

**COMMITTEE ON RELATIONS WITH CHURCHES ABROAD
OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES
SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD 2010**

February 15, 2010

Esteemed brothers:

Some time ago, the CRCA sent out its Report to General Synod 2010. On pages 27 and 28 of that document, we indicated that a Supplementary Report would be forthcoming in regard to the *Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia* as well as *The Reformed Churches in Indonesia*. As Committee, we decided to go the route of a Supplementary Report because of the need to include as much recent correspondence with the Indonesian churches as we possibly could. What follows constitutes the promised Supplementary Report.

In our Report, we use the following terminology.

Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia (Gereja Gereja Reformasis Calvinis di Indonesia NTT): CRCI.

Reformed Churches in Indonesia - NTT (Gereja Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia NTT): RCI

It should be noted that the CRCI was formerly referred to as the GGRC while the RCI was formerly referred to as the GGRI. Both in our main Report to General Synod and in this Supplementary Report, we have changed over to the standardized terminology and abbreviations used by the International Conference of Reformed Churches.

1. The CRCI (formerly GGRC).

Communication and Actions subsequent to our main Report to General Synod 2010:

- A series of email communications between br. H. Hoogstra on behalf of the CRCA and Rev. Yonson Dethan between Nov. 9, 2009 and Dec. 20, 2009. From this correspondence, the following can be highlighted:
 - Rev. Dethan gives information about a number of developments in his own work, including the establishment of a new College which will provide education for nearly all walks of life but with a special focus on preparing students for leadership in the ministry of the Word, teaching and for the work of office e-bearers.
 - In 2007, Rev. A. Souman addressed the Synod of the CRCI. In the course of his speech, he made the suggestion that the CRCI and the RCI could form one federation in which each of these churches would form a Regional Synod. Rev. Dethan states that the CRCI Synod decided to ask the churches to discuss this proposal at a local level. Rev. Dethan sees a number of difficulties in any potential merger. He writes: "The first problem that we are facing with this

47 proposal is the different (sic) of our culture, language, church history between
48 GGRC and GGRI as well as distance between the islands and different of
49 mentality between the GGRC and GGRI people. These are the import things to be
50 considered together so that later on they will not destroy the good will for church
51 unification and that we will not feel regret after that since we are consider them
52 well and wisely ready to face the coming problem for the sake of true
53 unification." He adds that "Most of GGRI people are Sumbanese, while Most of
54 GGRC people are Roteneses and some Sabunese and a bit of Timorese. Theses
55 are completely different tribes which has its own culture and language from one
56 to the other." Furthermore, Rev. Dethan also highlights the geographical barriers
57 between the two federations. With a scarcity of financial resources, travel and
58 official meetings between the two federations is challenging. In general, Rev.
59 Dethan is of the opinion that working toward the unification of the CRCI and the
60 RCI will require considerable time and patience.

- 61 • Rev. Dethan provides information about the conflict between the CRCI and the
62 GGRM. He states that a personal reconciliation took place between himself and
63 Rev. Fangidae on March 13, 2008. However, ecclesiastical reconciliation has not
64 yet occurred. From Rev. Dethan's perspective, the GGRM broke away from the
65 GGRC and thus reunification depends on the initiative of the GGRM.
- 66 • In December of 2009, the CRCA finally received a copy of the decision of the 2007
67 Synod of the CRCI in response to the decisions of the 2007 General Synod of the
68 Canadian Reformed Churches. What follows is a translation provided by Rev. Dethan:
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 - 70 1. *To accept the Synod decision of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Smithers*
 - 71 2. *To thank the Canadian Reformed Church in Smithville for sending Rev. Edwer.Y.*
72 *Dethan, M.Div, to be a Missionary in Timor and to work together with the GGRC*
73 *NTT.*
 - 74 3. *To thank the Canadian Reformed Church in Smithville for all their hard work and*
75 *efforts and cooperation in order to support GGRC NTT to be accepted as a sister*
76 *church of the Canadian Reformed churches.*
 - 77 4. *To ask the Canadian Reformed Churches in Smithville to please help supporting*
78 *GGRC to be a sister church with the Canadian Reformed churches at the coming*
79 *Synod of the Canadian Reformed churches.*
 - 80 5. *GGRC supports and accepts all churches and mission posts that are sponsored by*
81 *Canadian Reformed Church of Smithville.*
 - 82 6. *GGRC supports the establishing of the Reformed Training Centre of (IRTC)*
83 *Reformasi in Kupang that is being sponsored by Canadian Reformed in Smithville.*
 - 84 7. *Synod gave mandate to the elected CRCA of GGRC to continue the relationship with*
85 *the Canadian Reformed Churches so that in not too long time both GGRC and*
86 *Canadian Reformed may become sister churches.*
 - 87 8. *To thank Canadian Reformed of Smithville and the CRCA of the Canadian Reformed*
88 *Churches for sending Rev. Anton Souman to attend the Synod of GGRC in Noelbaki.*
 - 89 9. *To thank Canadian Reformed of Smithville and the CRCA of Canadian Reformed*
90 *Churches for the speech giving at the GGRC Synod 2007 via Rev. Anton Souman.*
 - 91 10. *In connection with the proposal of mentioned by Rev. Souman in his speech in GGRC*
92 *Synod 2007 for establishing the General Synod and dan Regional Synod, Sinod*

93 *decided to first of all do the work of socialization of this proposal to the local*
94 *churches and then it will be discussed again in the coming Synod.*

- 95 • Upon request, the CRCA received information from the "Children of Light" charity
96 which gathers and sends monies to support charitable projects overseen by Rev. Yonson
97 Dethan. The material we received included a recent financial statement as well as an
98 outline of procedures used for the disbursement and management of funds. In addition,
99 we received a copy of a recent and lengthy report from Rev. Dethan to the Children of
100 Light board.

101 **Evaluation**

102 During the last three years, our Committee has been frustrated by the lack of official
103 communication from the CRCI. Only in December of 2009 did we finally get responses to some
104 of our questions but they were personal answers from Rev. Yonson Dethan and not official
105 replies from their Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad. Because of this lack of
106 official contact, it is difficult for the CRCA to gain any sense of the character and direction of the
107 CRCI. In regard to unification possibilities between the CRCI and the RCI, the CRCA feels that
108 the CRCI lacks enthusiasm for this endeavour. Finally, we mention that while the Free
109 Reformed Churches of Australia have more knowledge of the situation in Indonesia, they have
110 not yet established ecclesiastical fellowship with these churches but are still monitoring the
111 situation.

112 **Recommendations**

113 The CRCA recommends that Synod Burlington 2010 decide:

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| 114 1. To not at this time offer a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship to the CRCI.
115 2. To mandate the CRCA to continue contact with the CRCI with a view to improving official
116 communications.
117 3. To acknowledge that unity between the CRCI and the RCI should not be a prerequisite for
118 ecclesiastical fellowship with either of these church confederations.
119 4. To mandate the CRCA to continue to promote unity efforts between the CRCI and the RCI.
120 5. To authorize the CRCA to appoint Dr. A.J. Pol and Rev. A. Souman to visit a General Synod
121 of the CRCI and to generally assess the ecclesiastical situation of these churches. |
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122 2. **The RCI (formerly the GGRI).**

123 **Communications and Actions** subsequent to our main Report to General Synod 2010: None

124 **Evaluation**

125 Already in 2007, the CRCA recommended the RCI for a relationship of Ecclesiastical
126 Fellowship. Synod 2007 considered that the CRCA "provides the proof that the RCI are a
127 federation of faithful churches of our Lord Jesus Christ" and further that "the committee gives

128 evidence that it followed Rule #3 for Ecclesiastical Fellowship when it consulted with the GKN
129 and the FRCA" (Acts of Synod 2007, Article 151, section 4.1).

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131 Synod 2007 wanted to deal with the RCI and the CRCI in a similar manner. For this reason it
132 decided to "delay accepting the invitation from the GGRI to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship
133 until all the necessary information is available to make a decision concerning ecclesiastical
134 fellowship with the CRCI" (Article 151, section 5.2). Since Synod 2007, despite several
135 requests, the CRCA has not been able to any obtain official correspondence from the CRCI. The
136 CRCA received communications from Rev. Yonson Dethan but not from Deputies for Relations
137 with Churches Abroad of the CRCI. It does not seem right to withhold a relationship of
138 ecclesiastical fellowship from the RCI due to problems in communicating with the CRCI.

139 Synod 2007 asked the CRCA to encourage the RCI to promote efforts toward federative unity
140 with the CRCI. It is clear that the RCI has been diligent in promoting unity. The RCI has sent at
141 least two official letters to the CRCI in which it offered to mediate between the CRCI and the
142 GGRM and also extended overtures of ecclesiastical unity to the CRCI. To date, the CRCI has
143 not responded to these offers and overtures. In addition, it can be mentioned that when Rev. A.
144 Souman proposed the model of the RCI and the CRCI forming Regional Synods which would
145 then meet together as a General Synod, this idea was discussed and accepted by a Synod of the
146 RCI. The CRCA is convinced that the RCI has done what it could to promote good relations and
147 church unity between itself and the CRCI. In some ways, the RCI has encountered the same
148 problem as the CRCA in dealing with the CRCI - a lack of official communications.

149 **Recommendations**

150 The CRCA recommends that Synod Burlington 2010 decide:

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| 151 1. To accept the invitation of the RCI to enter into a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship.
152 2. To maintain the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship under the adopted rules.
153 3. To monitor the progress of dialogue between the RCI and the CRCI. |
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