use their own personal email
5756 accounts, or move the email service to a more reliable and robust provider with a
5757 substantial increase in cost.

NOT FINAL

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- 5758 2.15 The committee recommends that, “if GS 2019 determines that the canrc.org email is
5759 beneficial and of importance to the churches”, to purchase G Suite Basic email service
5760 for the canrc.org email at a cost of \$10,300 CAD per year.
- 5761 2.16 With the transition to a new hosting platform for the federation website, webhosting for
5762 individual churches will be phased out. With Synod’s approval, the two Guelph
5763 churches will be informed that the hosting of their websites will expire in the Fall 2020.
- 5764 2.17 GS 2016 gave the CWEB a budget of \$10,000, of which \$5,800 was designated to
5765 implementing change to the federation website, and \$3,250 to the project of digitizing
5766 past synodical reports. Since the scope of the committee’s mandate to update the
5767 website exceeded the amount budgeted, the church appointed to administer the General
5768 Fund, Carman-East, granted an increased of \$3,000. These are one-time cost, which do
5769 not need to be repeated.
- 5770 2.18 Ongoing expenses CWEB are for website hosting, which currently includes email
5771 services, and domain name registration. From 2019-2022, the projected cost is \$1,250
5772 CAD per year.
- 5773 2.19 Burlington-Ebenezer comments, should Synod accept the committee’s recommendation
5774 to implement G Suite, “this is a significant expense that is already under budgeted.” It
5775 suggests that Synod instruct the CWEB to propose a migration plan so that users of
5776 canrc.org will be inclined (or compelled) to use it, since most people do not like
5777 changing email services, even if it is change for the better.
- 5778 2.20 Barrhead supports CWEB’s recommendation to implement G Suite since the email
5779 service has been “valuable for communicating and sharing information in a timely and
5780 efficient manner with colleagues and for soliciting/providing advice on pastoral
5781 matters.” Further, “opting for a different provider makes good sense, even fiscally, if it
5782 means that *all* CanRC ministers and missionaries can take part without undue hassle.”
- 5783 2.21 Toronto-Bethel favours the approach “to discontinue and phase out email hosting as
5784 most ministers use their own email which works well.”
- 5785 2.22 Grassie-Covenant is “not convinced that the benefit of providing a professional email
5786 service is worth \$25K [for three years] to the churches.” And, “the perceived advantage
5787 of an unchanging “@canrc.org” email extension only works within the confines of the
5788 Can. Ref. Churches. Any movement outside of Canada or to other federations ... would
5789 still require a change of address.” Grassie-Covenant disagrees with the proposed change
5790 of email services, and suggests that “email service be discontinued and phased out.” The
5791 church requests that “CWEB be asked to advise ministers on alternative solutions for
5792 confidential group conversations.”
- 5793 2.23 Burlington Waterdown-Rehoboth suggests that “the amount set in the budget for paid
5794 email service is much too high” and suggests an alternate solution.
- 5795 2.24 Taber feels that “regardless of how much money is invested in the email program,
5796 ministers will still be more comfortable using other encrypted email options that are
5797 available.” “It is not prudent to create a technologically advanced email system if it will
5798 not be adopted by a large percentage of users.”
- 5799 2.25 London-Pilgrim comments concerning a “canrc.org” email service that allows for an
5800 email address that does not change and is professional, “we do not consider these
5801 benefits to be worth the expense for the G Suite Basic email service.” Since the church
5802 sees the ministerial email list as a valuable means of communication for ministers, they

NOT FINAL

5803 ask that the committee be tasked to look into “an alternate mailing list that would be
5804 economical for the churches.”

5805 2.26 Orangeville indicates that it does not support CWEB’s recommendation to implement a
5806 robust and reliable email service because the services offered will not be “of practical
5807 benefit” to their minister, the canrc.org email address used by the clerk is auto-
5808 forwarded to a Gmail account, that “the committee has failed to demonstrate any
5809 additional benefit for G Suite Basic, other than a *perceived* “level of professionalism””,
5810 and that “the cost of continuing to provide [an] ongoing email service, for a service that
5811 is not likely to be fully utilized ... is quite significant.”

5812 **3. Considerations**

5813 3.1 The CWEB has fulfilled its mandate, including:

5814 3.1.1 Digitizing all past Synodical reports in searchable format and making them
5815 available on the federation website.

5816 3.1.2 Implementing changes on the federation website “considered necessary and
5817 desirable”, resulting in a website that is fresh and modern.

5818 3.2 While Barrhead supports the CWEB recommendation (Observation 2.15), Toronto-
5819 Bethel, Grassie-Covenant, Burlington Waterdown-Rehoboth, Taber, London-Pilgrim,
5820 and Orangeville do not support the recommendation. Burlington-Ebenezer suggests a
5821 plan so that ministers will be inclined or compelled to use the new email service.

5822 3.3 Based on the letters from the churches, GS 2019 does not support the recommendation
5823 to implement G Suite Basic.

5824 3.4 Burlington Waterdown-Rehoboth suggests an alternative solution which the committee
5825 has not investigated and would need time to evaluate.

5826 3.5 Since the current email service is fading into extinction and moving the email service to
5827 a more reliable and robust provider at a significant additional cost is not acceptable, the
5828 remaining option is to discontinue the service and encourage ministers to use their own
5829 personal email accounts (compare with Observation 2.14).

5830 3.6 Even if email hosting is discontinued, “canrc.org” email addresses can still be used as
5831 public-facing addresses by ministers and other church-related officers. These
5832 “canrc.org” email addresses can be set up to forward email to personal email accounts
5833 for incoming email. It should be noted, however, that the personal email address would
5834 be used as the origin for outgoing email.

5835 3.7 The ministers appreciate the email list service which allows them to communicate with
5836 each other confidentially, to share information and concerns, and ask for advice from
5837 colleagues.

5838 **4. Recommendations**

5839 That Synod decide that the CWEB has fulfilled its mandate, and:

5840 4.1 To thank br. Darryl Shpak for his work on the committee;

5841 4.2 To appoint two new members to the committee with six-year terms;

5842 4.3 To thank Rev. Jon Chase for his work of digitizing all past Synodical reports;

5843 4.4 To thank those involved in the development and implementation of the new federation
5844 website;

5845 4.5 To request the SCBP to seek an arrangement with copyright holders which would allow
5846 the entire *Book of Praise* to be hosted on the official website;

NOT FINAL

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- 5847 4.6 To confirm that website hosting for the churches is no longer part of the CWEB’s
5848 mandate;
- 5849 4.7 To approve a budget of \$6,000 for the period 2019-2021 for ongoing operations;
- 5850 4.8 To mandate the CWEB:
- 5851 4.8.1 To maintain the existing website and associated technical functions;
- 5852 4.8.2 To revise the content of the website whenever necessary, including:
- 5853 4.8.2.1 Posting news items and documents upon submission by ministers and clerks
5854 of church Councils, and by officers of ecclesiastical assemblies who are
5855 authorized to post press releases or news items related to classes, regional or
5856 general synods.
- 5857 4.8.2.2 Annually auditing the site’s information against the yearbook, and
- 5858 4.8.2.3 Maintaining pages for synodical committees with their current mandates and
5859 contact information;
- 5860 4.8.3 To make synod reports available on the web before the next synod;
- 5861 4.8.4 To discontinue and phase out email hosting.
- 5862 4.8.5 To provide email forwarding from “canrc.org” to personal email accounts for
5863 ministers, clerks, and others when requested by clerks of church Councils;
- 5864 4.8.6 To advise ministers on alternative email list services for confidential group
5865 discussions, and if an email list service is implemented for the ministers, to
5866 function as the administrator of the list;
- 5867 4.8.7 To appoint one of its members to validate and submit to the treasurer of the
5868 General Fund all expenses being submitted for committee work;
- 5869 4.8.8 To submit a report on its activities to the churches six months prior to the
5870 convening of next general synod.

ADOPTED

Article 147 – GGRI-T (Reformed Churches in Indonesia – Timor)

1. Material

- 5876 1.1. CRCA report
- 5877 1.2. Letter from Smithville (8.3.1.2)

2. Observations

- 5879 2.1 The Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad included in its report to GS 2019
5880 that in a letter dd April 9, 2018, Smithville CanRC requested the CRCA to “investigate”
5881 the fledgling federation of churches newly formed on the island of Timor in Indonesia
5882 “with a view to establishing a sister church relation with them.” This new federation of
5883 nine churches is the fruit the Lord has granted on the labors of Smithville’s missionary,
5884 Rev Edwar Dethan. This new federation has called itself “Gereja-Gereja Reformasi
5885 Indonesia – Timor” (GGRI-T) because it intends to apply to the next Synod of the
5886 national GGRI to become part of that federation of churches.
- 5887 2.2 Previous CanRC synods have indicated that requests for new relationships should come
5888 to the attention of the General Synod after having followed the ecclesiastical route (see
5889 GS 2007, Art 160, Cons 3.3; GS 2013, Art 81, Cons 3.1 & Rec 4; GS 2013 Art 175,
5890 Cons 3.2).

NOT FINAL

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- 5891 2.3 In her letter to GS 2019, Smithville “formally requests GS 2019 to investigate the
5892 GGRI-T with a view to establishing ecclesiastical fellowship with them.” As grounds
5893 for the request Smithville reiterates what the CRCA has written to Synod: the GGRI-T
5894 “are in a sense daughters of the CanRC and receive direct assistance from some CanRC
5895 through mission work. It is appropriate for the CanRC to establish closer ties with the
5896 GGRI-Timor.”
- 5897 2.4 The CanRC have had a relation of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the national GGRI
5898 since 2010.

5899 **3. Considerations**

- 5900 3.1 The request to “investigate” the GGRI-T with a view to establishing a sister church
5901 relation with them did not come to the attention of this GS via the the ecclesiastical
5902 route.
- 5903 3.2 As the GGRI-T is the fruit of mission work by Canadian Reformed Churches, we may
5904 be confident that our sister churches, the GGRI, will accept (be it perhaps via a process)
5905 their application to join their federation.
- 5906 3.3 As the churches known today as the GGRI-T were forming and finding their way into a
5907 federation, they have been looking to the Smithville CanRC for a measure of guidance.
5908 Now that they are newly federated, they continue to look for encouragement and
5909 support from Smithville and those with whom Smithville belongs. The CRCA has
5910 experience and resources from which the GGRI-T could benefit.

5911 **4. Recommendations**

5912 That Synod decide:

- 5913 4.1 To instruct the CRCA
- 5914 4.1.1 To provide assistance to the GGRI-T in its effort to join the GGRI;
- 5915 4.1.2 In conjunction with Smithville to offer any other assistance within the normal
5916 ambit of CRCA work that the GGRI-T would need.
- 5917 4.2 To send this decision to the Smithville CanRC as Synod’s answer to their request.

5918 **ADOPTED**

5919 **Article 148 – FRCNA (Free Reformed Churches in North America)**

5920 **1. Material**

- 5921 1.1 Report of the CCCNA – FRCNA (8.2.3.1).
- 5922 1.2 Letters from the CanRC: Lincoln -Vineyard (8.3.2.2); Attercliffe (8.3.2.6)

5923 **2. Observations**

- 5924 2.1 GS 2016 (Art. 49) gave a general mandate to the committee of the CCCNA:
- 5925 [4.1.2] To investigate diligently all the requests received for entering into EF in North
5926 America;
- 5927 [4.1.3] To respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests to attend assemblies,
5928 synods, or meetings of other churches in North America;
- 5929 [4.1.4] To report on its findings with suitable recommendations to the next general synod
5930 and to present to the churches a report of its work six months prior to the
5931 convening of the next general.
- 5932
- 5933

NOT FINAL

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- 5934 2.2 The CanRC does not have EF with the FRCNA but is a member of NAPARC together
5935 with these churches.
- 5936 2.3 The CanRC and FRCNA had official interaction at the federative level from 1998-2008.
5937 In response to certain concerns of the FRCNA, in 2007 the CanRC chose to cease
5938 pursuing discussions with the FRCNA until such a time as they requested resumption of
5939 contact. In 2008 there was a brief resumption but since that time there has been no
5940 contact until 2017.
- 5941 2.3.1 GS 1998 (Art. 98) decided to take up contact with the FRCNA and initiate
5942 fraternal dialogue with the FRCNA with a view towards establishing federative
5943 unity.
- 5944 2.3.2 GS 2001 (Art. 92) decided to acknowledge that the FRCNA has received the
5945 CanRC into a stage of “limited contact” according to the FRNCA unity guidelines
5946 at their recent Synod, and to continue dialogue with a view to promoting federative
5947 unity, discussing whatever obstacles there may be on this path.
- 5948 2.3.3 GS 2004 (Art. 85) decided to continue meeting with a view to EF, while at the
5949 same time promoting and maintaining the desire for federative unity, and to
5950 discuss whatever obstacles there may be on this path.
- 5951 2.3.4 GS 2007 (Art. 105) decided to cease from pursuing discussions with the FRCNA.
5952 A letter from the FRCNA dated November 10, 2005, listed the following reasons
5953 for a reluctance to meet: 1) “the ongoing discussions and movement of the CanRC
5954 towards union with the URCNA” 2) “our meetings are too much top down.”
- 5955 2.3.4 GS 2010 (Art. 30) decided to utilize NAPARC to meet the FRCNA and to
5956 conclude regretfully at this time to have no formal ecclesiastical relations with the
5957 FRNCA.
- 5958 2.4 There was an informal meeting at the ICRC 2017 between FRCNA delegates and
5959 CanRC delegates of the CRCA and CCCNA. The committee also held a meeting with
5960 the FRCNA at NARPAC 2017.
- 5961 2.5 With our joint membership in both the ICRC and NAPARC, there was an opportunity to
5962 renew acquaintances with the FRCNA’s external relations committee.
- 5963 2.6 During the meeting on November 15, 2017, the following was discussed:
5964 a) The reasons for the pause in our relationships over the past decade.
5965 b) The perception of one another when it comes to the topics of experiential preaching,
5966 the regeneration of infants, and what it means that children are sanctified in Christ.
5967 c) The mutual desire on the part of the respective committee members to resume contact
5968 and under the Lord’s blessing to have a relationship between our two federations
5969 grow without the pressure of speaking about federative unity.
- 5970 2.7 General Synod 2018 of the FRCNA decided to resume relationship with the CanRC at
5971 the FRCNA Level One correspondence. According to their rules, “Level 1 – Limited
5972 Contact” involves the following:
- 5973 1. *sending a delegate(s) to attend each other’s Synods (or equivalent). Visiting*
5974 *delegates attending our Synod may be asked for advice;*
- 5975 2. *exchanging copies of the Acts of Synod (or equivalent)*
- 5976 3. *offering spiritual support. This may include:*
- 5977 a. *calling attention to each other’s spiritual and ecclesiastical problems with*
5978 *mutual efforts toward Scriptural solutions;*

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- 5979 *b. warning each other of spiritual dangers which arise and which spread and*
5980 *begin to dominate the church of Christ;*
5981 *c. correcting each other in love regarding any slackening in connection with*
5982 *the confession or practice of “the faith once delivered unto the saints.”*
5983 *(Jude 3);*
5984 *4. co-operative activity in areas of common concern. For example: offering*
5985 *material support and co-operation or consultation with regard to mission work,*
5986 *theological education, etc.*

5987 **3. Considerations**

- 5988 3.1 The committee has been diligent in completing their mandate.
5989 3.2 Engaging in contact and dialogue with the Free Reformed Churches of North America
5990 (FRCNA) is equivalent to FRCNA’s Level One correspondence.
5991 3.3 On the basis of the CCCNA report and the input from the churches, with gratitude to the
5992 Lord, it is right to accept the offer of a Level One relationship of the FRCNA.

5993 **4. Recommendations**

5994 That Synod decide:

- 5995 4.1 To mandate the CCCNA committee:
5996 4.1.1 To accept the invitation of the Free Reformed Churches of North America
5997 (FRCNA) to enter into their Level One correspondence.
5998 4.1.2 To keep the churches with which EF has already been established informed of our
5999 relationship with the FRCNA and consult with them concerning the FRCNA.
6000 4.1.3 To submit its report to the churches five months prior to the convening of next
6001 general synod.

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6003 **ADOPTED**

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6005 **Article 149 – CRCA & CCCNA (Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad &**
6006 **Committee for Contact with Churches in North America)**

6007 **1. Material**

- 6008 1.1 Report of the CRCA (8.2.2)
6009 1.2 Report of the CCCNA (8.2.3)
6010 1.3 Letters from the churches: Toronto (8.3.2.4); Grassie (8.3.2.7); Tintern (8.3.2.8)

6011 **2. Observations**

- 6012 2.1 The CRCA and CCCNA submitted a combined report describing obstacles they
6013 encountered in operating as separate committees with a measure of overlap in their
6014 responsibilities:
6015 2.1.1 In multi-lateral situations such as the ICRC or NAPARC, challenges arose in
6016 relation to which committee should delegate how many men. GS 2016 mandated
6017 the two committees to consult with each other on the delegation to the ICRC.
6018 2.1.2 The two committees have inconsistent policies in some matters (e.g., whom to
6019 invite to our general synods). They have also experienced a lack of awareness
6020 about each other’s work when it came to representing the CanRC at sister

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- 6021 churches' General Synods or Assemblies so that they inadvertently worked at
6022 cross purposes.
- 6023 2.1.3 The CRCA and the CCCNA also report that the OPC "asked if the CanRC could
6024 cross-pollinate their inter-church relations committees (CRCA and CCCNA) to
6025 make it easier for our inter-church relations committees to function together."
- 6026 2.2 Consequently, the CRCA and the CCCNA jointly recommend that Synod "mandate" the
6027 "CanRC inter-church relations committees" to do "a study of how CO article 50 can
6028 best be executed." The committees request that the result of their study become "part of
6029 our ecclesiastical regulations."
- 6030 2.2.1 This study should include the following topics:
- 6031 2.2.1.1 Whom to invite as delegates and whom to invite as observers to our general
6032 synods?
- 6033 2.2.1.2 Who is responsible for extending this invitation?
- 6034 2.2.1.3 What are the rights and privileges of delegates and observers during synod?
6035 How are they cared for during the time of synod and how can they interact
6036 with members of synod?
- 6037 2.2.1.4 What synod materials are delegates and observers respectively entitled to?
- 6038 2.2.1.5 Who is responsible for ensuring delegates and observers receive the materials
6039 they are entitled to?
- 6040 2.2.1.6 How to have CanRC representation at multi-church conferences (e.g. ICRC,
6041 NAPARC).
- 6042 2.2.2 This study should also indicate "how the CanRC inter-church relations committees
6043 might most effectively and efficiently work together." Answers to challenges
6044 about working together ought to include matters as:
- 6045 2.2.2.1 The flow of information between the CanRC inter-church relations
6046 committees;
- 6047 2.2.2.2 The cooperation between CanRC inter-church relations committees;
- 6048 2.2.2.3 The pros and cons of consolidating and reorganizing all inter-church relations
6049 committees into one, taking into consideration reflection on this in the past;
- 6050 2.2.2.4 The pros and cons of maintaining different types of relationships.
- 6051 2.3 The church in Toronto supports the concept of studying how the churches can best
6052 execute our inter-church relations and offers some additional perspectives. For various
6053 reasons (e.g., Article 50 CO speaks of "churches abroad", but migrations of peoples
6054 increasingly means that these foreign churches are in reality living in our own
6055 communities; further, becoming one federation of churches with the sister churches
6056 living on our own continent is difficult to achieve at a solely federational level). Toronto
6057 concludes that "our current practice of EF no longer suits our context and needs to be
6058 re-evaluated." Toronto recommends that the proposed study include reflection on "if
6059 and how ecclesiastical fellowship can be acknowledged and experienced at a
6060 local/classical level while being considered at a federative level to avoid a hierarchical
6061 approach that can hinder local church interaction."
- 6062 2.4 The church in Grassie shares its opinion that "adopting a more clearly defined structure
6063 to govern inter-church relationships would provide more clarity and consistency in our
6064 efforts to achieve Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with other faithful churches." As an
6065 example of a "more clearly defined structure," Grassie draws Synod's attention to the 5

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6066 levels of EF used by the Heritage Reformed Congregations (with details supplied), with
6067 the suggestion that Synod consider making a decision to implement a structure in that
6068 line.

6069 2.5 The Spring Creek church in Tintern advises Synod of their conviction that “it would be
6070 beneficial for our federation to have a better policy as to our purpose and method in
6071 establishing and maintaining” existing and new relations with other churches. Tintern
6072 feels that too many resources are currently being used in establishing and maintaining
6073 relationships. Accordingly, Tintern commends to Synod’s attention the Rules for
6074 Ecclesiastical Relations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (with details supplied).

6075 **3. Considerations**

6076 3.1 Already at GS 2010 the CRCA requested Synod to consolidate and reorganize inter-
6077 church relations by disbanding the CRCA and the CCCNA and creating one Committee
6078 on Inter-church Relations. Synod did not follow through with that request because
6079 (among other reasons) the CCCNA had not been part of the conversation. Now both the
6080 CRCA and the CCCNA express some dissatisfaction with the full separation of the two
6081 committees.

6082 3.2 The influx of migrants to Canada plus our growing awareness of Reformed Christian
6083 communities amongst these migrants prompts a reshuffling of the relationship between
6084 foreign mission and local mission. This in turn suggests that we do well to re-examine
6085 the interface between mandates typically given to a Committee for Relations with
6086 Churches Abroad (per Art 50 CO) and those given to the Committee for Contact with
6087 Churches in North America.

6088 3.3 Given these new realities, our current structure for the ecclesiastical relations could
6089 benefit from a careful re-examination. Rules followed by other NAPARC and ICRC
6090 churches could assist us in improving our patterns of establishing and maintaining
6091 relationships.

6092 **4. Recommendations**

6093 4.1 Synod decide to instruct both the CRCA and the CCCNA to jointly

6094 4.1.1 Do a thorough study on how Art 50 CO can best be executed in today’s
6095 ecclesiastical realities. The items flagged in Observations 2.2-5 should be
6096 incorporated into the study.

6097 4.1.2 Submit a report to the churches 6 months prior to the convening of the next Synod.
6098

6099 **ADOPTED**

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6101 **Article 150 – Confidential Acts**

6102 Synod went into closed session.

6103 Motion by the clerks of GS 2019:

6104 That the following decisions of Synod Edmonton 2019 be declared confidential Acts:

6105 Articles 94 (Viersen), 95 (Neerlandia), 98 (Bosma), 141 (Sloots).

6106 **Ground:** Each of these deals with matters involving sensitive personal information that
6107 has never been made public and which, in view of the 9th commandment, ought not
6108 to be made public.
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Article 151 – Appointments

Not published in draft form on the web (so that those appointed may find out about their appointment via the right channels)

Synod adjourned until 7:00pm.

**Day 8 — Evening Session
Thursday, May 23, 2019**

Article 152 – Reopening

Synod reopened in open plenary session. The chairman had the meeting sing Hymn 64. He noted all synod members were present.

Article 153 – Adoption of Acts

Prepared articles of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

Article 154 - Concluding Matters

Censure as per CO 34

The chairman stated, with deep thankfulness to the Lord, that censure as per CO Art. 34 was not needed. Instead, he gave thanks that a good spirit of cooperation was evidenced throughout Synod.

Publication of the Acts

It was noted that the first and second clerks had been appointed to prepare the Acts of GS 2019 for publication. Synod allowed an official version of the acts to be made available on the website as soon as available. Two copies of the confidential Acts will be sent to each church.

Financial Matters

Synod members were reminded to contact br. Rob Duker regarding reimbursements.

Preparation of Next General Synod

The Guelph-Immanuel CanRC had already been appointed as convening church for GS 2019 (GS 2019 Art. 151). GS 2022 will be convened in the month of May.

Adoption of the Final Articles of the Acts

Members of Synod were requested to review the Acts received and to forward any further corrections to the clerk. The executive members of Synod will review and adopt the final articles of the Acts (articles of the last evening session).

Approval of Press Release

The press release will be prepared by the vice-chairman and approved by the executive members of Synod for publication.

Article 155 – Personal Questions and Comments

On behalf of the members of GS 2019, the vice-chairman, the Rev. Louwrese, expressed sincere gratitude to the Rev. Agema, who served so capably as chairman, referencing in particular the

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6152 morning devotions on Psalm 119, his impartiality, and good leadership. During the round
6153 appreciation was expressed for the leadership of the executive and the comradery during Synod.

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6155 **Article 156 – Close of GS 2019**

6156 The chairman then proceeded to speak some closing remarks. He first of all gave thanks to God,
6157 noting how dependent we are upon the Lord. He expressed deep gratitude on behalf of the
6158 members of Synod for the services of the Edmonton-Immanuel congregation. He presented the
6159 host church with a large plaque bearing the text “Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous
6160 things out of your law. Psalm 119:18” and the wild rose as an indication of the Synod taking
6161 place in Alberta. He explained how Psalm 119:18 reminds us of the need for the Holy Spirit to
6162 guide us in God’s Word. He reflected briefly on some of the agenda items, noting matters of
6163 sadness and joy. Some words of gratitude were spoken to the brothers at Synod for their
6164 cooperation. There was good trust among all, also when opinions differed. Synod 2019 was a
6165 deliberative assembly, as it ought to be. He expressed gratitude for how the Lord had blessed
6166 Synod in this way.

6167 On behalf the Council of Edmonton-Immanuel Elder Rob Duker presented the Rev. Agema with
6168 a gently used gavel as a token of appreciation for his work as chairman. Gratitude was also
6169 expressed for the guidance of Rev. VanSpronsen, minister of Edmonton-Immanuel and member
6170 of Synod.

6171 The Rev. Agema read Ephesians 1:15-23 & 3:20-21, led in prayer, and asked those present to
6172 sing Psalm 150.

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Since the *agenda* had become the *acta*,
with a gentle but firm strike of gavel
the chairman declared GS 2019
closed.

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Website - No