

ACTS

**General Synod
Lincoln, ON
1992**

of the

Canadian Reformed Churches

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Acts

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Top row (l to r): Rev. C. Van Spronsen, A. Witten, Rev. J.D. Wielenga, P. Meliefste, P. Vandergugten, A. Kingma, (Clerk-secretary), Rev. P.G. Feenstra, Rev. W. den Hollander; middle row: Rev. S.L. Phillips (OPC), J. Werkman, J. Schouten, W. Smouter, H. Faber, P. vanderPol; seated: Rev. Cl. Stam, Rev. J. Visscher, Rev. R. Aasman, Rev. D.G.J. Agema

ACTS

of the
General Synod
of the
Canadian Reformed Churches
held at
Lincoln, Ontario
November 3, 1992 - November 18, 1992

MORNING SESSION – TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1992

ARTICLE 1

Opening

On behalf of the convening church at Lincoln, ON, Rev. G.A. Snip calls the meeting to order. He requests the singing of Psalm 146: 1 and 3, reads Deuteronomy 4: 1-8, and leads in prayer.

He welcomes the delegates with the following words:

Esteemed brethren in our Lord Jesus Christ,

On behalf of the convening church at Lincoln, I bid you a hearty welcome. The Lord has given you a safe trip to Lincoln. May He also provide you with strength so that you can do your work here. A special committee has been active in making all of the necessary preparations, and now that the moment of Synod's opening has come, the church here at Lincoln will do its best to make your stay as pleasant as possible. It is our hope that you will be able to look back on these weeks as good ones. We realize that your presence here involves sacrifices. Several of you, as members of Synod will not even see your families for some weeks, but we know that our heavenly God will care for your families.

Brethren, you have come here to occupy yourselves with ecclesiastical matters. Decisions have to be made and for that purpose you need the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Yesterday evening a prayer service was held in which God was asked for a blessing over the work to be done. You have to do your work in dependence on the Lord. In our personal lives we are in submission to the Word of God. The Synod also must do its work in subjection to the authoritative Word of God. The Word of God has to be the starting point in all your considerations, discussions and decisions.

We read a part from the book of Deuteronomy. Israel was about to enter the promised land. Moses would not enter the land of Canaan, for he did not sanctify God in the eyes of the people of Israel as we can read in Numbers 20. Before his death, Moses delivered a long address in which he incited the Israelites to give heed to the statutes and the ordinances which he had taught them. We encountered in Deuteronomy the significant words: "You shall not add to the Word which I command you, nor take from it; that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." It was important for the Israelites that they would take to heart the Word of God. The children of God of all times have to keep the Word of God. A woman once said to Jesus Christ: "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked." But He replied: "Blessed rather are those who hear the Word of God and keep it."

The Church has to love and to defend the truth. The apostle Paul wrote in his first letter to Timothy about the Church of the Living God, which is the pillar and

bulwark of the truth. The Church is not allowed to deviate from the truth. In the first chapter of the last book of the Bible we come across the words: "Blessed is he who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written therein; for the time is near." We have to take into account that the moment of the return of our Lord and Saviour is approaching. In the course of history many have departed from the Word of God. Therefore, we have to let ourselves be warned by these words from the last book of the Bible: "I warn every one who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if any one adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book."

It is clear that the Word of God calls us to a continuous faithfulness. May this faithfulness be evident in your activities during the coming weeks. We confess in Article 8 of the Belgic Confession: "Since it is forbidden to add to or take away anything from the Word of God, it is evident that the doctrine thereof is most perfect and complete in all respects." Hold on to the Word of God, the Confessions of the Church and the Church Order. May the Word of God be as a lamp unto your feet, a lantern shining on the path before you. With these words I declare the General Synod of Lincoln 1992 as opened.

He requests the brothers to sing Psalm 119: 40.

ARTICLE 2

Examination of Credentials

The chairman of the convening church requests brothers R. VanAndel and G. Vanlperen to help examine the credentials. The delegates are:

From Regional Synod East:

Ministers:

Rev. D.G.J. Agema, Rev. W. den Hollander, Rev. P.G. Feenstra and Rev. Cl. Stam.

Elders:

elder H. Faber, elder J. Schouten, elder W. Smouter and elder A. Witten.

From Regional Synod West:

Ministers:

Rev. R. Aasman, Rev. C. VanSpronsen, Rev. J. Visscher and Rev. J.D. Wielenga.

Elders:

elder P. Meliefste, elder P. Vandergugten and elder J. Werkman.

Primi elder delegate from Regional Synod West, elder W. VanAssen is not able to attend. Alternate delegate, elder P. VanderPol is to arrive the next day.

All delegates sign an attendance list.

ARTICLE 3

Election of Officers

The following officers are elected:

Chairman: Rev. J. Visscher

Vice-chairman: Rev. Cl. Stam

First clerk: Rev. R. Aasman

Second clerk: Rev. D.G.J. Agema

ARTICLE 4

Constitution of Synod

The chairman of the convening church, Rev. G.A. Snip, declares Synod constituted. He invites the officers to take their seats. The chairman, Rev. J. Visscher, thanks

MORNING SESSION – WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1992

ARTICLE 7

Reopening

The chairman opens the meeting by asking that Psalm 93: 1 and 4 be sung. He reads Psalm 119: 33-48, and leads in prayer. Roll call shows that everyone is present, including elder P. VanderPol. He is welcomed and signs the attendance list.

ARTICLE 8

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 1-6 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 9

Adoption of Agenda

The following agenda is adopted:

- I. Opening on behalf of the convening church at Lincoln at 9:00 a.m.
- II. Examination of Credentials
- III. Election of the Officers
- IV. Constitution of General Synod
- V. Information from the Convening Church
- VI. Adoption of the Agenda
- VII. A. Arrangement of Time Schedule and Procedures
- B. Letter from the Foundation for Superannuation re date for tri-annual meeting, Saturday, Nov. 7, 1992
- VIII. Incoming Mail
 - A. Theological College
 1. Nominations for the Board of Governors
 - a. Regional Synod East Nov. 13-14, 1991
 - b. Regional Synod West June 16, 1992
 2. Report of the Board of Governors (plus appendices- bylaws)
 3. Proposal from the Senate re Article 132 Acts of General Synod Winnipeg 1989
 4. Letter from the church at Burlington East, ON re same
 5. Letter from the church at Cloverdale BC re cost allocation for the Theological College
 6. Report from the Finance and Property Committee
 - B. Bible Translations
 1. Report of the Committee on Bible Translations (plus appendix: Australia)
 2. Letter from the church at Burlington East, ON re Report of Committee on Bible Translations
 3. Letter from the church at Edmonton-Immanuel, AB re same
 4. Letter from the church at Guelph, ON re same
 5. Letter from the church at Burlington South, ON re same
 6. Overture from the church at Langley, BC re same

7. Overture from the church at Carman, MB re same
8. Overture from the church at Chilliwack, BC re same
9. Letter from the church at Port Kells, BC re same
10. Letter from Premier Printing re RSV

C. *Book of Praise*

1. Report of the Standing Committee for the publication of the *Book of Praise*
2. Letter from the church at Burlington East, ON re report of the committee
3. Letter from the church at Guelph, ON re same
4. Letter from the church at Port Kells, BC re same
5. Letter from the Organ Committee of the Free Reformed church at Armadale, WA re Hymn 1A
6. Letter from the church at Winnipeg, MB re same
7. Letter from the church at Carman, MB re same
8. Letter from br. J. VerHelst, Smithers BC re same
9. Letter from br. C. Hoogerdijk, Taber AB re same
10. Letter from the church at Burlington West, ON re introduction to Church Order
11. Letter from br. L. Van Zandwyk, Burlington, ON re Canons of Dort II 3,4

D. Protest and Appeals

1. Letter from the church at Brampton, ON re Acts General Synod Winnipeg 1989, (Art.132)
2. Letter from the church at Brampton, ON re Acts General Synod Winnipeg 1989, appendix III A1 and 2
3. Letter from br. D. Houweling, Lynden, USA re Regional Synod West May 28, 1991
4. Letter from the church at Langley, BC re synodical decisions e.g. Acts Winnipeg 1989 (Art.161, 91 &108)
5. Letter from Rev. G. Nederveen, Burlington, ON re decision Regional Synod East Nov. 13-14, 1991
6. Letter from the church at Carman, MB re Acts Regional Synod West June 16, 1992 (Art. 7)
7. Letter from the church at Winnipeg, MB re same
8. Letter from the church at Neerlandia, AB re same
9. Letter from the church at Toronto, ON re decision Regional Synod East Nov. 13-14, 1991, (Art. 8)
10. Letter from br. W. DeHaan, Wardsville, ON re decisions of Regional Synod West June 16, 1992
11. Letter from br. L. Van Zandwyk, Burlington, ON re Hymn 1A
12. Letter from br. L. Van Zandwyk, Burlington, ON re Acts of General Synod Winnipeg 1989 (Art. 154 C.1.b.)
13. Letter from br. C.J. Burger, Grand Rapids, USA re General Synod Winnipeg 1989 (Art. 111, 112, 113 & 122)
14. Letter from sr. A. Burger, sr. I. Kruyswijk, sr. W. Sikkema & sr. A. Sikkema, Grand Rapids, USA re decision Regional Synod East Nov. 13-14, 1991

15. Letter from br. G. Kruijswijk, Grand Rapids, USA re decisions General Synod Winnipeg 1989 (Art. 152)
 16. Letter from sr. W. Sikkema, Grand Rapids, USA re decisions Regional Synod East Nov. 13-14, 1991 (Art. 19)
 17. Letter from the church at Abbotsford, BC re Acts of General Synod Winnipeg 1989 (Art. 161)
- E. Overtures
1. Letter from the church at Vernon, BC re contact with the Federation of Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches
 2. Letter from Classis Ontario North June 12, 1992 re Deputies for Unity
 3. Letter from the church at Burlington East, ON re proposal of Classis Ontario North June 12, 1992
 4. Letter from the church at Guelph, ON re same
 5. Letter from the church at Lincoln, ON re printing of the Acts of General Synod
 6. Letter from the church at Langley, BC re convening date of General Synod
- F. Contact – Orthodox Presbyterian Church
1. Report from the Committee for Contact with the OPC
 2. Letter from the church at Burlington East, ON re report of committee
 3. Letter from the church at London, ON re same and previous Synodical decisions
 4. Letter from the church at Grand Rapids, USA re same
 5. Letter from the church at Attercliffe, ON re same
 6. Letter from the church at Burlington South, ON re same
 7. Letter from br. W. DeHaan, Wardsville, ON re same
 8. Letter from the church at Blue Bell, USA re same
 9. Overture from the American Reformed Church at Denver, USA submitted by the church at Grand Rapids, USA re additional information to item F4
 10. Letter from the Committee on Ecumenicity and InterChurch Relations of the OPC re Three Forms of Unity
 11. Letter from the church at Carman, MB re report of committee
- G. Relations with Churches Abroad
1.
 - a. Report from the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad
 - b. Supplementary report (plus appendices)
 2. Overture from the church at Carman, MB re contact with the Reformed Church in the United States
 3. Letter from the church at Guelph, ON re report of Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad
 4. Letter from the church at Attercliffe, ON re same
 5. Letter from the church at Burlington South, ON re same
 6. Letter from the church at Fergus, ON re same
 7. Letter from the church at Port Kells, BC re same
- H. Miscellaneous
1. Letter from the church at Burlington East, ON and correspondence they received as “address church” for the Federation

2. Letter from the church at Burlington East, ON re information to be sent for the year book of our sister churches in the Netherlands
 3. Letter from the church at Burlington West, ON re inspection of the archives of General Synod Winnipeg 1989
 4. Letters from br. L. Van Zandwyk, Burlington, ON re
 - a. Regulations Broader Assemblies
 - b. Acts Winnipeg 1989 (Art. 153)
 5. Letter from the church at Carman, MB re
 - a. Financial report General Fund
 - b. Audit report
 6. Letter from the church at Fergus, ON re Faber-Holwerda Bursary Committee
- IX. Appointments
- X. Censure according to Art. 44 C.O.
- XI. Publication of the Acts of General Synod
- XII. Financial matters of General Synod
- XIII. Preparation for the next General Synod
- XIV. Adoption of the Acts of General Synod
- XV. Approval of the Press Release of General Synod
- XVI. Closing of General Synod Lincoln 1992

ARTICLE 10

Advisory Committees

The following Advisory Committees are appointed:

Committee I

- Rev. J.D. Wielenga (convener)
- Rev. D.G.J. Agema
- Elder A. Witten
- Elder P. Vandergugten

Material: G, D11,12, E6

Committee II

- Rev. W. den Hollander (convener)
- Rev. J. Visscher
- Elder J. Werkman
- Elder J. Schouten

Material: A, B, C, D1,2, H6

Committee III

- Rev. P.G. Feenstra (convener)
- Rev. R. Aasman
- Elder P. Meliefste
- Elder H. Faber

Material: D3,4, 13,14,15,16, E1,2,3,4,5, H1,2,3,4,5

Committee IV

- Rev. C. VanSpronsen (convener)
- Rev. Cl. Stam

Elder W. Smouter
Elder P. VanderPol
Material: D5,6,7,8,9,10, F
Committee V
Rev. R. Aasman
Rev. J. Visscher
Material: D5,9

ARTICLE 11

Adjournment

Synod is adjourned for committee work.

EVENING SESSION – WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1992

ARTICLE 12

Closing

In closing, Rev. R. Aasman asks that Hymn 2: 1 be sung, and he leads in prayer.

MORNING SESSION – THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1992

ARTICLE 13

Reopening

The chairman opens the meeting by reading Job 9: 1-12 and asks that Psalm 29: 1 and 3 be sung. He leads in prayer. Roll call shows that all are present. Rev. G.I. Williamson is welcomed as fraternal delegate (alternate) from the OPC.

ARTICLE 14

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 7-12 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 15

Adjournment

Synod is adjourned for committee work.

EVENING SESSION – THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1992

ARTICLE 16

Reopening

The chairman asks that Hymn 3: 1 and 3 be sung. Roll call shows that all are present. The chairman expresses a hearty welcome to the professors of our Theological College who are present at this plenary session to listen to the discussion concerning reports on the Theological College. A welcome is also extended to all visitors present at this first plenary session.

ARTICLE 17

Theological College: General

Committee II presents:

Agenda item VIII A1,2,5,6

I. MATERIAL

Nominations for the Board of Governors

Regional Synod East Nov. 13-14, 1991.

Regional Synod West June 16, 1992.

Report of the Board of Governors to General Synod 1992.

Report of the Board of Governors (Finance and Property Committee) to General Synod 1992.

Letter from the church at Cloverdale, BC re assessments for Theological College.

II. OBSERVATIONS

A. With respect to the appointment to the Board of Governors Synod observes:

1. The Board of Governors recommends that Synod “appoint, elect or re-appoint or re-elect six active ministers [in accordance with section 3.04(a) of By-Law Number 1 (as amended) to hold office until the next General Synod and to appoint at least three substitutes from each Regional Synod area.”
2. Regional Synod East of Nov. 13-14, 1991 nominated the following ministers to serve as Governors of the Theological College: D.G.J. Agema, W. den Hollander, P.G. Feenstra, and as substitutes: G. Nederveen, G.Ph. VanPopta, P. Aasman, in that order.
3. Regional Synod West of June 16, 1992 nominated the following ministers to serve as Governors of the Theological College: B.J. Berends, C. VanSpronsen, J. Visscher, and as substitutes: R. Aasman, J. Moesker, P.K.A. DeBoer, in that order.
4. The Board of Governors makes the following recommendation with regard to the Governors who will serve on the Finance and Property Committee:
 - a. to re-appoint the brs. H. Buist and C.G. Heeringa as Governors for a term that will expire by the next General Synod.
 - b. to re-appoint the brs. K.J. Veldkamp and A. VanEgmond for a term from the date of their re-appointment until the second General Synod after the date of their re-appointment.
 - c. to appoint br. H.J. Sloots of Burlington, ON, for a term from the date of his appointment until the third General Synod after the date of his appointment (with as substitute: br. H.F. Stoffels of Stoney Creek, ON).

B. The Report of the Board of Governors covers the academic years 1989-1990, 1990-1991, 1991-1992, and from it the following highlights may be gleaned:

The work at the Theological College could continue without interruption. The Governors who regularly visited the lectures during the past three years report that the instruction is given in accordance with the Word of God and in harmony with the Reformed Confessions.

At times guest lecturers visited our College, while our own professors attended conferences or visited the churches. An elective course for senior students was given in OT Aramaic.

During the past three years five students have graduated from our College, two of whom have accepted a call within our churches. For the academic year

1992-1993, five new students were admitted (one from a sister church in Australia), which means that at present fifteen students are enrolled. Various promising contacts have been made with nine future students, of which two are from Australia.

The academic year 1989-1990 was marked by a time of transition. Prof. Dr. J. Faber officially terminated his twenty-one years of service at our College. Prof. Dr. N.H. Gootjes began his work as Professor of Dogmatics in January 1990. On May 1, 1990, Dr. J. DeJong entered the service of the College as Professor of Diaconology and Ecclesiology. On May 4, 1990, Dr. K. Deddens delivered his final lecture.

The Board of Governors acknowledges with gratitude that Prof. J. Geertsema obtained a Master of Theology degree from Wycliffe College and the University of Toronto. It is proposed that he be granted the status of a professor with tenure.

Our emeritus Professor of NT, Prof. L. Selles celebrated his fiftieth anniversary as Minister of the Divine Word on April 20, 1991.

In accordance with the appointments made by General Synod 1989, as of January 1, 1990, a rotating Principalship is now in place at our College. It is proposed that Prof. J. Geertsema be appointed as Principal for the period of Sept.1, 1993 - Aug.31, 1996, and that Prof. Dr. N.H. Gootjes be designated as Principal for the period of Sept.1, 1996 - Aug. 31, 1999.

The Board gratefully acknowledges the work of its Administrative Assistant and Assistant Librarian, Miss Catherine Mechelse and of its Associate Librarian, Ms. Marian Van Til. It also mentions with great appreciation the volunteer work of Mrs. Marsha Ostermeier, Mrs. Allison Schutten and Mr. U. Krikke. As well the Board remembers with gratitude the work of the Women's Saving Action. The labours of Mrs. C. Lindhout, who passed away in this past year, are gratefully remembered.

Regarding matters pertaining to the property and finances, the Board reports:

The members of the Finance and Property Committee have been able to do their work in brotherly harmony.

The College building has been well maintained. A new roof has been added at the cost of \$17,000.00.

The salaries of all Professors have been reviewed and increased annually based on the prescribed formula (Acts 1986, Art. 154, D, 4). Two Professors continue to receive retirement benefits. The salaries of the Staff have been reviewed and increased annually.

The churches continue to support the College faithfully, including continued generous contributions from our sister churches in Australia.

Audited financial statements for the years ending May 31, 1989, May 31, 1990, May 31, 1991, May 31, 1992, were sent to Synod as appendices to the reports for the years 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992. The Board recommends that Synod consider the audited statements and the reports of the auditor for the previous fiscal periods, and to ratify the appointment of Mrs. A. Spithoff C.A. as Auditor until the next General Synod.

The budget for the year 1989-1990 required an assessment of \$53.00 (an increase of \$8.00); the budget for the year 1990-1991 required an assessment of \$54.00 (an increase of \$1.00); the budget for the year 1991-1992 required an assessment of \$55.00 (an increase of \$1.00). Subject to the approval of the Board of Governors, the 1992-1993 year requires an increase of \$6.00 or an assessment of \$61.00.

The tuition fees for the period 1989-1992 were set at \$1325.00 for full-time Canadian Reformed students and \$4,000.00 for non-Canadian Reformed full-time students. The fees for the years 1993-1995 will be increased. No particulars were supplied.

In accordance with the regulations of the College Act, several members of the Board are scheduled to retire: Rev. P. Kingma, Rev. M. Vanderwel and Rev. J. vanRietschoten, due to their retirement from active service in the ministry; Rev. Cl. Stam and br. A.L. VanderHout, due to their having served the maximum allowable number of consecutive years.

- C. General Synod 1992 gratefully acknowledges the promotion of the Professor of Diaconology and Ecclesiology, Prof. J. DeJong to Doctor of Theology, at the Theological University of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.
- D. The church at Cloverdale, BC, proposes to change the annual tally of communicant members for the purpose of allocating costs to a twice annual count: January 1 and July 1.

III. CONSIDERATIONS

In accordance with section 3.04 (a) of By-Law Number 1 (as amended by By-Law Number 3), the General Synod shall appoint or re-appoint six active ministers to the Board of Governors.

In accordance with By-Law Number 1, section 3.04(b), the General Synod shall appoint or re-appoint five brothers who are not ministers.

On the basis of the reports received, Synod considers that the affairs of the Theological College are being well managed by the Faculty and the Board of Governors, composed of the Academic Committee and the Finance and Property Committee.

According to Section 5.11(e) of the Act of the Theological College, the Board of Governors has the power "to grant tenure...to members of the faculty in accordance with the policies established by Synod..." Synod notes that at present no policy is in place with regard to the granting of tenure.

With regard to the concerns raised by the church at Cloverdale about the matter of assessment, Synod considers that this matter should be submitted to the Board of Governors for further investigation and evaluation to see whether or not a change to the current procedure is warranted.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

to appoint as Governors of the Theological College the following active ministers and their substitutes:

From Eastern Canada:

Rev. D.G.J. Agema, Rev. W. den Hollander, Rev. P.G. Feenstra.

(Substitutes: Rev. G. Nederveen, Rev. P. Aasman, Rev. D. Moes, in that order).

From Western Canada:

Rev. B.J. Berends, Rev. C. VanSpronsen, Rev. J. Visscher.

(Substitutes: Rev. R. Aasman, Rev. J. Moesker, Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer, in that order).

to appoint as Governors of the Theological College the following brothers who are not ministers, according to the retirement schedule adopted by the Board of Governors: brs. H.J. Sloots (nine years); K.J. Veldkamp and A. VanEgmond (six years); H. Buist and C.G. Heeringa (three years).

to express its sincere gratitude for the work done by the retiring Governors: Revs. P. Kingma, Cl. Stam, M. Vanderwel, J. vanRietschoten and br. A.L. VanderHout.

to express gratitude that the work at the Theological College continues without interruption and that all instruction is given in harmony with the Word of God and in agreement with the Confessions of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

to acknowledge gratefully that Prof. Dr. J. DeJong was promoted to Doctor of Theology and that Prof. J. Geertsema obtained a Master of Theology degree.

to grant Prof. J. Geertsema the status of a Professor with tenure.

to appoint Prof. J. Geertsema as Principal of the Theological College for the period of Sept.1, 1993 to Aug.31, 1996 and to designate Prof. Dr. N.H. Gootjes as Principal for the period Sept. 1, 1996 to Aug.31, 1999.

to acknowledge gratefully the work for our Theological College by the Women's Saving Action, especially the work of our late sr. C. Lindhout.

to express gratitude to the:

Board of Governors,
the Faculty and Senate,

the Staff and volunteers, for all of their labours for the Theological College.

to express gratitude to the churches in Canada and the United States, and Australia, for their faithful and regular support of the Theological College.

to receive and adopt the report of the Board of Governors along with all appendices.

to acknowledge gratefully and approve the actions of the Board of Governors and officers of the College as mentioned in the report (including the interim appointment of sr. A. Spithoff as Auditor).

to take note of the audited financial statements and the reports of the Auditors for the years ending May 31, 1989, May 31, 1990, May 31, 1991, and May 31, 1992; and to relieve the Treasurer of the Board of all responsibilities for the years indicated; to appoint Sr. A. Spithoff C.A. as Auditor until the next General Synod.

to advise the church at Cloverdale to submit their suggestion to the Board of Governors.

to instruct the Board of Governors to establish a policy for the granting of tenure.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 18

Announcement

The chairman notes with thankfulness that Prof. J. Geertsema is granted tenure and addresses appropriate words to him.

ARTICLE 19

Theological College: By-laws and Policy

Committee II presents:

Agenda item A2, H6

I. MATERIAL

By-Law No. 9 being a By-Law to amend section 3.02 of By-law No. 1.

By-Law No. 10 being a By-Law relating to the establishment of a Publication Committee.

By-Law No. 11 being a By-Law relating to the establishment of the Faber-Holwerda Bursary Fund and the Faber-Holwerda Bursary Committee.

Proposal of the Board of Governors regarding Sabbatical Policy of the Theological College.

Letter from the church at Fergus, ON re C.

II. OBSERVATIONS

A. Regarding By-Law No. 9: the intent is that if a minister should cease to be an active minister during the term of his appointment, such minister may continue

to serve as a Governor until the expiration of his term, that is, until the next General Synod.

- B. Regarding By-Law No. 10: the intent is to establish a Publication Committee for the publication and dissemination of scholarly writings of the Faculty and other Reformed scholars, at the discretion of the Publication Committee and for the establishment of a periodical publication containing such scholarly work.
- C. Regarding By-Law No. 11: the intent is to appoint a Committee to administer the Faber-Holwerda Bursary Fund.
- D. Regarding the Sabbatical Policy: it is the intent to establish guidelines for a research leave program.
- E. The church at Fergus, ON suggests that the representative of the Faber family be a member in good standing of a Canadian Reformed Church or a sister church. It also requests stipulations regarding who is eligible to receive the support.

III. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Regarding By-Law No.9, it articulates more clearly the stipulation for the retirement of Governors who cease to be active ministers.
- B. Regarding By-Law No.10, Synod considers that the establishment of a Publication Committee is a constructive way of advancing the learning in theology for the training for the ministry of the Gospel (Act, Section 3).
- C. The proposed By-Law No. 10 does not include reference to Section 3 of the Canadian Reformed Theological College Act to justify the establishment of such a Publication Committee. Neither does it include accountability to the Board of Governors.
- D. Regarding By-Law No. 11, it deals adequately with the requirements regarding the establishment of such a Fund and Committee. As for the suggestions made by the church at Fergus, ON, these are dealt with under Section 4, and 8(a) of the By-Law.
- E. Regarding the Sabbatical Policy, Synod notes that under By-Law No. 1, Section 3.15 (d) the Board has the power to grant leaves of absence. To assist the Board in the execution of this power, a Sabbatical Policy is proposed which adequately outlines the process of granting such leaves of absence. This proposed Policy ensures that the education at the Theological College will not be hampered. The financial implications, however, will be in the area of \$15,000.00 per annum (or more than \$2.00 per communicant member per year).

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

- A. to confirm By-Law No. 9.
- B. to refer By-Law No. 10 back to the Board of Governors and to recommend that the following changes be made to it:
 - that Section 3 of the Act be referred to under 2 to read "all of which shall be consistent with the object and basis of the College as described in the Sections 3 and 4 of the Canadian Reformed Theological College Act, 1981."
 - that one representative of the Academic Committee of the Board of Governors be included in the Publication Committee.
 - that an Annual Report of its activities be submitted to the Board of Governors.
- C. to confirm By-Law No.11.
- D. to approve the Sabbatical Policy presented by the Board of Governors.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 20

Theological College: Appeals

Committee II presents:

Agenda item VIII A3,4, D1

After some discussion the Advisory Committee takes its report back for reconsideration.
(see Article 27)

ARTICLE 21

Overtures Regarding Deputies for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity

Committee III presents:

Agenda item VIII E1,2,3,4

After some discussion the Advisory Committee takes its report back for reconsideration.
(see Articles 28 and 36)

ARTICLE 22

Adjournment

Elder A. Witten asks that Psalm 84: 1 and 6 be sung, and closes in prayer.

MORNING SESSION – FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1992

ARTICLE 23

Reopening

The chairman opens the meeting by asking that Psalm 132: 6 and 7 be sung. He reads 1 Kings 8: 22-30, and leads in prayer.

ARTICLE 24

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 13-22 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 25

Adjournment

Synod is adjourned for committee work.

EVENING SESSION – FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1992

ARTICLE 26

Reopening

The chairman opens the evening session by asking that Psalm 1: 1 and 2 be sung. Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present. He welcomes the guests to this second plenary session.

ARTICLE 27

Theological College: Appeals

Committee II presents:

Agenda item VIII A3,4 D1

I. MATERIAL

- A. Letter from the church at Burlington East, ON.
- B. Letter from the church at Brampton, ON.
- C. Letter from the Senate of the Theological College.

II. ADMISSIBILITY

The letter from the Senate of the Theological College is admissible as its appeal pertains to a matter which involves the members and mandate of Senate (Act, By-Law 1, Section 9.01 (a)).

III. OBSERVATIONS

- A. Synod Winnipeg 1989 decided "to instruct the Board of Governors that in the event of future appointments to the Faculty at the Theological College, the Board of Governors will make available to the delegates to General Synod the confidential report including curriculum vitae of proposed new professors for an available faculty vacancy one month before the convening of General Synod" (Acts, Art. 132).
- B. The church at Burlington East, ON is of the opinion that Synod 1989 made the decision on insufficient grounds. They also adduce that a church seeking a change in a long established procedure must provide proof that the current practice is wrong.
- C. The church at Brampton, ON states that the decision lacks any kind of proof that this change was necessary or even advantageous.
- D. The Senate of the Theological College is of the same opinion regarding the absence of grounds. It also alleges that this decision "greatly reduces the margin of confidentiality."

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Synod 1989 considered that delegates to General Synod should be provided with the proper information in order that they can "prepare themselves adequately for their work at General Synod" (Acts, Art. 132, Cons.C).
- B. The matter of preparation for the appointment of a new professor is a task assigned to the Senate and the Board of Governors (Theological College Act, Section 5.11(d); By-Law No.1, 9.01(a)).
- C. The Senate states that "The Board of Governors is normally always available to provide further information on any proposed candidate to the Synod. Advance knowledge of the confidential report including curriculum vitae of any candidate is thus not an essential prerequisite for a well considered and responsible decision regarding appointment."
- D. The churches at Brampton, ON and Burlington, ON are correct in stating that the burden of proof lies with the church proposing a change in the long-established procedure. From the Acts of 1989 it is evident that, though Synod gives a reason for its recommendation, no proof is given why the existing procedure should be changed.

V. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide to rescind the decision of Synod Winnipeg 1989, Acts, Art. 132.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 28

Overtures Regarding Deputies for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity

Committee III presents:

Agenda item VIII E1,2,3,4

After some discussion the Advisory Committee takes its report back for reconsideration.
(see Articles 21 and 36)

ARTICLE 29

Bible Translations

Committee II presents:

Agenda item VIII B

After some discussion the Advisory Committee takes its report back for reconsideration.
(see Article 35)

ARTICLE 30

Adjournment

Rev. J.D. Wielenga asks that Psalm 33: 1 and 6 be sung, and closes with prayer.

MORNING SESSION – MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1992

ARTICLE 31

Reopening

The chairman asks that Hymn 28: 1-4 be sung, and reads 1 Peter 1: 13-25. He leads in prayer. He welcomes the brothers back to the second week of Synod, expressing the hope that everyone had a relaxing weekend.
Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 32

Adjournment

Synod is adjourned for committee work.

EVENING SESSION – MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1992

ARTICLE 33

Reopening

The chairman opens the evening session by asking that Psalm 46: 1 and 2 be sung. Roll call indicates that all are present. The chairman extends a special welcome to Rev. S. Phillips, fraternal delegate of the OPC, and to Rev. F. Walker, observer from the RCUS. He expresses the hope that these brothers will have a fruitful visit.

ARTICLE 34

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 23-30 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 35

Bible Translations

Committee II presents:

Agenda item B

I. MATERIAL

Report of the Committee on Bible Translations, plus appendices.

Letter from the church at Burlington East, ON.

Letter from the church at Edmonton-Immanuel, AB.

Letter from the church at Guelph, ON.

Letter from the church at Burlington South, ON.

Letter from the church Langley, BC.

Letter from the church at Carman, MB.

Letter from the church at Chilliwack, BC.

Letter from the church at Port Kells, BC.

Letter from Premier Printing.

II. OBSERVATIONS

The Committee for Bible Translations concludes that although there are good things to say about the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), it is unacceptable for use in the Canadian Reformed Churches because its preoccupation with the gender issue has resulted in a translation that changes the intent of the text, hinders an understanding of prophecy and introduces new teachings. The Committee also reports that the RSV will go out of print within five years.

All the letters received by Synod from the churches agree with the recommendation of the Committee not to accept the NRSV.

All of the churches request Synod to re-appoint the Committee on Bible Translation for the investigation of the New International Version (NIV), the New American Standard Bible (NASB), and the New King James Version (NKJV).

Some churches recommend that there be a close co-operation with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia in this matter. As well the Committee on Bible Translations has submitted to Synod, as an appendix, the decisions of Synod Bedforddale 1992 of the FRCA pertaining to Bible translations in general and the NKJV in particular.

Premier Printing informs Synod that it is able to reprint the RSV. Some churches express concern about the lack of future availability of the RSV. Some churches question whether the RSV should be reprinted for reasons of isolation.

The church at Carman, MB reminds Synod that a change in Bible translation also has implications for the use of quotations in the Confessions and the Liturgical Forms.

III. CONSIDERATIONS

Having evaluated the extensive report of the Committee for Bible Translations regarding the NRSV, Synod agrees that this translation is unacceptable for use in the churches.

Although it is becoming increasingly difficult to acquire copies of the RSV translation of the Bible, the situation still allows for the required investigation of other translations. Synod considers that it would be premature to recommend a different translation to the churches.

To prevent the possible isolation of the Canadian Reformed Churches with the usage of the RSV it is desirable to further investigate other translations.

Considering our experience with the committees behind the translation of the RSV and with the direction it has taken over the past years resulting in the NRSV, Synod should instruct the Committee on Bible Translations to investigate similar developments with other Bible Societies/Publishers and Translation Committees.

Seeing that there is a request from one of our sister churches dealing with Bible translations, Synod should refer this matter to its Committee for further consideration.

Synod considers studies of Bible translations by deputies in the past a valuable basis for renewed investigation to come to a recommendation for the use of a different Bible translation. In light of these studies, as well as in consideration of the letters received from the churches, Synod should see to it that an evaluation is undertaken of the NASB, NIV and NKJV.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

to thank the Committee for the work it has done and the report it submitted.

to continue the Committee with the following mandate:

to do a comparative study of the NASB, NIV and NKJV, making use of past studies, in order to determine which one translation can be positively recommended for use by the churches, whereby the criteria are: faithfulness to the original text and linguistic character of the translation.

to investigate the direction of the Bible Societies/Publishers behind different translations and whether there is the possibility to suggest improvements in the translation to the Bible Societies/Publishers which can be incorporated into future editions; as well, to investigate the future availability of the translations.

to give due consideration to the decision of Synod Bedforddale 1992, regarding Bible translations.

to report to the churches and next General Synod six months prior to the next General Synod.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 36

Overtures Regarding Deputies for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity

Committee III presents:

Agenda item VIII E1,2,3,4

I. MATERIAL

- A. Overture from the church at Vernon, BC re contact with the Federation of the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches.
- B. Overture from Classis Ontario North June 12, 1992 re the appointment of a committee for ecclesiastical unity among Reformed churches.
- C. Letter from the church at Guelph, ON.
- D. Letter from the church at Burlington East, ON supporting the overture of Classis Ontario North.

II. ADMISSIBILITY

The overtures have been placed before Synod because they deal with matters which belong to the churches in common (Art. 30 C.O.) as they concern a federation and provisional assembly of churches.

III. OBSERVATIONS

- A. The church at Vernon, BC proposes that General Synod 1992 “appoint Deputies to establish contact with the Federation of Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches to see if we can come to the mutual recognition of each other as true churches of Jesus Christ and seek ways in which our unity of faith can be expressed and experienced.” According to the church at Vernon, “our local contacts with the Orthodox Reformed Church of Kelowna have convinced us that there are no such differences that justify a separate existence.”
- B. Classis Ontario North proposes “to appoint a committee with the mandate to promote ecclesiastical unity with Reformed Churches and/or Assemblies which recently have withdrawn or are withdrawing themselves from the Christian Reformed Church and which in all things want to bind themselves to the Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity and which in governing the church maintain good order in accordance with a Reformed church order.” Classis informs us that these churches have seceded from the Christian Reformed Church and rejected errors in doctrine and church government which the Canadian (American) Reformed Churches had warned them about. The Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches in North America have also publicly stated that they wished to have ecclesiastical fellowship with all truly Reformed believers and wish to be united with congregations, based on God’s infallible Word. Classis Ontario North recognizes that the local contact leading to unity or merger has implications for the federation and therefore a committee appointed by General Synod can assist and contribute to the execution of the calling to true ecclesiastical unity.
- C. Classis Ontario North recommends that the following mandate be given to the committee:
 - 1. to follow the ecclesiastical developments among Reformed churches in North America and be diligent to contact churches of Reformed confession and church government, which seceded from the Christian Reformed Church and bind themselves to the Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity and which live together or want to live together in accordance with a Reformed church order.
 - 2. to inform these churches and/or assemblies as soon as possible about the existence of the Canadian (American) Reformed Churches, their confessions and church order, and stimulate and encourage local contacts, if geographically feasible.
 - 3. to inform Canadian (American) Reformed Churches of these developments and upon request advise them and offer assistance in establishing and maintaining contacts within their ecclesiastical area.
 - 4. to be available to consistories for counsel if problems and questions arise when contacts develop into a process of locally becoming one church.
 - 5. to represent the Canadian (American) Reformed Churches when invited to the meetings of the Alliance of Reformed Churches and/or other meetings of Reformed churches/assemblies, held for the purpose of strengthening and developing the unity of faith among Reformed churches and believers.
 - 6. to serve the following General Synod with a report and recommendations, which should be sent to the churches at least six months before the beginning of this Synod.
 - 7. to keep the churches informed concerning its activities by means of interim reports.
- D. The church at Burlington East, ON emphasizes the need for such a committee as proposed by Classis Ontario North June 12, 1992 because “discussions at

the meetings organized in October 1992 by the Burlington Reformed Study Centre in Ancaster showed that both Canadian Reformed and former Christian Reformed recognize the need to seek unity.” The letter points out that “local action, where possible, is necessary.” However it is also indicated that “there are many issues that go beyond the local situation ... There are many issues that should be dealt with on a federative level and cannot be dealt with adequately locally.”

- E. The church at Guelph, ON asks Synod to reject the proposal of Classis Ontario North June 12, 1992 on grounds that the appointment of such a synodical committee is premature because more investigation and initiating contact should be made at the local level. It also contests that Classis Ontario North has not given sufficient information about these churches and refers to a decision made by General Synod Coaldale 1977:

Minor assemblies when making a proposal for taking up contact with other churches should supply Synods with sufficient information as it appears from the decisions made by General Synod Hamilton 1962, Acts Article 82 and General Synod Edmonton 1965, Acts Article 141, sub II (see General Synod Toronto, Acts Article 64).

Guelph also suggests that the mandate of the proposed committee is too broad and open-ended.

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. The overtures properly acknowledge the Scriptural call for unity in Christ's church (John 17:20,21; Ephesians 4:1-6) and the expressions in our confessions underlining such a call (Belgic Confession, Art.27-29; Heidelberg Catechism, L.D. 21), but differ as to its implementation.
- B. Classis Ontario North and the church at Vernon, BC point to the need to have contact with the OCRC and other independent churches that have broken with the CRC at a federal level. However there is also the legitimate point made clear from the overture of the church at Guelph, ON that this should not intrude upon or interfere with contact at the local level.
- C. The mandate as provided by Classis Ontario North is somewhat intrusive upon and not sufficiently sensitive to the primary responsibility of a local consistory in promoting this contact, e.g. Point 1 “be diligent to contact churches of Reformed confession and church order,” and Point 2 “stimulate and encourage local contacts.”
- D. The observation by the church at Guelph, ON that Classis Ontario North June 12, 1992 did not provide evidence “that the churches who have left the Christian Reformed Church have returned to the true service of God and are faithful to the Three Forms of Unity” is answered by ground 6 of the overture made by Classis:

“The Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches in North America have . . . declared to ‘seek unity with all Christians and congregations who wish to live together in Christian harmony through the humble submission to God’s infallible Word, as this has been summarized in our Three Forms of Unity.’ (Declaration of Separation and Return approved by the following Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches: Bowmanville, ON; Burlington, WA; Pella, IA; Cambridge, ON; New Westminster, BC.; Everson, WA; Grand Valley, MI; Lynden, WA; Ripon, CA; Surrey, BC.; Toronto, ON; Wingham, ON; Kelowna, BC.) Furthermore, independent Reformed churches have expressed similar sentiments.”

- E. The concern of Guelph as to the lack of background information, a concern raised by previous Synods in considering contacts with other churches, is

legitimate. However, these are churches who have broken with the CRC, the very church with whom we have had contact in recent decades and to whom we appealed on the basis of God's Word and our common confessions.

- F. Synod notes that the churches referred to in the overtures of Vernon and Classis Ontario North June 12, 1992 have organized as a federation or are organizing as provisional assemblies, thus providing an opportunity for contact beyond the local level. Further, the timeliness of the overtures justifies Synod's consideration of the material presented. It is therefore warranted to establish a committee for the purpose of providing information, consultation and representation on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches, whenever invited, at assemblies or meetings, for the goal of achieving ecclesiastical unity.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

- A. to acknowledge the concerns expressed by the church at Guelph regarding the appointment of a committee by recognizing the need for continued contact on the local level.
- B. to appoint Deputies for the promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity, consisting of an equal number of committee members from the two Regional Synod districts, to promote the unity of Reformed believers who have left the Christian Reformed Church with the mandate:
 - 1. to make their presence known for the purpose of information and consultation.
 - 2. to represent the churches, whenever invited, at assemblies or meetings held for the purpose of coming to ecclesiastical unity.
 - 3. to report on their activities to the churches and to the next General Synod.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 37

Book of Praise

Committee II presents:

Agenda item VIII C, D2

After some discussion the Advisory Committee takes its report back for reconsideration. (see Articles 48 and 64)

ARTICLE 38

Adjournment

Elder J. Werkman asks that Psalm 119: 5 be sung, and closes in prayer.

MORNING SESSION – TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1992

ARTICLE 39

Reopening

The chairman asks that Psalm 118: 1 and 6 be sung. He reads 1 Peter 2: 1-10, and leads in prayer.

Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 40

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 31-38 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 41

Adjournment

Synod is adjourned for committee work.

AFTERNOON SESSION – TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1992

ARTICLE 42

Reopening

The chairman opens the afternoon session by asking that Psalm 66: 1 and 2 be sung. Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 43

Address of Rev. F. Walker

The chairman gives Rev. F. Walker, who is an observer to this Synod from the RCUS, the opportunity to address Synod. Rev. F. Walker addresses Synod with the following words: (here follows an abridged version of his address)

Brethren in Christ:

I come to you this day in behalf of the InterChurch Relations Committee of the Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States. I bring you greetings from our Synod and from the Peace Reformed Church of Napoleon, Ohio.

It is a joy for me to be here with you today. Although my contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches has been minimal, what I have had so far was interesting and profitable. It is clear that we are basically of one mind in Christ Jesus.

The RCUS is small by almost every standard of measurement. We have thirty-four congregations and a total membership of slightly more than three thousand. But small does not necessarily mean weak, for our adherence to the inerrant Word of the living God and our subordinate standard, the Heidelberg Catechism, is second to none.

As for our Synod, a resolution was passed in 1991 which mandated that our InterChurch Relations Committee "continue to investigate establishing fraternal relations with the Canadian Reformed Churches." And in 1992 the same committee was instructed "to pursue the establishment of fraternal relations with the Canadian Reformed Churches." Therefore, in behalf of the RCUS, I extend a hand of fellowship to you and to your churches.

The fraternal relations we suggest must be consistent with the principles adopted by our Synod, such as, taking heed to one another's doctrines, inviting delegates to one another's assemblies, informing one another of decisions taken at such assemblies, informing one another in cases of changes in or additions to confessions, church order or liturgical forms, and informing one another of new relationships with third parties and membership in ecumenical organizations.

While we recognize that there are differences between us, it is our belief that these differences are not of such a nature as should separate brother from brother. The fact that we formed a sister church relationship with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated) establishes how close we are. It is our hope and prayer that such a relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches might be as mutually beneficial in the near future.

Looking forward to a closer working relationship, I would like to assure you of our desire to meet with you by reading Psalm 133: *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing – life forevermore.*

May our wonderful God and Saviour give you wisdom and guidance as you consider the affairs of His kingdom in your deliberations. And many thanks for your gracious invitation to be here as a representative of the Reformed Church in the United States.

Response of Rev. J. Visscher

The chairman Rev. J. Visscher responds by observing that the RCUS has just had its 246th Synod which indicates a long and established history of the RCUS in North America. The chairman thanks Rev. F. Walker for his frank address and considers that the content of this address bodes well for eventual future discussions, should Synod recommend to establish contact with the RCUS.

ARTICLE 44

Relations with Churches Abroad re RCUS

Committee I presents:

Agenda item VIII G1a,2,3,4

After some discussion the Advisory Committee takes its report back for reconsideration. (see Articles 74 and 79)

ARTICLE 45

Appeal of br. C.J. Burger

Committee III presents:

Agenda item VIII D13

This is dealt with in closed session.

I. MATERIAL

Letter from br. C.J. Burger re Acts of General Synod 1989 (Art. 111, 112, 113 & 122).

II. ADMISSIBILITY

- A. Br. C.J. Burger offers no new grounds to show that the matter he appealed to General Synod 1989 should be reconsidered.
- B. Article 31 of the Church Order points out very clearly that whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote, in the major assemblies, "shall be considered settled and binding, unless it is proved to be in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order." In his submission br. C.J. Burger does not demonstrate that he has been wronged by the decisions of General Synod 1989 on the basis of the Word of God and the Church Order.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide to declare this appeal inadmissible.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 46

Appeal of br. G. Kruyswijk

Committee III presents:

Agenda item VIII D15

This is dealt with in closed session.

Due to time restrictions, this report will be further dealt with at a later time.

(see Articles 87 and 120)

EVENING SESSION – TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1992

ARTICLE 47

Reopening

The chairman asks that Psalm 135: 1 and 10 be sung. Roll call is held and indicates that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 48

Book of Praise

Committee II presents:

Agenda item VIII C, D2

After some discussion the Advisory Committee takes its report back for reconsideration.

(see Articles 37 and 64)

ARTICLE 49

Relations with Churches Abroad re Sister Churches

Committee I presents:

Agenda item VIII G1a

I. MATERIAL

Report of the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad re the Committee Mandate – Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA), the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands [Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Vrijgemaakt)] (RCN) and the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa (FRCSA)

II. INTRODUCTION

The Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) received from Synod 1989 the following mandate:

- A. To continue the Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, and Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika in accordance with the adopted rules.
- B. To charge the CRCA to send an invitation to sister churches abroad at least one year prior to the date the next General Synod is to convene and to have our churches represented by a delegate to General Synods of such churches abroad if invited and when feasible.
- C. To renew the mandate of the CRCA as given by Synod 1986 concerning the following points:
 1. to request the churches abroad that in the matter of relationship or contact with third parties "there be consultation and coordination between sister churches."

2. to request the churches abroad that contacts in countries where sister churches are already established be made not independently but in consultation with these sister churches.
3. to continue to address the sister churches on the matter of church relations, setting forth the decisions and concerns of the Canadian Reformed Churches, as outlined by the General Synods of Smithville (Acts, Art. 154, D, 1, 2) and Cloverdale (Acts, Art. 110, D, 1).
4. to evaluate the reaction of the sister churches in these matters with respect to a possible common approach.
5. to report to the next General Synod with suitable recommendations (Acts 1989, Art. 102, E, 2,3,4).

III. OBSERVATIONS

A. The Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA)

The CRCA notes:

1. Acts of Synods were exchanged with the FRCA of Australia. The CRCA sent best wishes of our churches to the FRCA on the occasion of their General Synod Armadale 1990 and Bedforddale 1992.
2. The FRCA appointed deputies for contact with the Reformed Churches of Australia (RCA).
3. Synod Bedforddale 1992, instructed its Deputies to continue to investigate the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore (ERCS) with a view to establishing sister church relations. In its considerations Synod renewed its support for a policy which sees the Australian sister churches concentrating more on churches which are geographically close to them.
4. Synod Bedforddale 1992, decided to continue its sister church relationship with the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK). Synod also stated that recent additions to the Westminster Confession indicated that the PCK was obedient to the Scriptures.
5. Synod Bedforddale 1992, decided to continue to move in the direction of a sister church relationship with the Free Church of Scotland (FCS). Deputies of the FRCA for contact with the FCS were instructed to get clarification on whether or not their offer of Temporary Ecclesiastical Contact has been accepted by the FCS.
6. Synod Bedforddale 1992, instructed new deputies to deal with a list of concerns with respect to the ICRC, to consult the sister churches on these concerns, to publish the results and to state that the concerns raised may affect the FRCA's continuing membership in the ICRC. The FRCA requests a special meeting of sister churches prior to or coinciding with the ICRC meeting in 1993 to discuss their concerns about the ICRC; our CRCA proposes that the Canadian Reformed Churches delegates be mandated to attend.
7. Under the heading of "Training for the Ministry," Synod decided to continue its support for our Theological College in Hamilton and to request the churches to forward \$37.50 per communicant member annually for this cause, starting July 1, 1992.
8. Synod Armadale 1990, declared that the NASB, NKJV and NIV are better Bible translations than the RSV. Synod Bedforddale 1992, recommended to the churches that the NKJV be used for study, instruction and family purposes but to withhold final endorsement for use in the worship services, until the churches have become more familiar with it and more study has been made of the NKJV in comparison to the NIV. Synod also decided to communicate this decision to the Canadian Reformed Churches "urging the brotherhood in Canada to reach a similar decision."

9. The FRCA have adopted new “Rules for Exercising Sister Relations” (see CRCA Supplementary Report I,2,f) and they desire the CanRC to adopt their rules as “common rules” for all sister churches. The CRCA has reservations about the rules that the FRCA have adopted. The CRCA is of the opinion that:
 - a. the rules should be as concise as possible.
 - b. Rule # 1 & 2 adopted by the FCRA should be combined.
 - c. in the matter of third party relationships the expression “to give account” should not be used. It is too intrusive and was not practised.
- B. The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands [Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Vrijgemaakt)] (RCN).

The CRCA notes:

1. The Acts of Synods were exchanged with the RCN. Upon invitation, the Revs. Cl. Stam and J. Visscher were appointed to attend Synod Leeuwarden 1990. Although they could not attend this Synod before its agenda was completed, extensive discussions were held with the Dutch deputies (BBK) on September 20, 1990.
2. A letter was sent by the CRCA to the Dutch deputies (BBK) expressing our regret that more consultation had not taken place before Synod Leeuwarden 1990, entered into a sister church relation with the Reformed Church of the United States (RCUS).
3. Synod Leeuwarden 1990, decided to do away with the relationship known as “the temporary ecclesiastical contact relationship” and instead adopted newly-formulated “rules for sister church relationships.” The CRCA judges these rules do not indicate any significant change in the relationship maintained until now and may well be accepted.
4. The RCN have initiated and still maintain contact with several Reformed and Presbyterian Churches around the world (see CRCA Report V,2,g,iii-v).
- C. The Free Reformed Churches in South Africa (FRCSA)

The CRCA notes:

1. Acts of Synod and fraternal greetings were exchanged with the FRCSA.
2. Synod Capetown 1990, decided not to go so far as to recognize the Reformed Churches of South Africa as a true church, but to ask for a clear memorandum on the main differences with the RCSA.
3. A new committee was appointed by Synod Capetown 1990, to review the liturgical forms.

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. From the correspondence and Acts of the FRCA, RCN and the FRCSA we may gratefully conclude that these churches are faithful to the Word of God, the Confessions and the Church Order.
- B. The CRCA has fulfilled its mandate regarding our ecclesiastical fellowship with these churches.
- C. The FRCA are to be commended for the generous support they give to the Theological College in Hamilton.
- D. The nature of ecclesiastical fellowship includes that when a sister church asks for a meeting, our CRCA delegates should if possible attend.
- E. The mandate of the CRCA includes “to request the churches abroad that contacts in countries where sister churches are already established be made in

consultation with the sister churches.” The CRCA was therefore correct in addressing the RCN regarding their contact with the RCUS.

- F. The reservations of the CRCA regarding the rules adopted by the FRCA are valid. The FRCA should be requested to consider our reservations.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

- A. to thank the CRCA for the work done since 1989.
- B. to continue the Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands [Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Vrijgemaakt)] and the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa in accordance with the adopted rules.
- C. to request the CRCA to convey our appreciation for support given by the FRCA to our Theological College in Hamilton.
- D. to charge the CRCA to send an invitation to our sister churches abroad to attend the next General Synod as soon as its date has been established and published by the convening church and to have our churches represented by a delegate to General Synods of such churches abroad if invited and when feasible.
- E. to mandate the CRCA delegates to attend, if possible, the meeting organized by the FRCA to discuss their concerns regarding the ICRC and report about this to the next General Synod.
- F. to mandate the CRCA to convey our reservations about the rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship adopted by the FRCA.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 50

Relations with Churches Abroad re Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship

Committee I presents:

Agenda item VIII G1a,b

I. MATERIAL

- A. Report from Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad of the Canadian Reformed Churches (CRCA) re Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship.
- B. Letter from the church at Attercliffe, ON.
- C. Letter from the church at Burlington South, ON.

II. OBSERVATIONS

- A. The mandate of the Committee as given by Synod 1989 (Acts 1989, Art. 102, E,2,3,4,b,c,d) includes:
 - 1. to continue to address the sister churches on the matter of church relations, setting forth the decisions and concerns of the Canadian Reformed Churches, as outlined by the General Synods of Smithville (Acts, Art. 154, D,1,2) and Cloverdale (Acts, Art. 110, D,1).
 - 2. to evaluate the reaction of the sister churches in these matters with respect to a possible common approach.
 - 3. to report to the next General Synod with suitable recommendations.
- B. Regarding the first mandate mentioned above, many letters have been exchanged by the sister churches about “rules for ecclesiastical fellowship.” The members of the CRCA who visited the Netherlands and Scotland in 1990 dealt with it in both places.

- C. Regarding the second mandate mentioned above, the sister churches in the Netherlands and Australia inform the CRCA about their respective rules for ecclesiastical fellowship. In the CRCA Report the committee evaluates these responses (see Appendix II, and Supplementary Report I,2,f).
- D. Regarding the third mandate mentioned above, the CRCA proposes that Synod adopt the following Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship:
 1. The churches shall as much as possible assist each other in the maintenance, defence and promotion of the Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline, and liturgy.
 2. The churches shall inform each other of the decisions taken by their broadest assemblies, if possible by sending each other their Acts or Minutes and otherwise, at least by sending the decisions relevant to the respective churches (if possible, in translation).
 3. The churches shall inform each other when entering into relations with third parties.
 4. The churches shall accept one another's attestations or certificates of good standing, which also means admitting members of the respective churches to the sacraments upon presentation of that attestation or certificate.
 5. The churches shall in principle open their pulpits for each other's ministers in agreement with the rules adopted in the respective churches.

In exercising these relations, the churches shall strive to implement also the following:

6. When major changes or additions are being considered to the confessions, church government or liturgy, the churches shall be informed in order that as much consultation can take place as possible before a final decision is taken.
 7. The churches shall receive each other's delegates at their broadest assemblies and invite them to participate as much as local regulations permit.
- E. In comments on Rule # 3 the CRCA states "that when either our churches in the past, or our sister churches have entered into a relationship with a third party, it was never a matter of giving account, but rather a matter of mutual consultation" (p.25 CRCA Report).
 - F. The CRCA maintains that these proposed Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship "remain basically an adaptation of the Dutch rules," and "that no radical overhaul is being proposed" (p.21 CRCA Report).
 - G. The Committee notes that the negative character of Rule # 1 has been criticised as being too one-sided. The Deputies of the Free Church of Scotland agreed with this criticism and informed the Committee that "the order of rules – the priority given to watching out for aberrations – suggests an inquisitorial and judgmental attitude. This may not be intended but it is, unfortunately, quite patent."
 - H. The church at Attercliffe, ON states that the proposed Rule # 1 weakens the existing Rule # 1 significantly. The expression "not deviate from" should be maintained in Rule # 1.
 - I. The church at Burlington South, ON,
 1. observes that the proposed Rule # 1 conveys the appearance of good intention but not solid commitment.
 2. suggests the phrase "in principle open..." in Rule # 5 is somewhat vague.

III. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. The approach to churches abroad should be balanced and avoid the impression of "an inquisitorial and judgmental attitude."

- B. The assistance sister churches give each other should include the duty to watchfulness against deviation.
- C. In light of the comments by the CRCA about Rule # 3 it is better to speak of “consulting each other” rather than “informing each other.”
- D. To delete the phrase “in principle” in the proposed Rule # 5 would cause confusion. By a Synod decision the pulpits are “in principle” opened; the actual opening is a matter of an invitation by a local church.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

- A. to thank the CRCA for the work it has done and the report submitted.
- B. to amend Rules # 1 and # 3 of the CRCA proposed rules and adopt the following Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship:
 - 1. The churches shall assist each other in the maintenance, defence and promotion of the Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline, and liturgy, and be watchful for deviations.
 - 2. The churches shall inform each other of the decisions taken by their broadest assemblies, if possible by sending each other their Acts or Minutes and otherwise, at least by sending the decisions relevant to the respective churches (if possible, in translation).
 - 3. The churches shall consult each other when entering into relations with third parties.
 - 4. The churches shall accept one another’s attestations or certificates of good standing, which also means admitting members of the respective churches to the sacraments upon presentation of that attestation or certificate.
 - 5. The churches shall in principle open their pulpits for each other’s ministers in agreement with the rules adopted in the respective churches.
 In exercising these relations, the churches shall strive to implement also the following:
 - 6. When major changes or additions are being considered to the confessions, church government or liturgy, the churches shall be informed in order that as much consultation can take place as possible before a final decision is taken.
 - 7. The churches shall receive each other’s delegates at their broadest assemblies and invite them to participate as much as local regulations permit.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 51

Archives

Committee II presents:

Agenda item VIII H3

I. MATERIAL

Letter from the church at Burlington West, ON re Inspection of the General Archives.

II. OBSERVATION

The church at Burlington West, ON inspected the archives of Synod Winnipeg 1989 and found them to be in good order.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide to thank the church at Burlington West, ON for examining the archives and reporting to Synod.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 52

General Fund

Committee II presents:

Agenda item VIII H5

I. MATERIAL

Report from the church at Carman, MB re General Fund

II. OBSERVATIONS

A. The church at Carman, MB submits a financial report of the General Fund for the period from March 25, 1989 to October 9, 1992. The income was \$18,759.07. The disbursements were \$17,349.93. The balance at October 9, 1992 was \$1,409.56.

B. The books were audited by the deacons of the church at Carman, MB and found to be in good order.

C. The church at Carman, MB recommends that \$1.00 per communicant member per year be levied for the next three years.

III. CONSIDERATION

Although the church at Carman, MB proposes a levy of \$1.00 per communicant member per year, it is within its mandate to request more funding from the churches, if required.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

A. to express gratitude to the church at Carman, MB for the administration of the General Fund, to the deacons for auditing the books, and to br. G. VanderSluis for keeping the books;

B. to discharge the church at Carman, MB for responsibility during the period of March 25, 1989 to October 9, 1992, and to re-appoint the church at Carman, MB as Church for the General Fund.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 53

Adjournment

Rev. D.G.J. Agema asks that Psalm 93: 1 and 4 be sung, and closes in prayer.

MORNING SESSION – WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1992

ARTICLE 54

Reopening

The chairman opens the meeting by asking that Psalm 145: 1 and 5 be sung and reading Micah 4: 1-7. Since it is Remembrance Day, the chairman reflects on the fact that it is customary, one day in the year, to remember those who lost their lives in the wars of this century. He remembers Canada's participation in these wars, as well as Holland's, which has led to the suffering and loss of life in some of our families. The freedom we have today has been granted by the Lord through the fighting of oppression. We do not know what oppression lies ahead. Micah 4 speaks of a day when swords shall be beaten into plowshares, and spears into pruning hooks. Ultimately all conflicts are governed by God and are His judgments on the nations, but they will not

continue endlessly, for the day is coming when our Lord Jesus Christ will restore all things and bring perfect peace.

The chairman leads in prayer.

Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 55

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 39-53 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 56

Adjournment

Synod is adjourned for committee work.

EVENING SESSION – WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1992

ARTICLE 57

Reopening

The chairman asks that Hymn 5: 1-4 be sung. Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 58

Address of Rev. S. Phillips

The chairman gives Rev. S. Phillips, who is a fraternal delegate from the OPC, the opportunity to address Synod. Rev. S. Phillips addresses Synod with the following words:

I wish, personally, to thank Synod for operating under the New Covenant fulfillment of the prophecy of Micah 4:6 read this morning by the chairman ("I will assemble the lame...") in allowing this lame man to enter the house of God [Mr. Phillips arrived at Synod using crutches], as well as permitting G.I. Williamson and myself to interact with your advisory committee dealing with the report of your CCOPC. Both of us believe the report re Agenda Items VIII.F.1-8,11 is an accurate reflection of the present status, and generally concur with its recommendations. I trust my saying this will not have an adverse effect on your deliberations to adopt them!

You must be aware that though the title of fraternal delegate has been bestowed on me by our Committee on Ecumenicity and InterChurch Relations (CEIR), I've learned through years of experience that no Orthodox Presbyterian speaks for the whole denomination. As it is your practice to transcribe this address in your Acts of Synod, you may be fairly certain, unless your CCOPC reports to the contrary at Synod 1995, that I was not subsequently lynched by my brothers for what I am about to say.

Permit me, then, in this light, to limit these remarks to the following:

I. RE: the Denver case (and, partially, the Blue Bell case)

This has affected our brethren because the appropriate court of the CanRC has acted or may act (1) without encouraging said parties to work through the proper OPC Form of Government processes in such cases, and (2) without ascertaining from the appropriate OPC court(s) whether the information provided them is indeed indisputable.

As to (1), I am led to believe that the Presbytery of the Dakotas itself may be and perhaps should be faulted because it did not insist that Rev. Pollock follow due process fully in the PCA before he was received by the Presbytery. However, this failure on the part of the Presbytery should not have precluded the appropriate Classis from informing Mr. Pollock that with respect to his ministerial credentials, he should have talked with his brethren in the Presbytery of the Dakotas, and, if not satisfied, taken his concerns to the higher court.

As to (2), Synod ought to be made aware of the fact that, and Mr. Pollock should have attested that, he had attended the March 1987, September 1988, September 1990, January 1991, and March 1991 meetings of the Presbytery of the Dakotas where at the latter meeting he took vows and was received as a member of the regional church (cf. Art. 109, 110). At that same meeting, a committee of three was appointed to “examine the applicants [from Christ Presbyterian Church] and appoint a time for their reception and organization as a particular congregation of the OPC. (FG XXIX.A.5.b.)” (cf. Art. 113). Articles 114 and 115 read: “The members of Christ Presbyterian Church who signed Communication I1 *were placed on the rolls of the regional church* until such time as the church is particularized.” “On motion, Presbytery directed that the Committee shall see to it that officers are ordained and installed (FG XXIX.A.5.d.)” (emphasis added)

- II. Your CCOPC has noted the action of our 58th General Assembly erecting a committee “to examine the method of admission of guests to the Lord’s Supper.” (cf. Minutes 58th GA, Art. 107.3) We are under no delusions that this study will necessarily lead you to change your stance, nor should you be under any delusions that the study will necessarily lead us to change our stance. As far as I know, it is the purpose of the Committee to make our position as clear as possible.
- III. Your CCOPC has noted the action of our 58th General Assembly “to direct the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations to consider the desirability and feasibility of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church adding the Three Forms of Unity (Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort) to its present confessional standards (the Confession of Faith, the Larger Catechism and the Shorter Catechism) and of establishing a common Presbyterian and Reformed church order, so as to provide a basis for unity into one church body of those who are committed to one faith.” (cf. Minutes 58th GA, Art. 113) This action was not further delineated.
- IV. Your CCOPC apparently has not been made aware of three actions of our 59th General Assembly:
 - A. “That the Orthodox Presbyterian Church cordially invite the churches listed below to enter into a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with us, with the following conditions:
 1. The implementation of the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship where possible and desirable would be by:
 - a. Exchange of fraternal delegates at major assemblies
 - b. Occasional pulpit fellowship (by local option)
 - c. Intercommunion (regulated by each session/consistory)
 - d. Joint actions in areas of common responsibility
 - e. Communication on issues of joint concern
 - f. The exercise of mutual concern and admonition with a view to promoting the fundamentals of Christian truth and unity.
 - g. Exchange of minutes/yearbooks
 2. The churches are:
 - a. The Presbyterian Church in Korea (Kosin)

- b. The Reformed Church in Japan
 - c. The Reformed Church in the United States
 - d. The Reformed Churches of New Zealand
- B. Overture 10 (“...to review, through its Committee on Ecumenicity and InterChurch Relations, the propriety of the OPC’s continued fraternal relations with the Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRC). Further, the committee shall bring its recommendation to the Sixtieth General Assembly (1993).” ...with grounds) was referred to the CEIR.

Please note in this matter that we are driven by the Word of God. Whether the Committee recommends to the Assembly that relations be terminated or continued, the decision of the Assembly will be based on the force of God’s Word. So it has been. Some years back the Christian Reformed Church was ready to bid us ecclesiastical farewell because we were seen only and always as prodding and poking at those areas where we saw them being influenced by other than the Word. We refused to let them dismiss our small, but noisy bark at their heels. It was our drive to understand and implement Ephesians 4:13 and other passages that compelled us to scratch to the last fingernail in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (now Council). This is our heritage, our founding fathers doggedly working their way through the courts of the northern Presbyterian Church for the cause of faithfulness to the Word of God as the only rule of faith and practice, until they were excommunicated. Brothers, it feels very odd to have the tables turned with a small, but noisy barking at our heels. Don’t give up barking! But on the other hand, bear in mind that relations do not live by barking alone!

- C. Overture 1 (“...to expand the boundaries of the Presbytery of the Midwest to include the counties of Essex, Lambton, Kent, Middlesex, Elgin, Oxford, Brant, Haldimand, Hamilton and Niagara in the province of Ontario, Canada.”) was referred to the CEIR.

V. RE: Relations in General

You are to be commended for desiring to be inflexible in your commitment to the biblical Reformed faith, your creeds, and your church order, though this commitment appears at times to make you ever so guarded against certain forms of divergence among your own communion as well as in your varying degrees of ecclesiastical association. It is understandable that you do not wish the wrath of the holy God to fall upon you due to association with or tolerance of that which offends our Lord. It seems to this brother that we all need to be inflexible in our allegiance to and obedience to the Word of God, for “...if you rebel against the Lord today he will be angry with the whole congregation ... tomorrow.” “Did not Achan ... break faith ... and wrath fell upon all the congregation...?” But we all need to be as flexible as the Word of God itself. The federation which spotted “rebellion or breach of faith toward the Lord” in their ecclesiastical brothers, were bent on permanently denying those brothers any legitimate covenant membership. Thankfully, they discussed the matter, and the detestable divergence actually became “a witness between [them] that the Lord is God.” (quotations and summary from Joshua 22:10-34).

VI. Conclusion

In closing, I note with interest Synod’s uncertainty concerning whether ecclesiastical bodies in the USA come under the foreign/churches abroad category or not. You may be unsure about such status, but I am certain about mine. Like Abraham, I am an alien in a foreign land, and doubly so, by birth and by re-birth. When one is a guest in a foreign land, it is appropriate that an attempt be made to speak in

the native language. With faltering tongue, but from the heart, I do so now. Wij bidden dat God u zal zegenen (We pray that God will bless you).

Response of Rev. J. Visscher

The chairman, Rev. J. Visscher thanks Rev. S. Phillips for his frankness and openness, and expresses the hope that his words may be blessed. He also mentions that Rev. P.G. Feenstra will respond to Rev. S. Phillips at the appropriate time during this Synod.

ARTICLE 59

Contact with the OPC

Committee IV presents:

Agenda item VIII F1-8,11

Due to time restriction, this report will be discussed further the next morning.
(see Articles 63 and 72)

ARTICLE 60

Adjournment

Rev. W. den Hollander asks that Hymn 42: 1,2,7 and 8 be sung, and closes in prayer.

MORNING SESSION – THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1992

ARTICLE 61

Reopening

The chairman opens the meeting by asking that Psalm 116: 1 and 10 be sung. He reads 1 Peter 5: 1-11 and leads in prayer. Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present. A special welcome is extended to students of the John Calvin School of Smithville.

ARTICLE 62

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 54-60 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 63

Contact with the OPC

Committee IV presents:

Agenda item VIII F1-8,11

After some discussion the Advisory Committee takes its report back to reflect upon and incorporate some of the suggestions made.
(see Articles 59 and 72)

ARTICLE 64

Book of Praise

Committee II presents:

Agenda item VIII C, D2

I. MATERIAL

A. Report of the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise*.

- B. Letter from the church at Burlington East, ON re report of the committee.
- C. Letter from the church at Guelph, ON re same.
- D. Letter from the church at Port Kells, BC re same.
- E. Letter from the Organ Committee of the Free Reformed Church at Armadale, WA re Hymn 1A.
- F. Letter from the church at Winnipeg, MB re same.
- G. Letter from the church at Carman, MB re same.
- H. Letter from br. J. Verhelst, Smithers, BC re same.
- I. Letter from br. C Hoogerdijk, Taber, AB re same.
- J. Letter from church at Burlington West, ON re introduction to Church Order.
- K. Letter from br. L. Van Zandwyk, Burlington, ON re Canons of Dort II 3,4.
- L. Letter from the church at Brampton, ON re Acts Cloverdale 1983, Art. 174 Prefaces to the Canons of Dort/Heidelberg Catechism.

II. OBSERVATIONS

For the mandate of the Committee see Acts of Synod 1989, Article 145 D2.

In its Report to Synod the Standing Committee of the *Book of Praise*:

- acknowledges the work done by the late br. J.G. Van Huisstede;
- mentions various matters relating to the Book of Praise, namely: printing and distribution, renewal of contract, corporate status, publicity, harmonizations;
- proposes Scripture references to the Belgic Confession;
- proposes that in the Preface to the final edition of the Book of Praise as a whole it be pointed out that the added Scripture references do not form an integral part of the Confessions;
- submits a linguistic revision of the Nicene Creed;
- presents revised Prefaces to the Creeds;
- reports on its findings regarding the Alternate Melody for Hymn 1A;
- proposes a policy for the future revision of the *Book of Praise*;
- makes recommendations for the Standing Committee.

The church at Guelph, ON addresses Synod regarding the Scripture references to the Belgic Confession.

The churches at Burlington East, ON and Port Kells, BC submit comments regarding the linguistic revision of the Nicene Creed.

The church at Burlington East, ON addresses Synod with regard to the Preface of the Nicene Creed. The Organ Committee of the Free Reformed Church at Armadale, Western Australia, the churches at Winnipeg and Carman, MB, and the brs. J. Verhelst and C. Hoogerdijk, address Synod regarding an Alternate Melody for Hymn 1A.

The church at Burlington West, ON proposes that Synod include a Preface to the Church Order.

Br. L. Van Zandwyk asks a question regarding the Canons of Dort.

The church at Brampton, ON brings to the attention of General Synod the mandate of the Standing Committee regarding the Preface to the Canons of Dort and the Heidelberg Catechism as given by Synod Cloverdale, Acts 1983, Art. 174.

III. CONSIDERATIONS

Synod expresses gratitude for the many years that the late br. J.G. Van Huisstede

used his musical talents for the benefit of the churches and in his service on the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise*.

In light of the corrections and changes submitted by the church at Guelph, ON regarding the Scripture references to the Belgic Confession, the Committee should as yet scrutinize these references and prepare them to be included in the *Book of Praise*.

While the Preface to the *Book of Praise* should be updated, no special mention need be made regarding the Scripture references to the Confessions.

The churches at Burlington East, ON and Port Kells, BC have questions about the revised text of the Nicene Creed and its new Preface, and request that various changes be made. It is regrettable that the Standing Committee did not explain to the churches its revisions to the Nicene Creed. It is also regrettable that an insufficient number of copies of the Committee's Report were sent to the churches.

With the updated and improved Prefaces to the Ecumenical Creeds, this part of the Committee's mandate may be considered completed.

The Standing Committee has not finalized its mandate regarding the alternate melody for Hymn 1A, desired according to the considerations of previous Synods (Synod 1980 Art. 122 C14a; Synod 1986 Art 189, C1; Synod 1989 Art. 145 B10). Seeing that an evaluation of the responses from the churches regarding the "alternate melody" still must take place, the Standing Committee should also include in its evaluation the (late) submissions of the brs. Hoogerdijk and Verhelst. Synod also received a new melody for Hymn 1A (Schoof version); however, it has not been evaluated by the Committee, nor by the churches, neither has it been requested. The church at Winnipeg states that the present text of Hymn 1A is not consistent with the newly adopted text of the Apostle's Creed and proposes an adaptation to Hy.1A ("Teitsma adaptation"). It needs to be investigated whether such an adaptation infringes on the copyrights of the melody of Hymn 1A.

There is merit in the proposal of the church at Burlington West, ON to add an introduction to the Church Order. Such an addition would be consistent with the practice followed with regard to the Creeds and Confessions and would enhance the understanding of the Church Order.

Synod considers that the following policy for the future revision of the *Book of Praise* should be established:

Changes or corrections which pertain to the *Book of Praise* must be submitted to the Committee for evaluation and recommendation to the next General Synod and reported to the churches six months prior to the next General Synod. Adopted changes are to be collected until such a time when they can be included in the next printing of the *Book of Praise*.

The question of br. L. Van Zandwijk belongs to the mandate of the Committee (Acts 1989, Art.145, 2, g).

The Standing Committee should be reminded that Synod 1983 adopted a Preface to the Canons of Dort which should be included in the next edition of the *Book of Praise*. The Committee should also report on its findings with regard to a Preface for the Heidelberg Catechism.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

to acknowledge the work done by the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise*.

to send a letter to sr. J.G. Van Huisstede expressing the appreciation of Synod for

- the work which her late husband did for the churches.
- to adopt the updated Prefaces to the Ecumenical Creeds.
- to give the Committee the following mandate:
- to update the general Preface to the *Book of Praise*;
 - to prepare an introduction to the Church Order;
 - to insert the Preface of the Canons of Dort;
 - to fulfil the instruction of Cloverdale 1983 regarding the preface to the Heidelberg Catechism;
 - to see to it that the *Book of Praise* remains available to the churches at a reasonable price;
 - to make the necessary arrangements with printers and others for the production and distribution of the *Book of Praise*;
 - to maintain its corporate status in order to be able to protect the interests of the Canadian Reformed Churches in all matters concerning the *Book of Praise*;
 - to re-submit its revision of the Nicene Creed to the churches, including an explanation of the proposed changes;
 - to charge the Committee to scrutinize the Scripture references to the Belgic Confession and prepare them to be included in the next edition of the *Book of Praise*;
 - to implement all Synod decisions regarding the contents of the *Book of Praise*;
 - to foster an increased awareness of the existence of the *Book of Praise* for use in the English-speaking world;
 - to serve as the address to which any correspondence regarding the *Book of Praise* should be directed;
 - to evaluate submissions for changes and corrections for the *Book of Praise* and submit its recommendations to the churches and the next General Synod, and further deal with it according to the policy as outlined in consideration H;
 - to serve the next Synod with a detailed evaluation of the “alternate melody,” the “Teitsma adaptation,” and the “Schoof version” taking into consideration the evaluations submitted by the brs. Hoogerdijk and Verhelst, investigate copyrights, and carry out this part of the mandate in consultation with musical experts;
 - to evaluate the question of br. L. Van Zandwyk and make a recommendation to the next General Synod;
 - to serve the following General Synod with a report to be sent to the churches at least six months before the beginning of this Synod.
- to re-appoint the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise*.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 65

Address Church

Committee III presents:

Agenda item VIII H1,2

I. MATERIAL

- A. Report of the address church, the church at Burlington East, ON.
- B. Letter of the church at Burlington East, ON re information to be sent for the yearbook of our sister churches in the Netherlands.

II. OBSERVATIONS

- A. General Synod Winnipeg 1989 appointed the church at Burlington East, ON as address church.
- B. The church at Burlington East, ON received and acted upon a letter of Mr. Richard Vaughan of Newmarket, Ontario who requested information as part of a course requirement in missiology. As address church they also answered a letter of Mr. R. Ian Savage of St. Stephen, New Brunswick who showed interest in the work and ministry of the Canadian Reformed Churches.
- C. The Ontario Bible College in Willowdale, ON requested a directory of the churches. This request was refused since the address church sensed the directory was requested to send school promotion material.
- D. The church at Burlington East, ON requests General Synod give priority to appointments when establishing the agenda so that the up-to-date information can be passed on for the *Handboek ten dienste van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland*.

III. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. General Synod notes that the church at Burlington East fulfilled its mandate in answering the requests of Mr. R. Vaughan and Mr. R.I. Savage and in refusing the request of the Ontario Bible College.
- B. The request of Burlington East, ON can only be received as information since it is difficult to finalize all appointments before Synod concludes its work.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

- A. to thank the church at Burlington East, ON for the work done as address church.
- B. to reappoint the church at Burlington East, ON as address church of the Canadian Reformed Churches, and to request it to ensure that it be known as the church to which communications to the Canadian Reformed Churches be addressed.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 66

Finances for Synod

Committee II presents:

Agenda item VIII H5a,b

I. MATERIAL

Statement of income and expenses of the Finance Committee of General Synod Winnipeg 1989.

Audit report by the church at Carman, MB of the books of the Finance Committee of Synod 1989.

II. OBSERVATIONS

General Synod of Winnipeg 1989 appointed the church at Carman, MB to audit the books of the finances of General Synod 1989, and to send a report to General Synod 1992.

From the report regarding the finances of General Synod 1989 the expenses can be summarized as follows:

Archivist, Ebenezer Church Burlington	184.46
Stationery/Postage	639.28
Rental - Chairs/Tables	735.00
Printer repairs	108.68
Telephone	405.21
Meals etc.	2,989.99
Acts of Synod	12,821.47
Travel expenses	12,937.99
Service charges Bank	33.72
Miscellaneous	553.08
Total	31,408.88

The church at Carman, MB has audited the books of the finances of General Synod 1989, and reports that they were found in good order.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

to express appreciation for the work done by the Finance Committee of Synod 1989 and the auditing church.

to discharge the Finance Committee Synod 1989 on the basis of the auditors report of the church at Carman, ON.

to appoint a Finance Committee General Synod 1992 which will pay the expenses made by General Synod 1992, using funds submitted by the Regional Synods. This Committee will forward any balance of funds of General Synod 1992 to the convening church of the next General Synod.

to appoint the following brothers in the Finance Committee of Synod 1992: H. Snow, N. VandenOever, W. VanSydenborgh, members of the church at Lincoln, ON.

to appoint the church at Rockway, ON to audit the books of the finances of General Synod 1992, and to send a report to General Synod 1995.

ADOPTED

AFTERNOON SESSION – THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1992

ARTICLE 67

Reopening

Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 68

Appeal of srs. A. Burger, J. Kruyswijk, W. Sikkema and A. Sikkema

Committee III presents:

Agenda item VIII D14

This is discussed in closed session.

I. MATERIAL

Letter from sr. A. Burger, sr. J. Kruyswijk, sr. W. Sikkema and sr. A. Sikkema, Grand Rapids, USA re a decision of Regional Synod East Nov. 13-14, 1991.

II. ADMISSIBILITY

A. From the material submitted it appears that sr. A. Burger, sr. W. Sikkema, sr. J. Kruyswijk and sr. A. Sikkema were excommunicated from the church at Grand Rapids, USA.

- B. Since they are appealing a decision of Regional Synod East, November 13-14, 1991 that involves their excommunication, Synod decide to declare this appeal admissible (Art 31 C.O.).

III. RECOMMENDATION

Synod judge that Regional Synod East of November 13-14, 1991 erred in considering that Classis Ontario South of March 13-14, 1991 advanced new grounds with respect to the matters raised in the Appellants' letter of May 22, 1990, items a, b, c and d. Therefore the matter has not been finished at the minor assembly.

ADOPTED

(see Article 131)

ARTICLE 69

Appeal of Sr. W. Sikkema

Committee III presents:

Agenda item VIII D16

This is discussed in closed session.

I. MATERIAL

Letter from sr. W. Sikkema, Grand Rapids, USA re decisions Regional Synod East November 13-14, 1991 (Art. 19).

II. ADMISSIBILITY

- A. From the material submitted it appears that sr. W. Sikkema was excommunicated from the church at Grand Rapids, USA.
- B. Since sr. Sikkema is appealing a decision of Regional Synod (Nov. 1991) that involves her excommunication Synod decide to declare this appeal admissible (Art. 31 C.O.).

III. OBSERVATIONS

- A. Sr. Sikkema asks General Synod to judge that Regional Synod November 13-14 was wrong when it denied her appeal.
- B. Synod notes that Regional Synod stated the following in denying the appeal:
Regional Synod observes that Classis judged "that the appellant gives no grounds for Classis to judge that her excommunication was hasty or on unscriptural grounds." Regional Synod agrees with this observation of Classis and judges that such proof must as yet be adduced to Classis, should the appellant decide to pursue her appeal. Therefore Regional Synod cannot judge that the excommunication was hasty.
- C. In requests B, C, E, F, G and H, sr. Sikkema asks Synod to make statements on the actions of Classis Ontario South, March 13-14, 1991, and of the consistory of the church at Grand Rapids, USA.

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Although sr. Sikkema challenges the decision of Regional Synod, she provides the same arguments as those given to Regional Synod to support her claim that she has been wronged. General Synod cannot dispute the grounds given by Regional Synod for denying the appeal.
- B. Synod cannot make a judgment on the actions of Classis Ontario South, March 13-14, 1991, or of the consistory of the church at Grand Rapids, USA since this goes beyond the scope of the appeal on the basis of the material submitted.

V. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide to deny the appeal of sr. W. Sikkema.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 70

Appeal of Br. L. Van Zandwyk

Committee I presents:

Agenda item VIII D12

This is discussed in closed session.

After some discussion, due to both time restriction and some suggestions that the Advisory Committee would like to consider, the report is taken back.

(see Article 77)

EVENING SESSION – THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1992

ARTICLE 71

Reopening

The chairman asks that Psalm 107: 1 and 12 be sung. Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 72

Contact with the OPC

Committee IV presents:

Agenda item VIII F1-8,11

I. MATERIAL

- A. Report from the Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
- B. Letter from the church at Burlington East, ON re report of Committee.
- C. Letter from the church at London, ON re same and previous Synodical decisions.
- D. Letter from the church at Grand Rapids, USA re same.
- E. Letter from the church at Attercliffe, ON re same.
- F. Letter from the church at Burlington South, ON re same.
- G. Letter from the church at Blue Bell, USA re same.
- H. Letter from br. W. De Haan, Wardsville, ON re same.
- I. Letter from the church at Carman, MB re same.

II. INTRODUCTION

Synod 1989 gave the Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) the following specific mandate as recorded in the Acts, Article 94:

- A. To maintain the contact with the OPC, taking into account the rules for Ecclesiastical Contact, with the understanding that the temporary relationship of "ecclesiastical contact" is designed to come to full sister church relationship in the unity of the true faith and is not intended to continue indefinitely, or become a relationship of permanent status.
- B. To include in the "continued discussions" on "issues of mutual concern" (Acts, Synod 1977. p.42) the statement on Biblical Principles of Church Unity.
- C. To be diligent to continue the discussion on and the evaluation of the divergencies such as the doctrine of the covenant, visible and invisible church, the

assurance of faith, the observance of the law, the fencing of the Lord's Table, confessional membership, church-political differences, and the contact with the CRC.

- D. To coordinate the discussion of the divergencies with the discussion concerning the Biblical principles on the unity of the church.
- E. To serve the following General Synod with a report to be sent to the churches at least six months before the beginning of this Synod.
- F. To keep the churches informed concerning its activities by means of interim reports and press releases.

III. OBSERVATIONS

A. Report of the Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

1. Mandate Synod 1989.

With respect to fulfilling its mandate, the Committee reports:

- a. It did not deal with all the divergencies listed in the Mandate from Synod 1989, for lack of time, and further by deciding to concentrate "on the major issues arising from the Blue Bell and Laurel cases," namely, "the fencing of the Lord's Supper" and "confessional membership." (4.1.a.)
- b. The Committee found it difficult to incorporate in the discussions the statement of the OPC, "Biblical Principles of the Unity of the Church" (3.3.a.) because the statement was "prepared by the OPC with a view to their contact with the PCA."

The Committee does add, however, "the doctrine of the church was an important part of our discussions."

- c. The Committee addressed the OPC with respect to their relationship with the Christian Reformed Church and report the OPC has been critical of the course of the CRC, but also that "the OPC and the CRC continue to receive each other's delegates at their assemblies or synods, pulpit exchange continues to take place by local option, and there are voices within the OPC which oppose severing ties with the CRC."
- d. The Committee reports that the 58th General Assembly of the OPC has appointed two committees "which are of importance for our contact," being one "to examine the method of admission of guests to the Lord's Supper," and the other "to study the desirability and the feasibility of the OPC adding the Three Forms of Unity to its present confessional standards and of establishing a common Presbyterian and Reformed church order so as to provide a basis for unity into one church body of all those who are committed to one faith" (p.17b).
- e. The Committee states that "in the matters discussed – the fencing of the Lord's Supper and Confessional Membership – some misunderstandings have been taken away, some points have been clarified, but differences remain." The question is asked, "Is it our task to continue to explain our position on these points and leave it at that? Does the OPC have to change its position in order to allow us to continue, or should we be satisfied with the progress made?"

2. Developments re Blue Bell and Laurel.

The Committee notes that the developments with respect to Blue Bell, Laurel, (and "Denver") make "the work of our committee, representing our churches, rather difficult." The Committee places these questions before Synod (4.2.a,b,c.):

- a. How shall the CEIR's request regarding procedures to deal with receiving congregations and ministers that have been or are members of the OPC be answered?
- b. What is our Committee's role in situations such as these? In this connection, we refer to Synod 1986, Acts, Article 137, in which Synod requested a close cooperation between our Committee and Classis Ontario South with respect to the "Hofford" case. This decision seems to imply a role for our Committee in cases where churches seek affiliation with our federation, but it is not clear how our Committee can legitimately become involved.
- c. At a more general level, how can we continue to speak about and aim for a sister church relationship with the OPC while we accept churches into our federation which used to be part of the OPC? We ask Synod for clarification, since this has a direct bearing on our relationship, and on the nature of the contact which we have with the OPC.

3. The Committee's mandate

With respect to its mandate the Committee makes the following requests:

- a. In view of differing mandates of past Synods, the Committee asks for a mandate which is clear and specific (4.3) with respect to the divergencies, and in this connection raises the question "What is the status of the work done in the report submitted to Synod 1968," (published in the Acts, Synod 1971, Supplement V); "and what is the status of the report Evaluation of Divergencies which was received by Synod 1986 (Acts, Article 126)?"
- b. The Committee recommends that Synod 1992 decide:
 - i. to gratefully acknowledge the commitment of the OPC to be faithful to the Scriptures and defend the Reformed heritage, and to note with gratitude its warnings against the course taken by the Christian Reformed Church;
 - ii. to encourage the OPC to remain faithful to the Scriptures in their examination of the method of admission of guests to the Lord's Supper, and in their study of the desirability and feasibility of adding the three Forms of Unity to its present doctrinal standards (see section 3.3.b);
 - iii. to respond to the question raised by the CEIR with regard to the problem of receiving congregations and ministers that have been or are members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church while maintaining official contact (see section 2.2.c);
 - iv. to acknowledge that the issue of the fencing of the Lord's Supper and confessional membership have been addressed, and that these discussions have led to clarification and better understanding, but also to a more focused articulation of the differences, preventing at this moment a closer relationship;
 - v. to acknowledge that there is a need for patience in our efforts to seek true unity in obedience to Christ's command;
 - vi. to continue the committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with the following mandate:
 - 1. to maintain the contact with the OPC, according to the rules for "Ecclesiastical Contact" as determined by Synod 1977;
 - 2. to continue the discussion of divergencies by focusing on the differences in ecclesiology (see 4.1.a);

3. to continue to discuss and evaluate the current third party relationships of the OPC, and to urge the OPC to break contact with the Christian Reformed Church (see 4.1.b);
 4. to serve the churches with regular reports of the Committee;
 5. to serve General Synod 1995 with a report, to be sent to the churches at least six months prior to the beginning of Synod.
- B. Various churches have written General Synod regarding the temporary relationship with the OPC. Their recommendations range from “rescinding the 1977 decision” and “terminating the temporary contact relationship” to continuing “the dialogue with the OPC.” The reactions, although questioning the present “temporary contact relationship,” do acknowledge the desire and responsibility to maintain contact with the OPC. The recommendations can be listed as follows:
1. The church at Burlington East, ON:
 - a. is of the opinion that continued dialogue is necessary, especially in the matter of “confessional membership”;
 - b. wonders “if it is not now the right time and the task of General Synod to overture the 60th General Assembly (1993) to stimulate” a debate within the OPC at the local level re the relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches;
 - c. states “any action on the part of the Canadian Reformed Churches in accepting former OPC churches into our federation should not be construed as undermining the recognition of the OPC as true church”;
 - d. asks Synod to be very specific in its new mandate to the Committee which issues stand in the way of full sister church relationship with the OPC.
 2. The church at London, ON proposes that since the list of divergencies with the OPC is “a growing list,” in which “the obedience to the Word of God is at stake,” the decision of Synod 1977 is to be termed “premature.” Since the interpretations of the decision of 1977 are “creating more and more confusion,” it must be withdrawn.
 3. The church at Grand Rapids, USA requests Synod to rescind the decision of Synod 1977, to discontinue the relationship described as “ecclesiastical contact,” and to communicate to the OPC its shortcomings, and call it to faithfulness.

This request is based on Grand Rapids’ conviction that the OPC does not “purely administer the sacrament of baptism” since it receives members who oppose infant baptism.

The church at Blue Bell, USA sees here a “clergy/laity distinction” asking more of the office bearers than of the other members.
 4. The church at Attercliffe, ON questions the distinction made by Synod 1989 about the divergencies possibly being an impediment to full correspondence but not to recognition of the OPC as a true church (Acts, Art.94 D.IV.sub 2). The divergencies are of a principal and confessional nature, and therefore the decision of Synod 1977 should be re-evaluated.

The following grounds are given:

 - a. since 1977 no significant progress has been made;
 - b. since 1977 it has become increasingly clear that the divergencies are of a principal nature;

- c. since 1977 local situations have come to light, namely in Blue Bell and Laurel, which show that the doctrinal and church political divergencies are of a serious nature.
- 5. The church at Burlington South, ON is of the opinion that after 15 years the differences should have been resolved. Synod is urged “to give clear direction to the Committee for Contact with the OPC in order to come to a definite conclusion.”
- 6. The church at Blue Bell, USA notes that the Committee does not report “any movement toward uniformity of opinion” nor that “our churches and the OPC are any closer than three, six, or fifteen years ago.” Instead there are “clearer articulations of the differences” and “the relationship is unfruitful.” Specific observations are made with respect to fencing the Lord’s table, confessional membership, and other divergencies, of which the church at Blue Bell, USA concludes, “It is clear that there are radical differences between our churches and the OPC regarding the doctrine of the church.”
The church at Blue Bell, USA proposes that due to the fact that “obedience to the Word of God is deficient in the OPC” the decision of 1977 be withdrawn and the temporary form of ecclesiastical contact be ended.
- 7. Br. W. De Haan appeals to General Synod that due to “the lack of substantial progress toward unity with the OPC,” and the “growing divergencies in the American and Canadian Reformed churches because of the contact with the OPC,” to discontinue the ecclesiastical contact relationship with the OPC.
- 8. The church at Carman, MB objects to the distinction of Synod 1989 regarding impediments to recognizing the OPC as true church and impediments to full correspondence with the OPC. Carman feels that this distinction “contradicts what the churches have agreed to in article 50 of the Church Order.”

Carman also requests a clarification of the status of the “Evaluation of Divergencies” as received by General Synod 1986.

Synod is requested “to make a clear statement where our contact is at with the OPC at this time,” and to judge that the following obstacles to full correspondence with the OPC remain:

- a. The fencing of the Lord’s Supper and, related to it, confessional membership, is a serious confessional divergency.
- b. The question of church relations as it is practised with the CRC and involvement in NAPARC involves the doctrine of the church.

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. The Committee report may be divided into three sections, namely:
 - 1. The fulfilment of the mandate of Synod 1989.
 - a. It is understandable that the Committee could not deal with all of the divergencies listed in the mandate from Synod 1989, given the scope of that mandate, but decided to concentrate on the matters of “fencing the Lord’s Supper” and “confessional membership.” From recent events, these items appear to be the most pressing and needful of discussion. The Committee may be thanked and commended for its approach in this matter.
 - b. The statement of the OPC entitled “Biblical Principles of the Unity of the Church” was not included in the discussions with the OPC. This document can be further discussed when the CCOPC and the CEIR focus on “the differences in ecclesiology” (see Committee recommen-

dation 5 f.2), especially in the light of the Committee's comments about the value of this statement (3.3.a).

- c. It is regrettable that the OPC did not sever its relationship with the CRC as yet. This relationship becomes an increasing concern in the process of establishing ecclesiastical fellowship with the OPC. At the same time, the OPC's warnings directed to the CRC must be thankfully noted.
- d. The appointment by the OPC General Assembly of two committees (the first to examine the method of admission of guests to the Lord's Supper; the second to study the desirability and the feasibility of adding the Three Forms of Unity to its present confessional standards, and of establishing a common Presbyterian and Reformed church order) may be seen as a positive development of great interest to the Canadian Reformed Churches. The CCOPC's discussion papers on these points should be forwarded, via the CEIR, to the committees appointed by the General Assembly, for their information.
- e. Gratitude may be expressed for the progress made in the taking away of misunderstandings and achieving clarification of some parts of the discussion regarding (i) "the fencing of the Lord's table" and (ii) "confessional membership."
 - i. It appears, in view of the OPC's ongoing internal deliberation (see d.), that there is still reason to continue the discussion on this point. It is hoped that in time the OPC and the Canadian Reformed Churches may come to a common understanding and unified practice regarding the supervision of the Lord's Table.

This is not to say that an identical practice is required with respect to the supervision of the Lord's table to come to ecclesiastical fellowship. It should be agreed, however, that a general verbal warning alone is insufficient and that a profession of the Reformed faith is required in the presence of the supervising elders from the guests wishing to attend the Lord's Supper.

- ii. With respect to "confessional membership"
 - the different situations in the OPC and the Canadian Reformed Churches must be taken into account as resulting in various practices (3.1.b.). It should be agreed, however, by the Canadian Reformed Churches and the OPC that all who profess their faith accept the doctrine of God's Word as summarized in the confessions (standards) of the churches. This means that all members are bound by the Word of God in the unity of faith as confessed in the accepted standards.

2. Questions regarding developments with respect to Blue Bell and Laurel.

It is evident that the involvement of the CCOPC with the developments with respect to Blue Bell and Laurel has indeed made the task of the Committee more difficult, to the extent that the original purpose and mandate of the Committee has been obscured by them. The changes in mandates through the years has not made the work of the Committee any easier. The questions of the Committee in this respect need to be clearly answered.

- a. With respect to the CEIR's question regarding our "receiving congregations and ministers that have been or are members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church," it should be noted the Canadian Reformed Churches have no uniform procedure in place, because the present relationship of "ecclesiastical contact" is of a temporary and undefined nature.

- b. The Committee's mandate should not include dealing with procedures of receiving individual congregations and ministers, but should promote the process of coming to full ecclesiastical fellowship. Requests and concerns about such individual cases should be referred to the appropriate ecclesiastical assemblies involved. It would be good to take away a contrary impression left by Synod 1986 (Art. 137) in this respect.
- c. Concerning the receiving of former OPC churches, the following should be considered:
 - i. The question of the Committee "at a more general level, how can we continue to speak about and aim for a sister church relationship with the OPC while we accept churches into our federation which used to be part of the OPC?" indeed requires a response. The answer to the question is, however, not simple because in the Canadian Reformed Churches, local congregations are admitted via the minor assemblies, not via General Synods. Furthermore, the reasons why various churches left the OPC appear to focus on the same concerns which our churches have expressed to the OPC (see the list of divergencies, e.g. fencing of the table, and confessional membership).

It is also to be noted that complete unanimity does not exist within the Canadian Reformed Churches with respect to the relationship with the OPC. This helps explain the different judgments of various Classes regarding the admission of a former OPC minister and/or congregation.

The withdrawal of these churches from the OPC may have the positive effect of underlining the need for the OPC and Canadian Reformed Churches to resolve the matter of divergencies which are considered to be impediments to ecclesiastical fellowship.

- ii. The "temporary contact relationship" implies that ecclesiastical unity has not yet been achieved. Therefore, in the interim, it is understandable that when requests for admission reach the Canadian Reformed Churches, these cannot be rejected simply by stating that the OPC has been declared a true church. Such situations may arise until substantial agreement is reached on the outstanding issues and the temporary contact relationship has led to "ecclesiastical fellowship."
- iii. It is to be noted that, when the Canadian Reformed Churches received the church at Blue Bell, USA, one of the grounds was that "The Reformation Church at Blue Bell does not demand that the Canadian and American Reformed Churches for their sake break the 'temporary form of ecclesiastical relationship' which the Canadian and American Reformed Churches have with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church" (Acts, Classis Ontario South, Sept.11,12, and October 2, 1985, Art.6,3,d).
- iv. With respect to the subsequent Laurel situation, one of the decisions of Classis Ontario South was that "Classis judges that it is not within the province of Classis to make further pronouncements re: the OPC since it is a matter which ought to be dealt with by a General Synod" (Acts, Classis Ontario South, March 25-26, and April 1, 1987, Art.8B,ii,2).

Accordingly, these admitted churches are therefore under obligation to pursue, together with the Canadian Reformed Churches,

unity with the OPC. This remains, in any case, the striving of the Canadian Reformed Churches and the CCOPC.

- v. Whenever a congregation was received into the federation of Canadian Reformed Churches, this was done upon request, not on the initiative of the Canadian Reformed Churches, and always on the prerequisite of the adoption by such a congregation of the Three Forms of Unity and the Reformed Church Order. It was found difficult to refuse such requests of independent Reformed churches in this regard.
 - vi. It is to be recognized that the Canadian Reformed Churches, given their recognition of the OPC as true church – must exercise greater caution in considering admission of congregations which have separated themselves from the OPC, and first engage in open consultation with the ecclesiastical assemblies involved. Where this was not done, the assemblies of the Canadian Reformed Churches have lacked in following proper procedures. During this temporary relationship, individual departures should not be encouraged.
3. The Committee's mandate.
- a. With respect to the mandate of the CCOPC, the status of the report submitted to Synod 1968 and the report "Evaluation of Divergencies" (received by Synod 1986) must indeed be clarified so that the Committee knows what has, and what has not been resolved.
 - b. From these reports it appears that the divergencies discussed are not considered to be an obstacle to recognition and the pursuit of church unity.
 - c. Synod 1971 (Acts, Art.92) decided that the impediments to enter into "correspondence" are (i) the relation with churches that maintain correspondence with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands (i.e. the CRC), (ii) membership in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, and (iii) preference for "fraternal relationship" instead of "correspondence."

With respect to "divergencies in confession and in church polity," Synod 1971 did not state that these are impediments, but "are serious enough to remain the subject of further and frank discussion."

- d. Regarding the report "Evaluation of Divergencies," submitted to Synod 1986, it was decided, "Synod receives this report as the detailed evaluation of the divergencies which the General Synod of 1977 neglected to give for its decision to recognize the OPC as a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts, Art. 126).

The report itself states that continued evaluation has confirmed the decision of Synod 1971 that the differences in confession and church polity "need not prevent the Canadian Reformed Churches from entering into correspondence with [the OP] Church." Synod 1986 did not decide to rescind the decision of 1977 or terminate the ecclesiastical contact relationship with the OPC.

The word "received" used by General Synod 1986 with respect to the "Evaluation of Divergencies" does not state that the evaluation was adopted as final. Synod 1986 obviously felt that discussion on the divergencies should be continued. This is in keeping with the decision Synod 1971 which also spoke of "a further and frank discussion."

It should also be noted that the "Evaluation of Divergencies" received in 1986, was neither refuted nor rejected. In the line of this report, "con-

tinual discussion of the divergencies” is possible within the framework of “permanent contact” (Acts, Synod 1986, p.151).

The conclusion may be that the divergencies in doctrine and church government, as specified in the 1971 and 1986 reports, should be further discussed, but need not be seen as impediments to ecclesiastical fellowship. Instead, it may be even more fruitful to continue the discussion of the divergencies mentioned in these reports from within a permanent relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship.

The matters which have come up since Synod 1983, especially “confessional membership” and “supervision of the Lord’s table” are of a more serious nature (see Acts, Synod 1983, Art. 55, Acts, Synod 1986, Art. 132, and Acts, Synod 1989, Art. 94).

- e. Since the OPC, in 1977, was not comfortable with our rules for correspondence (Acts, Synod 1977, Art. 91) the Committee should enquire whether the present rules are acceptable to the OPC.
- f. From all of the foregoing, it becomes clear that the impediments that still need to be removed are:
 - i. Lack of agreement on the meaning and application of “confessional membership.”
 - ii. Lack of agreement on supervision of the Lord’s table.
 - iii. Lack of agreement on the relationship of the OPC with the CRC.

These items must be addressed by the CCOPC with the OPC. Here, as the Committee itself suggests in its analysis, it may be helpful to discuss “whether these divergencies stem from ecclesiological and/or historical differences.”

- B. In order to facilitate dealing with the matters raised by the churches and of br. W. de Haan, the objections can be summarized under the following headings:

- 1. The decision of General Synod 1977 to recognize the OPC as true church is premature.

Synod considers that the objection on this point has been dealt with by a previous synod. (Acts, Synod 1980, Art. 97). No new grounds are given to deal with this objection again. (Art. 30. C.O.)

- 2. The divergencies are of a serious principal and confessional nature. The status of the “Evaluation of Divergencies” (received by Synod 1986) must be clarified.

Synod considers that it should be borne in mind that the various “divergencies” were not considered to be of the same character and level of concern.

Synod 1986 received the “Evaluation of Divergencies” (see Acts, Art. 126) “as the detailed evaluation of divergencies which the General Synod of 1977 neglected to give for its decision to recognize the OPC....” The report states “We hope that our evaluation has underlined this conclusion that truly Presbyterian churches acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Head of the Church and accept His Word as the only rule for faith and order” (see Acts, Synod 1986, p.151). Synod 1986 did not refute the conclusions of this report (see also Consideration A3 iv).

The remaining divergencies have been included in the mandate from Synod.

- 3. The list of “divergencies” has grown through the years instead of being resolved.

Synod considers that the list of divergencies has not really grown, but certain developments which occurred after 1977 brought to the fore some underlying concerns which may stem from ecclesiological and/or historical differences. Aside from the long-standing matter of the relationship with the CRC, there remain, in fact, two areas of major concern: confessional membership and the fencing of the Lord's Table.

4. The churches at Grand Rapids and Blue Bell, USA introduce a new "divergency," namely the lack of "the pure administration of baptism" as added reason to rescind the decision of 1977, and to terminate the ecclesiastical contact relationship.

Synod considers that the documentation provided by Grand Rapids and Blue Bell makes it clear that the OPC does maintain the scriptural doctrine of the sacrament of baptism, even calling someone who does not present his child for baptism "delinquent in doctrine." The issue is rather one of admitting persons as members who have not fully accepted the teaching of the Scriptures as summarized in the Standards. The matter of "confessional membership" and its application remain a topic for discussion (see Recommendation B2).

5. The period of fifteen years (since 1977) has been long enough to come to a conclusion of the temporary ecclesiastical contact relationship.

Synod considers that the churches have never set a time limit to the temporary ecclesiastical relationship, but each time have looked at the progress that has been made. The report of the Committee contains every reason to maintain the contact with the OPC under the present rules. In this respect the Committee urges Synod "to acknowledge that there is a need for patience in our efforts to seek true unity in obedience to Christ's command" (see report, CCOPC, recommendation (e)).

6. The present relationship with the OPC is causing confusion and disunity within the Canadian Reformed Churches and for the OPC (e.g. in cases such as the receiving of Blue Bell, Laurel and "Denver").

Synod considers that a certain degree of confusion and disagreement indeed exists within the churches as a result of the present relationship. However, Synod considers that termination of this relationship will not in itself take away whatever confusion exists. The confusion can be removed only through a proper resolution of the matters which still hinder full ecclesiastical relationship.

7. The impediments to full sister church relationship are of the same nature as impediments to recognition as a true church (contra Acts Winnipeg, Art. 94,D,IV, sub 2). Recognition as true church implies sister church relations.

Synod considers that it is possible that churches, after having recognized each other as true churches, still need to remove through brotherly discussion, certain hindrances to full fellowship. Recognition as true churches does not in all instances imply immediate fellowship but does underscore the obligation to work towards this goal, all the while keeping in mind what we have agreed to in Art. 50 C.O.

8. The ongoing relations between the OPC and the Christian Reformed Church continue to be a great obstacle.

Synod acknowledges this to be the case; see mandate for the CCOPC (see Recommendation B5c).

9. It is suggested that Synod should overture the next General Assembly that debate at the local level should be stimulated.

Synod considers that more local contacts are already being pursued by Classis Alberta-Manitoba and the Presbytery of the Dakotas. Such local contacts might well be duplicated in other areas where feasible.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

- A. to thank the Committee (and its retired members) for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church for the work done.
- B. to conclude from previous Synods' decisions that the divergencies evaluated in 1971 and 1986 have been sufficiently discussed to confirm that these are not impediments to ecclesiastical fellowship with the OPC, but may be discussed within the framework of church unity.
- C. to continue the Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with the following mandate:
 1. to maintain the contact with the OPC, according to the rules for "Ecclesiastical Contact" as determined by Synod 1977, and to request comment on the rules of ecclesiastical fellowship to determine whether these are presently acceptable.
 2. to continue the discussion of divergencies which are considered to be impediments to ecclesiastical fellowship, and to see whether these divergencies stem from ecclesiological and/or historical differences (as outlined in IV,A3 vi above), with the purpose of having these impediments removed.
 3. to respond to the question of the CEIR to the problem of receiving congregations and ministers that have been or are members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, as outlined by Synod under Considerations IV,A2a,b and c.
 4. to continue to discuss and evaluate the current third party relationships of the OPC.
 5. to inform the OPC that the matters which still require resolution for the establishment of full ecclesiastical fellowship are (see IV,A3v):
 - a. the matter of confessional membership.
 - b. the matter of supervision of the Lord's table, and
 - c. the matter of the relationship with the Christian Reformed Church.
 6. to serve the churches with regular reports of the work of the Committee, and to serve General Synod 1995 with a report, to be sent to the churches at least six months prior to the beginning of Synod.

Synod expresses the fervent wish that these matters may be resolved so that the way to ecclesiastical fellowship, in accordance with the Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship, may be realized.
- D. to send to the churches at Burlington East, ON, London, ON, Grand Rapids, USA, Attercliffe, ON. Burlington South, ON, Blue Bell, USA, Carman, MB, and to br. W. De Haan, the considerations of Synod as response to their submissions.

ADOPTED

Note:

A motion is made to delete from Recommendation B the words, "ecclesiastical fellowship with the OPC," and replace them with, "recognize the OPC as a true church." The chairman on behalf of the Executive rules that this is not germane to the entire report and therefore is inadmissible.

ARTICLE 73

Address of Rev. P.G. Feenstra

The chairman gives Rev. P.G. Feenstra the opportunity to respond to the address of Rev. S. Phillips, fraternal delegate of the OPC. He speaks the following words:

Rev. Stephen Phillips, I have been asked to speak to you on behalf of Synod Lincoln 1992. We thank you for coming to us and speaking to us on behalf of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Tonight we have decided to continue our relationship with you. We pray that this decision may be to our mutual benefit and upbuilding. During the past years you have shown willingness to stand up for the truth of God's Word. Furthermore, you have illustrated a desire to address the matters we have placed before you as concerns. The contact and discussion we have had with you on a committee level has been open, honest, straightforward and brotherly.

I would like to interact with a few comments you made last evening. Rev. Phillips, you mentioned the decision made by the 59th General Assembly regarding your relation with the CRC. You informed us that the Committee on Ecumenicity and InterChurch Relations has been instructed "to review the propriety of the OPC's continued fraternal relations with that body." We are grateful that you take this matter seriously. To say it in the words of Larry Wilson who wrote about this decision in your magazine *New Horizons*: "Unity with one another also involves responsibility for one another." A federation of true churches should not allow unfaithfulness in its own ranks or in its contacts with other churches. We, therefore, believe the strong words of warning your delegate spoke to the CRC Synod were in place.

We have had contact with you for a number of years. Fraternal delegates have addressed our respective assemblies and we have had joint committee meetings. Yet something is lacking. There hasn't been any pulpit exchange, intercommunion, or joint activity on a local level.

In 1977 we established a relationship of "temporary ecclesiastical contact" with you. In 1980 your delegate to Synod Smithville commented that such a relationship raises the question, "Where do we go from here?" That's why we, at this Synod had to grapple with and answer the questions "How far have we come?" and "How far can we go?" These concerns are living in many of our churches. We hope that the course we set out on this evening may bring us further.

In your address you referred to the decision made at the 58th General Assembly regarding the establishment of a committee to study the question of fencing of the Lord's Supper: this is a source of encouragement. Last night, you cautioned us not to be under any delusions that the study will necessarily lead to change in the OPC's stance on this matter. Yet we hope that you will look at what we have said to you before: your present practice regarding guests at the Lord's Supper runs contrary to your own Standards and Form of Government. This is not simply a practical but a confessional matter. May your committee be given the wisdom and insight to deal with this matter in a biblical manner.

Criticism of each other should not be construed as mistrust. Picking at flaws isn't helpful and neither would it be constructive to "bark" at you. We value you, and the relation we have with you too highly for that.

In our contact with you our motive is not to have it our way or to get what we want but to be faithful and obedient to the command of Christ. We are not a federation of perfect people. Far from it. Please point out our faults and errors. It can only be to our benefit. Forgive us if we have come across as being haughty and set in our ways. It is our sincere desire to be faithful to the Lord, to His Word and to Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions which summarize what the Bible teaches. To continue walking together we need to pull in one and the same

direction in doctrine and practice. What we desire is full ecclesiastical fellowship built upon a solidly biblical and confessional basis.

Rev. Phillips, may our contact be built on the apostolic foundation established by Christ and may the Spirit of the Lord guide us into all the truth and bind us together. Thank you.

ARTICLE 74

Relations with Churches Abroad re RCUS

Committee I presents:

Agenda item VIII G1a,2,3,4

Due to time restriction this report will be dealt with further the next morning.
(see Articles 44 and 79)

ARTICLE 75

Adjournment

Elder H. Faber asks that Hymn 40: 1 and 2 be sung, and closes in prayer.

MORNING SESSION – FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1992

ARTICLE 76

Reopening

The chairman asks that Hymn 54: 1-5 be sung, reads 1 John 3: 1-10 and leads in prayer. Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present. The chairman remembers that elder J. Werkman's brother-in-law passed away earlier this week. Condolences are expressed to elder Werkman.

ARTICLE 77

Appeal of Br. L. Van Zandwyk re Acts 1989, (Art. 154)

Committee I presents:

Agenda item VIII D12

This is discussed in closed session.

Elder H. Faber abstains from voting.

I. MATERIAL

Letter of appeal from br. L. Van Zandwyk re Acts, 1989, Art. 154.

II. ADMISSIBILITY

- A. The adopted Guidelines for Synod stipulate that "all appeals should ordinarily be at the convening church at least one month before Synod convenes." (Guidelines, I,D.) The cause of justice and responsible decision making is not served when members of a broader assembly have to deal with extensive appeals that they have neither read beforehand nor been able to research carefully.
- B. Regulations used by broader assemblies are put in place to serve the churches and the individual members in order that matters brought before these assemblies can be dealt with in a well-prepared and well-considered manner.
- C. The appeal of br. Van Zandwyk was received on Monday November 2, one day before the Constitution of General Synod. Br. Van Zandwyk does not give reasonable explanation for this delay.

- D. The postscripts to the appeal indicate that the appeal is “by and large an earlier essay on this matter, written in 1990” and therefore could have been submitted earlier.
- E. The content of br. Van Zandwyk’s submission is such that the time allowed by the Guideline, I,D is essential to do justice to this appeal.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide to declare this appeal inadmissible.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 78

Appeal of Br. L. Van Zandwyk re Regulations Broader Assemblies

Committee II presents:

Agenda item VIII H4a

After some discussion the Advisory Committee takes its report back for reconsideration. (see Articles 89 and 101)

ARTICLE 79

Relations with Churches Abroad re RCUS

Committee I presents:

Agenda item VIII G1,a,2,3,4

I. MATERIAL

- A. Report of the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) re The Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS).
- B. Letter of the church at Attercliffe, ON.
- C. Letter of the church at Carman, MB.
- D. Letter of the church at Guelph, ON.

II. OBSERVATIONS

- A. From the CRCA report we note that on Jan. 11, 1991, the InterChurch Relations Committee of the RCUS invited an observer to be sent to the 1991 Synod that was scheduled to meet in Garner, Iowa, from April 2-5, 1991.
- B. The CRCA report records that on July 23, 1991, we received a letter from the RCUS deputies informing us that Synod 1991 of the RCUS would like to establish fraternal relations with our churches and will be sending an observer to Synod Lincoln 1992. The letter was accompanied by various documents: the Constitution of the RCUS, a brochure entitled “The Reformed Church in the United States” and a copy of the 1991 Abstract of the Minutes of the 245th Synod.
- C. The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN) informed CRCA that Synod Leeuwarden, 1990, decided to offer the RCUS a sister church relationship.
- D. The CRCA recommends that Synod 1992 respond to the requests of the RCUS for an official relationship by mandating the CRCA to investigate the RCUS with a view to entering into a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with it and to report its findings to the next General Synod (see CRCA Report: Section IX, 4)
- E. The church at Carman, MB has had contact with the RCUS since 1986.
- F. The church at Carman, MB requests Synod to judge that:

1. "The church at Carman, MB was correct to initiate such contact on the local level and to encourage her to continue it.
 2. That Synod does not appoint a committee with a mandate for contact with the RCUS while local investigation and study is incomplete."
- G. The church at Carman, MB maintains that "the Canadian Reformed Churches are a federation of local autonomous churches" therefore the initiative to enter into relations with other churches should come as a matter of "principle of Reformed polity" from a local church. In addition, the church at Carman, MB finds "it unnecessary and wrong for work already being done on a local level to be placed in the hands of a committee."
- H. The church at Carman, MB does not consider the RCUS to be a church "abroad" and therefore states that we should come to full ecclesiastical unity, without leaving room for Ecclesiastical Fellowship according to the adopted rules.
- I. The church at Guelph, ON suggests that the CRCA should not be involved with the RCUS until the church at Carman requests its involvement (Art. 30 C.O.).
- J. The church at Attercliffe, ON is of the opinion that the request for seeking contact with the RCUS must come from a local church, and be brought to Synod via Classis and Regional Synod.
- K. The church of Carman, MB notes that more discussion with the RCUS is necessary concerning a number of points including:
1. "the method and use of church discipline (including erasure)
 2. diversity in and among the local congregations
 3. participants at the celebration of the Lord's Supper
 4. (unofficial, but practical) contact with the Christian Reformed Churches (eg. involvement with MARS and Dort College, combined worship services)
 5. keeping the day of rest (we have received conflicting reports about this matter)
 6. giving and receiving of attestations from other 'conservative' denominations."

The report of the CRCA also mentions the matter of theonomy as a possible discussion point.

III. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. According to the Word of God and the Confessions (John 17:11, 17,20,21; Eph. 3:14-4:16; 2 Tim. 3:15, 16; L.D. 21, H.C. and Art. 27-29 B.C.), true believers and churches have the calling to seek ecclesiastical fellowship with all those who with them confess the same faith and maintain and practice it in preaching, worship, discipline and government.
- B. The following up of this calling lawfully belongs to the jurisdiction of the combined churches, on the ground that this calling has been accepted by the churches together in their confession (Art. 27, B.C.; Art. 50, C.O.), and should therefore not be made dependent on the initiative of a local church only.
- C. The church at Carman, MB is to be commended for the contact initiated with the RCUS and should not be discouraged to continue this contact. The church at Carman for its part and in its situation understood its calling to pursue unity with the RCUS. That does not exclude the federation's own task and responsibility (in its Synods) regarding this calling especially because it is the Federation of the RCUS, and not a local church, which requests contact with our Federation. The church at Guelph, ON is not correct when it sees here a conflict with Art. 30, C.O.

- D. The desire of the RCUS to seek unity and establish a “fraternal relationship” with the CanRC is a reason for thankfulness. The documentation provided by the CRCA warrants seeking further contact with the RCUS.
- E. The aim of contact with the RCUS as a Federation of churches abroad is to come to Ecclesiastical Fellowship according to the adopted rules.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

- A. to thank the church at Carman, MB and the CRCA for their work done with regard to the RCUS and express our appreciation for the desire of the RCUS to establish fraternal relations with our churches.
- B. to mandate the CRCA to investigate the RCUS with a view to entering into a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship, making use of the findings of the church at Carman, MB.
- C. to send this decision to the churches at Attercliffe, ON, Carman, MB and Guelph, ON as an answer to their letters.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 80

Appointment of Deputies for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity

In view of the meeting of the Alliance of Reformed Churches to be held on November 17-19, 1992. Synod decides to appoint an ad hoc committee consisting of Rev. J. Mulder and Dr. C. VanDam as temporary deputies, to speak on behalf of our churches.

ARTICLE 81

Appeal of Br. D. Houweling

Committee II presents:

Agenda item VIII D3

After some discussion the Advisory Committee takes its report back for reconsideration. (see Article 88)

ARTICLE 82

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 61-75 are read and adopted.

EVENING SESSION – FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1992

ARTICLE 83

Reopening

The chairman asks that Psalm 122: 1 and 3 be sung. Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 84

Relations with Churches Abroad re PCK

Committee I presents:

Agenda item VIII G1a,4,6,7

The Committee presents two reports.

After some discussion the Advisory Committee takes these reports back for reconsideration.

(see Articles 93, 108 and 111)

ARTICLE 85

Adjournment

Rev. C. VanSpronsen asks that Psalm 134: 1-3 be sung, and closes in prayer.

MORNING SESSION – MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1992

ARTICLE 86

Reopening

The chairman asks that Psalm 138: 1 and 2 be sung, he reads Psalm 138 and leads in prayer. Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 87

Appeal of Br. G. Kruyswijk

Committee III presents:

Agenda item VIII D15

This is dealt with in closed session.

After some discussion the Advisory Committee takes its report back for reconsideration.

(see Articles 46 and 120)

ARTICLE 88

Appeal of Br. D. Houweling

Committee II presents:

Agenda item VIII D3

I. MATERIAL

Letter of br. D. Houweling plus appendices.

II. ADMISSIBILITY

Since br. D. Houweling is appealing a decision of Regional Synod West May 28, 1991, which br. Houweling contends to be in conflict with the Word of God, Synod decide to declare this appeal admissible (Art. 31 C.O.).

III. OBSERVATIONS

Regional Synod answered br. Houweling in first instance with an erroneous reply which was superseded by the official reply dated July 5, 1992, acknowledging that an error had been made.

Br. Houweling agrees with the Regional Synod's analysis of his correspondence with the Consistory and Classis (Observations 1 and 2 and Consideration 1): "The place of the law in the life of the Christian is indeed the focal point of the issue." Br. Houweling asks: "Since Scripture teaches that believers are under grace and not under law (Rom. 6:14) how is it that the Reformed Confessions and the Reformed Church in general still places God's people under the law?"

Br. Houweling states that Regional Synod "fails to deal with the issue in light of the Scriptures involved but rather quote exclusively from the exact source with which I take issue – namely the three forms of unity."

Regional Synod judges:

that br. Houweling's interpretation of Scripture in this matter is incorrect.

that the Consistory has dealt with br. Houweling's concerns in accordance with Scripture and the Confessions.

that Classis Pacific correctly supported the church at Lynden.

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

The clerk of Regional Synod West May 28, 1991, admits error in his reply of July 5, 1991 and submits this letter as Synod's official reply to br. Houweling's appeal, thus removing any doubt as to which reply to accept.

In its considerations Regional Synod submits:

that the following N.T. references, Rom. 7:12, 14, James 1:25, 1 Cor.6:9-11 and Col. 3, support the doctrine of sanctification as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity (Lord's Day 23, 24; Belgic Confession Art. 22, 23, 24).

that the Reformed Confessions are a summary of Scripture and that these Three Forms of Unity are not in conflict with Scripture on this point.

Regional Synod has already submitted Scripture proof, contrary to br. Houweling's allegation that they did not, and these references answer his question "how is it that the Reformed Confessions and the Reformed Church in general still places God's people under the law ?" The Scriptures show that br. Houweling is correct in his emphasis that for its sanctification the congregation must be referred to Christ. Yet, br. Houweling must see from the Scriptures as well, that in Christ the law is maintained, for Christ has delivered us "in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." (Rom. 8:4). Br. Houweling could look for further confirmation of this Reformed doctrine in the epistle of John, e.g. 1 John 2:3,6,7,29; 3:3,22,24; 5:3, to see how the Holy Spirit leads the N.T. believers in the paths of righteousness for Christ' sake by means of His law (1 John 3:24).

V. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide to deny the appeal of br. Houweling based on the above considerations.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 89

Appeal of Br. L. Van Zandwyk re Regulations Broader Assemblies

Committee II presents:

Agenda item VIII H4a

After some discussion the Advisory Committee takes its report back for reconsideration. (see Articles 78 and 101)

ARTICLE 90

Adjournment

Synod adjourns for committee work.

EVENING SESSION – MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1992

ARTICLE 91

Reopening

The chairman reopens the meeting by asking that Psalm 47: 1 and 3 be sung. Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 92

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 76-85 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 93

Relations with Churches Abroad re PCK

Committee I presents:

Agenda item VIII G1a,4,6,7

The following motion is made and adopted:

That Dr. N.H. Gootjes be invited to join Synod at his earliest convenience to address Synod with respect to the request of the Presbyterian Church of Korea, and to clarify any matters raised by Synod pertaining thereto.

The following motion is made and defeated:

To provide Dr. N.H. Gootjes with the two reports of the Committee re PCK. Further discussion re PCK is tabled until Dr. N.H. Gootjes arrives. (see Articles 84 and 111)

ARTICLE 94

Relations with Churches Abroad re ICRC

Committee I presents:

Agenda item VIII G1a,b,6

I. MATERIAL

- A. Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) re ICRC.
- B. Letter from the church at Fergus, ON.

II. OBSERVATIONS

- A. Regarding the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) Synod 1989 gave the CRCA the following mandate: that the Committee overtures the ICRC to make discussion of the Constitution a matter of priority.

- 1. that the mandate as expressed by Synod 1986, Art. 175, D, 2,a,b,c be maintained.

This mandate reads as follows:

“To advise the executive of the ICRC that the amendments as proposed by the General Synod of Burlington West 1986 be placed on the agenda instead of those proposed by Synod Cloverdale 1983, to wit:

- a. that a stipulation be included in the ‘Basis’ of the ICRC that the delegates subscribe only to the standards of the churches of which they are a member.
- b. that membership of the RES is an impediment to membership of the ICRC.
- c. that “CONSTITUTION Art. V – Authority” be amended to read:

‘The conclusions of the conference shall be advisory in character. Member churches are to be informed of these conclusions and are recommended to work towards their implementation.’ ”

- 2. that the delegates keep the churches informed regarding the activities of the Conference by means of Press Releases (Acts 1989, Art. 128, D,2,3,4).
- B. The CRCA report indicates that the Committee asked that the amendments to

the Constitution of the ICRC as proposed by General Synod of Burlington West 1986 were placed on the agenda of the ICRC at Langley.

- C. The first proposed amendment (that a stipulation be included in the “Basis” of the ICRC that the delegates subscribe only to the standards of the churches of which they are a member) was not accepted by the ICRC. The reason for this was that such a stipulation was unnecessary because the relationship of the member churches and the delegates to the Basis is not one of subscribing in the sense of a formal act of subscription, but one of subscribing in the sense of recognition.
- D. Regarding the second proposed amendment (that membership of the RES is an impediment to membership of the ICRC) the ICRC, Langley 1989, decided not to adopt such a change because it is already covered in the ICRC Constitution Art. IV 1,B (Those churches shall be admitted as members which are not members of the World Council of Churches or any other organization whose aims and practices are deemed to be in conflict with the Basis).
- E. The third proposed amendment (that the conclusions of the conference shall be advisory in character and member churches are to be informed of these conclusions and are recommended to work towards their implementation) was unanimously adopted by the ICRC, Langley 1989.
- F. The CRCA proposed to continue participation in the ICRC for the following reasons:
 - 1. the integrity of our churches is not jeopardized by our being a member of the ICRC.
 - 2. membership in the ICRC is voluntary and its conclusions are advisory and therefore the Conference does not undermine the Three Forms of Unity.
 - 3. our participation in the ICRC should be one of full cooperation and continued evaluation.
 - 4. the ICRC is not a super-synod but a conference.
 - 5. the ICRC is a suitable organization for sharing our wealth, experience and manpower with young churches in the “third world.”
- G. The CRCA recommends:
 - 1. that the CanRC continue to participate in the ICRC.
 - 2. that the CanRC be represented at the next meeting of the ICRC, Zwolle 1993.
 - 3. that the Revs. Cl. Stam and J. Visscher be sent as voting delegates and Profs. N.H. Gootjes and J. Faber as advisors.
 - 4. that the CRCA report to the next General Synod giving a report and evaluation of the ICRC, Zwolle, the Netherlands, (D.V.) 1993.
- H. The church at Fergus, ON questions why five delegates are suggested to attend the ICRC, Zwolle 1993. They suggest that three members would suffice, thus reducing the cost to the churches.
- I. The report of the CRCA does not give evidence that the delegates to the ICRC, Langley 1989, did inform the churches regarding the activities of the Conference.

III. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. The CRCA is to be thanked for all it has done in fulfilling its mandate.
- B. Noting the advisory nature of the ICRC, Synod accepts the explanation of the delegates regarding the proposed constitutional amendments which ICRC, Langley 1989 did not adopt.

- C. The CRCA is encouraged to continue to participate in the ICRC for the reasons given in Observation F, 1,2,3,4,5.
- D. The suggestion by the church at Fergus, ON to send three delegates to the ICRC, Zwolle 1993, has merit.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

- A. that the CanRC continue to participate in the ICRC.
- B. that the CanRC be represented at the next meeting of the ICRC, Zwolle 1993.
- C. that two members of the CRCA be sent to the ICRC, Zwolle 1993, as voting delegates and Dr. N.H. Gootjes as advisor (with Dr. J. Faber as alternate).
- D. that the CRCA report to the next General Synod, as well as to the churches, giving a report and evaluation of the ICRC, Zwolle, the Netherlands, (D.V.) 1993.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 95

Appeal of the Church at Toronto

Committee V presents:

Agenda item VIII D9

I. MATERIAL

Letter from the church at Toronto, ON re decision Regional Synod East November 13-14, 1991, Acts, Art.8.

II. ADMISSIBILITY

The appeal of the church at Toronto, ON is not admissible seeing that it appeals a decision of a Regional Synod held a year ago and was submitted on the eve Synod 1992 convened, thereby ignoring the Guidelines for Synod (Synod 1983, Article 45). No explanation is given for the tardiness of this appeal.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide to declare the appeal of the church at Toronto, ON, inadmissible.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 96

Appeal of Rev. G. Nederveen

Committee V presents:

Agenda item VIII D5

After some discussion the Advisory Committee takes its report back for reconsideration. (see Article 104)

ARTICLE 97

Adjournment

Rev. P.G. Feenstra asks that Psalm 65: 1 and 4 be sung, and closes in prayer.

MORNING SESSION – TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1992

ARTICLE 98

Reopening

The chairman asks that Psalm 146: 1 and 3 be sung, he reads Revelation 1: 9-20,

and leads in prayer. Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present. The chairman mentions that the father of elder P. Vandergugten is near death and therefore br. Vandergugten will try to leave for home on Thursday.

ARTICLE 99

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 86-97 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 100

Letter from Reformed Churches in the Netherlands

A fax arrived from our sister churches in the Netherlands this morning expressing their greetings and the hope that the Lord will bless the work of this Synod.

ARTICLE 101

Appeal of Br. L. Van Zandwyk re Regulations Broader Assemblies

Committee II presents:

Agenda item VIII H4a

I. MATERIAL

Appeal from br. L. Van Zandwyk.

II. ADMISSIBILITY

Although the material was submitted too late according to the Guidelines for General Synod (Acts 1983, Art. 45), the nature of the contents is such that it can be considered by Synod. As well, because br. Van Zandwyk contends that the matter he appeals is incompatible with Scripture and Church Order, Synod declares this appeal admissible. (Art. 31 C.O.)

III. OBSERVATION

Br. Van Zandwyk requests Synod to declare that rules for broader assemblies "... are incompatible with Scripture and Church Order; that they are a potential cause for unwarranted delays and are imposing unjustifiable burdens and frustrations on those who appeal against possible wrongdoings of minor assemblies in our church confederation. And to urge all minor assemblies to rescind these rules as un-Scriptural and un-just; as un-warranted curtailments of the unrestricted right to appeal laid down in Article 31 of our Church Order."

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

The regulations in the various ecclesiastical regions are not a matter of the churches in common.

A request for revision of Classical Regulations ought to be directed to a minor assembly.

V. RECOMMENDATION

On the basis of Art. 30 C.O., Synod decides not to accede to the request of br. L. Van Zandwyk.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 102

Appeal of Br. L. Van Zandwyk re Acts Winnipeg 1989, (Art.153)

Committee II presents:

Agenda item VIII H4b

After some discussion the Advisory Committee takes its report back for reconsideration.
(see Article 115)

ARTICLE 103

Appeal of Br. L. Van Zandwyk re Hymn 1A

Committee I presents:

Agenda item VIII D11

I. MATERIAL

Appeal of br. L. Van Zandwyk re Hymn 1A.

II. ADMISSIBILITY

Synod declares the letter of br. L. Van Zandwyk dated Oct. 21, 1992, admissible on the following grounds:

- A. the matter concerns the churches in common:
- B. the short period of time between Synod and Classis Ontario North Sept. 18, 1992, may have made it difficult to comply with Synodical Guideline 1,D (Acts, 1983, Art. 45).

III. OBSERVATIONS

- A. Br. Van Zandwyk requests “that Synod now deal with my request to Classis, since Classis did not do so ‘in an ecclesiastical manner.’”
- B. Br. Van Zandwyk requested Classis Ontario North Sept. 18, 1992, “to pronounce that in the present circumstance the singing of Hymn 1A ought to be suspended in our churches, until the text (and melody) of this hymn have been adapted to the officially adopted text of the Apostles’ Creed. That is: to discontinue insulting the Lord with an obsolete text of our ‘credo’ containing an *officially acknowledged ‘impoverishment.’* And to seek a similar pronouncement from the coming General Synod, this being a matter which regards all the churches.”
- C. Classis responded as follows:
 1. Synod 1989, adopted the proposal of the Standing Committee.
 2. It is not in the province of Classis to make such a pronouncement.
- D. The grounds of the requests of br. Van Zandwyk to Classis were:
 1. The text of Hymn 1A contains a major flaw “which was officially labelled by a previous General Synod as an ‘impoverishment’ of the expression of our catholic undoubted Christian faith” (Acts, Cloverdale, 1983, p. 51).
 2. Hosea 14:2 and Hebrews 13:15; “where ‘the fruits (or confession) of our lips that acknowledge His Name’ is characterized as a sacrifice to the Lord.”
 3. Deut. 17:1 and Mal. 1 and 2; “where the presentation of any defective or blemished sacrifice is condemned as an insult to the Lord, a practice on which we can expect not His blessing, but only His curse” (Mal.2:2).

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Although it was not in the province of Classis Ontario North Sept. 18, 1992, to suspend the singing of Hymn 1A for the churches in its jurisdiction, it was in its province to deal with the matter, and to overture General Synod to suspend the usage of Hymn 1A in the Book of Praise.
- B. Synod Winnipeg 1989, did not adopt the proposal of the Standing Committee that “Hymn 1A be left as it is so that it remains within the freedom of the churches to use this text and melody” (Acts, 1989, Art. 145, Observation 5), but Synod considered (Consideration 2) that “Synod 1986, already decided to have the same text of the Apostles’ Creed for singing and speaking (Acts,

Art.189, Cons.2),” and showed in its Recommendation 2,j that it mandated the Standing Committee to continue to work towards this aim.

- C. Synod 1989, continued to leave it in the freedom of the churches to sing Hymn 1A which has been adopted by the churches as suitable in worship.
- D. Br. Van Zandwyk fails to consider the difference between on the one hand giving to the Lord a blemished sacrifice motivated by disrespect and selfish gain, while there is the choice to give to the Lord an unblemished sacrifice, and on the other hand giving to the Lord a blemished sacrifice which is the only one available and the motivation is not selfish gain, but to give to the Lord the best there is at the moment. Such sacrifices are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, as they are covered in the sight of God by the perfect holiness of the Mediator (1 Peter 2:5).
- E. Synod should not impoverish the worship of the congregation by suspending the singing of Hymn 1A, and continue to leave its use in the freedom of the churches and to review the matter when according to the judgment of the churches a better melody has been made available.

V. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide not to grant the request of br. L. Van Zandwyk to suspend the usage of Hymn 1A.

DEFEATED

The following motion is made:

I. MATERIAL

Appeal br. L. Van Zandwyk re Hymn 1A.

II. ADMISSIBILITY

Synod declares the letter of br. L. Van Zandwyk dated Oct. 21, 1992, admissible on the following grounds:

- A. the matter concerns the churches in common;
- B. the short period of time between Synod and Classis Ontario North Sept. 18, 1992, may have made it difficult to comply with Synodical Guideline 1,D (Acts, 1983, Art. 45).

III. OBSERVATION

Br. Van Zandwyk requested Classis Sept. 18, 1992, “to pronounce that in the present circumstance the singing of Hymn 1A ought to be suspended in our churches, until the text (and melody) of this hymn have been adapted to the officially adopted text of the Apostles’ Creed. That is: to discontinue insulting the Lord with an obsolete text of our ‘credo’ containing an officially acknowledged ‘impoverishment.’ And to seek a similar pronouncement from the coming General Synod, this being a matter which regards all the churches.” Since Classis did not do this, br. Van Zandwyk approaches Synod.

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. The churches have not yet been able to incorporate into Hymn 1A the word “Christian,” but are still seeking ways to do so, as affirmed by Synod 1992.
- B. Br. Van Zandwyk’s allegations about “insulting the Lord” by singing an “obsolete text” of our credo are unproven and far-fetched. The text of the credo in the present Hymn 1A may be as yet incomplete, but is not by that fact “obsolete.”

V. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide not to grant the request of br. L. Van Zandwyk to suspend the singing of Hymn 1A.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 104

Appeal of Rev. G. Nederveen

Committee V presents:

Agenda item VIII D5

The following motion is made and defeated:

To delete Considerations D and E.

The following motion is made and defeated:

To replace Consideration G with the words: As to the method of instruction, Synod cannot judge whether Regional Synod exceeded its jurisdiction since the appellant does not provide the necessary documentation.

The Advisory Committee report is now voted upon.

I. MATERIAL

Letter from Rev. G. Nederveen of Burlington, ON re decision of Regional Synod East, November 13-14, 1991.

II. ADMISSIBILITY

The appeal submitted by Rev. G. Nederveen is admissible, seeing that it deals with an appeal against a decision of a minor assembly and was submitted in accordance with the Guidelines for Synod.

III. OBSERVATIONS

Rev.G. Nederveen requests that General Synod judge:

- A. "Regional Synod East of November 13, 1991, was remiss in its dealings of my appeal by treating it in the contexts of the appeal of Toronto.
- B. Regional Synod has not dealt with the specifics of my appeal and did not refute my arguments which defend the Reformed principle that a minister and the consistory have the right and freedom to select material which they deem suitable for catechism instruction.
- C. Regional Synod erred in stating that Classis has the right to deal with catechism teaching in a congregation. A classis may only judge an appeal against a consistory decision whereby this consistory upheld the teaching of its minister at catechism classes even though the material he used or the thing he taught are contrary to Scripture. Such a judgment can be based only on the contents of the material not being faithful to Scripture and not on the basis whether the writer of a book or the speaker on a tape has signed the Three Forms of Unity.
- D. Regional Synod erred by upholding the decision of Classis Ontario North of December 14, 1990 that the speaker on tapes becomes the instructor.
- E. Regional Synod erred in upholding the decision of Classis North of December 14, 1990 because it denied a consistory the right to use material it found to be Scriptural. This is a 'lording' over a consistory and, therefore, contrary to Art. 74 C.O."

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. From the material submitted it is clear that Rev. G. Nederveen's appeal functions within the broader context of the appeal of church at Toronto, ON.
- B. It is evident that Regional Synod did deal with that part of his appeal which pertained to the basic question whether a minister and the consistory have the freedom to select material which they deem suitable for catechism instruction when it observed that "Classis has indeed the right to deal with the catechism teaching in a congregation when this is properly brought before Classis." (Acts, 1991, Article 11, A 1).

- C. A major assembly may sustain an appeal against catechism instruction when it is proven that this instruction (whether this deals with the instructor, method of instruction or contents of instruction) is contrary to the Scriptures, Confessions and the Church Order.
 - D. A minister has as one of his main duties “to instruct the children of the church in the doctrine of salvation.” (Article 16, C.O.). As such a minister must not give the appearance of abdicating his duty as an instructor and must be sensitive to the fact that the use of a large number of tapes, to which Rev. Nederveen refers, could call into question the performance of his duties.
 - E. Should he make use of supplemental material, it must be properly scrutinized and used, and if it is given for independent study, the minister must be certain that it serves to promote a better understanding of Reformed doctrine.
 - F. When a minister properly scrutinizes and uses material to supplement his catechetical instruction, he, and not the original author of the material, remains the instructor. The appellant states that the aforementioned tapes were properly scrutinized by the consistory of the church at Toronto, and adds that this fact is: “... not acknowledged by Classis anywhere in its report.”
 - G. Given the absence of any proof in the decision of Classis Ontario North, that the method was contrary to the Scriptures, the Confessions or Church Order, Regional Synod erred in upholding this decision and therefore these minor assemblies exceeded their jurisdiction.
- V. RECOMMENDATION

Synod judge to adopt the above considerations as its answer to the appeal of Rev. G. Nederveen.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 105

Adjournment

Synod is adjourned for committee work.

AFTERNOON SESSION – TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1992

ARTICLE 106

Reopening

Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present with the exception of elder H. Faber who is temporarily absent with notification.

ARTICLE 107

Discussion with Dr. N.H. Gootjes

In order to facilitate the discussion re Presbyterian Church in Korea, Dr. N.H. Gootjes is present in plenary session and answers the questions of the members. After the discussion, the chairman thanks Dr. Gootjes for his assistance.

ARTICLE 108

Relations with Churches Abroad re PCK

Committee I presents:

Agenda item VIII G1a,4,6,7

It is decided by secret ballot to deal with the report of Rev. J. D. Wielenga and elder P. Vandergugten first this evening.

(see Articles 84, 93 and 111)

ARTICLE 109

Adjournment

Synod is adjourned for committee work.

EVENING SESSION – TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1992

ARTICLE 110

Reopening

The chairman asks that Psalm 108: 1 and 2 be sung. Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 111

Relations with Churches Abroad re PCK

Committee I presents:

Agenda item VIII G1a,4,6,7

The following motion is made and defeated:

To delete Consideration D.

The following motion is made and defeated:

To add to Observation E, as point 3:

“Let us not pre-empt the discussions we are having with them (the OPC) by extending sister church relations to similar groups abroad.”

Rev. J.D. Wielenga & br. P. Vandergugten present:

Agenda VIII, G1a,4,6,7

I. MATERIAL

- A. Report of the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) re the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK).
- B. Letter from the church at Attercliffe, ON.
- C. Letter from the church at Fergus, ON.
- D. Letter from the church at Port Kells, BC.

II. OBSERVATIONS

- A. The CRCA reports that the communications problem with the PCK has been resolved so that an essential obstacle to enter into a sister church relationship with the PCK has been removed.
- B. Synod 1986 (Art. 150, C, 5) with regret recognized that due to language and communication difficulties a correspondence relationship with the PCK can neither be established responsibly nor maintained fruitfully at this time.
- C. The mandate given by Synod 1986 to the CRCA to be diligent in the endeavour to improve communications with the PCK so that entering into and maintaining of a correspondence relationship becomes possible. Synod 1989 charged the CRCA “to continue to be diligent regarding the matter of communication with the PCK” (Acts 1989, Art.103,D2).
- D. The church at Attercliffe, ON urges Synod not to accept the recommendations of the CRCA with regard to the PCK on the following grounds:
 1. these recommendations did not come from the churches;

2. a sister church relationship can only be established after divergencies between the Westminster Confessions and the Three Forms of Unity have been resolved;
 3. they question whether it is our ecumenical task to search the whole world for sister churches;
 4. they suggest a regional approach towards our contact with other churches;

The church at Fergus, ON also suggests that before Ecclesiastical Fellowship can be established the PCK adopt the Three Forms of Unity.
- E. The church at Port Kells, BC writes:
1. concerning Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the PCK that "It seems unwise to . . . establish full sister church relations with churches abroad when we have not reached that stage with churches in our own area who have the same confessions and church government";
 2. "such a step abroad would tend more toward disunity than unity on the home front."
- F. The communications from the PCK received by the CRCA since 1989 reveal that the General Assembly of the PCK of Sept. 1990 decided to establish Ecclesiastical Fellowship with our churches.
- G. The consideration of Synod 1986 (Art 150, C,4) that formal recognition of the PCK as churches of Jesus Christ should not be based on testimony of sister churches only or on ICRC membership. Such recognition remains the churches' own responsibility.
- H. The CRCA in their 1983 report has evaluated the PCK's Confessions, church government, history and character of these churches. They state that there is nothing that forms an impediment to our recognizing the PCK as a true church of our Lord Jesus Christ and to entering into an official relationship with this church.
- I. The same report addresses the concern of Synod 1980 (Art. 153,E,4) expressed in its charge to the CRCA to evaluate the communications with the PCK as to the question whether official ecclesiastical correspondence, even if it would be warranted in principle, can be responsibly maintained, due to distance and language. This matter has been satisfactorily addressed as it does not return in the mandate given to the committee by Synod 1983.
- J. The PCK testifies in the received communications that they "believe in, preach and live by the Scriptures of the Old Testament and New Testament and the original Presbyterian Standards (the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechism, the Form of Government, the Manual of Discipline, and the Directory of Worship) following Reformed theology."
- K. The sister churches in the Netherlands maintain a sister church relationship with the PCK since 1967 and require that the missionary professors which they appoint to the PCK seminary become a member of a PCK congregation and place themselves under the supervision of the eldership of that congregation (Groningen Zuid 1978, Art. 175).
- L. The sister churches in Australia decided at their last Synod (Bedfordale 1992) to continue their relationship with the PCK on the ground of proven faithfulness of the PCK to Scripture and Confessions.
- M. The CRCA, considering the expressed desire of the PCK, recommends to offer the PCK a sister church relationship called "Ecclesiastical Fellowship" to be practised under the rules adopted by this Synod.
- N. The CRCA further recommends to send two delegates to a next General Assembly of the PCK to formalize the sister church relationship in a solemn ceremony.

III. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. According to the Word of God and the Confession (John 17:11, 17,20,21; Eph. 3:14-4:16; 2 Tim.3:15, 16; L.D. 21, H.C. and Art. 27-29 B.C.), true believers and churches have the calling to seek ecclesiastical fellowship with all those who with them confess the same faith and maintain and practise it in preaching, worship, discipline and government.
- B. With regard to the church at Attercliffe, ON:
 1. The following up of this calling (mentioned in consideration A) lawfully belongs to the jurisdiction of the combined churches, on the ground that this calling has been accepted by the churches together in their confession (Art. 27, B.C.; Art. 50, C.O.), and should therefore not be made dependent on the initiative of a local church only.
 2. The matter of the relationship to the PCK has been on the agendas of previous Synods. Synod 1971 mandated the CRCA to examine whether there were any obstacles to enter into correspondence with the PCK. (Art. 47, 6b)
 3. A regional approach towards contact with other churches does not exclude the worldwide calling, and cannot avoid worldwide contacts, although by reason of proximity, resources and other practical factors, priority should be given to the ecumenical calling in the churches' own environment.
- C. With regard to the church at Port Kells, BC, entering into Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the PCK need not be a cause for disunity on the home front. The reason Ecclesiastical Fellowship has not been finalized with the OPC is because of certain different practices and not due to their different confessions or form of government.
- D. In response to the churches at Attercliffe, ON and Fergus, ON the fact that the PCK has the Westminster Standards and Presbyterian Form of Government is not in itself a hindrance to Ecclesiastical Fellowship.
- E. According to the testimony of the PCK itself and the testimony of the RCN and of the FRCA, as well as the CRCA, the PCK is faithful in its adherence to the Westminster Confession and the Presbyterian Form of Government.
- F. The elimination of the communication problem opens the possibility of a fruitful relationship with the PCK, although limitations to an optimum form of contact, due to language, distance and resources, should be taken into account.
- G. The request of the PCK to our churches to enter into a sister church relationship with them should be honoured since there are no lawful grounds to doubt the testimony of the PCK itself and the testimony of two sister church federations regarding the faithfulness of the PCK.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

- A. to note with gratitude that the obstacles to Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the PCK have been removed.
- B. to mandate the CRCA:
 1. to inform the PCK of our acceptance of their request for Ecclesiastical Fellowship using the adopted rules.
 2. to formalize this relationship in a manner satisfactory to both church federations.
 3. to inform the churches and to report to the next General Synod on the relationship with the PCK.

ADOPTED

Because of the adoption above, the following is considered defeated.

(Report of Rev. D.G.J. Agema and elder A. Witten)

I. MATERIAL

- A. Report of the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) re the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK).
- B. Letter from the church at Attercliffe, ON.
- C. Letter from the church at Fergus, ON.
- D. Letter from the church at Port Kells, BC.

II. OBSERVATIONS

- A. Synod 1989, charged the CRCA to continue to be diligent regarding the matter of communication with the PCK, and report to the next General Synod (Acts, 1989, Art. 103, D,2).
- B. Synod 1986, decided to “recognize with regret that due to language and communication difficulties, a correspondence-relationship with the Presbyterian Church Koryu-Pa can neither be established responsibly nor maintained fruitfully at this time.” It therefore charged the CRCA to be diligent in the endeavour to improve communications with the PCK so that the “entering into and maintaining of a correspondence – relationship” becomes possible.
- C. Synod, 1986, based its decision on the following considerations:
 - 1. “General Synod Edmonton 1965, judged that correspondence with churches abroad should be established only after an accurate and serious examination has shown that these churches not only officially have adopted the Reformed confessions and church government, but also practically maintain the same (Acts, 1965, Art.141,11).
 - 2. The General Synod of Smithville expressed its concern regarding the importance of communications with these churches and charged the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad to evaluate the communication with the Presbyterian Church Koryu-Pa as to the question whether official ecclesiastical correspondence, even if it would be warranted in principle, can be responsibly maintained, due to distance and language (Synod Smithville 1980, Acts, Art. 153, E,4,b).
 - 3. Formal recognition of the Presbyterian Church Koryu-Pa as true churches of Jesus Christ should not be based on testimony of sister churches only, or on ICRC membership. Such recognition remains the churches’ own responsibility.
 - 4. Mere formal recognition of the PCK as a true church of Jesus Christ without the possibility to implement such recognition by entering into a correspondence relationship with the PCK renders such recognition ineffective.
 - 5. Both the General Synods of Smithville and the General Synod of Cloverdale expressed their regret that with regard to the OPC the publication of the detailed evaluation of the divergencies was not given before stating that these divergencies do not form an impediment to recognition. It is therefore understandable that the General Synod of Cloverdale did not consider it edifying to proceed with ecclesiastical fellowship until this evaluation for the benefit of the churches was completed.” (Acts, 1986, Art. 150, C,2-6)
- D. The CRCA report gives evidence that the lines of communication have greatly improved.
- E. The CRCA report notes:
 - 1. the PCK decided at their 40th General Assembly to enter into a sister church relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches.

2. our sister churches the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland [Vrijgemaakt]) (RCN) have formally recognized the PCK as sister churches.
 3. an English summary of some of the highlights of the PCK 40th General Assembly and a booklet in English with information on their history, organizational principles and standards, constituency, institutions, home and foreign missions, church education, literature activities and cooperation with other church bodies were received by the CRCA.
- F. The PCK testifies in the received communications that they “believe in, preach and live by the Scriptures of the Old Testament and New Testament and the original Presbyterian Standards (the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechism, the Form of Government, the Manual of Discipline, and the Directory of Worship) following Reformed theology.” In Appendix III to the CRCA Report the PCK gives further detailed information about its organizational principles and standards: “Our church doctrinal standards are the Westminster Confession of Faith, with the Larger Catechism and the Shorter Catechism. With the addition of the 1903 American Presbyterian chapters on ‘The Holy Spirit’ and ‘The Mission of the Church’ to the 17th century Westminster Confession of Faith, our confession numbers 35 chapters. Also as administrative standards we have the Form of Government, the Manual of Discipline and the Directory of Worship. These standards have been published (in Korean) in a book entitled ‘the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in Korea.’ ”
 - G. The CRCA recommends to offer the PCK a sister church relationship called “Ecclesiastical Fellowship” to be practised under the rules adopted by this Synod.
 - H. The CRCA further recommends to send two delegates to a next General Assembly of the PCK to formalize the sister church relationship in a solemn ceremony.
 - I. The church at Attercliffe, ON notes that “until now the CanRC have not entered into a sister church relationship with churches that adhere to different standards.” It suggests that the question, whether we can have a sister church relationship with churches which do not adhere to the same confession, must be answered. The church at Attercliffe is of the opinion that a sister church relationship can only be established after divergencies between the Westminster Confessions and the Three Forms of Unity have been resolved.
 - J. The church at Fergus, ON reacts to the recommendation to have Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the PCK by suggesting that before Ecclesiastical Fellowship can be established, the PCK should adopt the Three Forms of Unity.
 - K. The church at Port Kells, BC suggests:
 1. “Let us not pre-empt the discussions we are having with them [the OPC] by extending sister church relations to similar groups abroad”;
 2. “It seems unwise to... establish full sister church relations with churches abroad when we have not reached that stage with churches in our own area who have the same confessions and church government”;
 3. “Such a step abroad [to establish a sister church relationship with the PCK] would tend more toward disunity than unity on the home front.”
 - L. This Synod has adopted the following Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship:

1. The churches shall assist each other in the maintenance, defence and promotion of the Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline, and liturgy, and be watchful for deviations.
2. The churches shall inform each other of the decisions taken by their broadest assemblies, if possible by sending each other their Acts or Minutes and otherwise, at least by sending the decisions relevant to the respective churches (if possible, in translation).
3. The churches shall consult each other when entering into relations with third parties.
4. The churches shall accept one another's attestations or certificates of good standing, which also means admitting members of the respective churches to the sacraments upon presentation of that attestation or certificate.
5. The churches shall in principle open their pulpits for each other's ministers in agreement with the rules adopted in the respective churches.
In exercising these relations, the churches shall strive to implement also the following:
 6. When major changes or additions are being considered to the confessions, church government or liturgy, the churches shall be informed in order that as much consultation can take place as possible before a final decision is taken.
 7. The churches shall receive each other's delegates at their broadest assemblies and invite them to participate as much as local regulations permit.

III. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. The lines of communication with the PCK have improved since Synod 1989. The CRCA has fulfilled its mandate to improve the communication with the PCK.
- B. The CRCA's consideration that the matter of communication as cited by Synod 1989 was the only obstacle to offering the PCK a sister church relationship is not accurate. Now that the communication has improved, the CRCA through further discussion with the PCK may be able to come to a responsible recommendation as to the concerns raised by previous Synods (Acts, 1980, Art. 153, E, 4, a,b; Acts, 1986, Art. 150, C, 2-6).
- C. The report of the CRCA does not give evidence that the CRCA addressed with the PCK the items mentioned in the considerations of General Synod, 1986, namely:
 1. how the confessions and church government are practically maintained.
 2. whether due to distance and language an official ecclesiastical fellowship can function meaningfully.
 3. the doctrinal divergencies between our respective standards.
- D. The CRCA report to Synod Lincoln 1992, and the previous CRCA reports (Appendices, Acts 1980, 1983, 1986) provided the churches with information about the history, background, doctrinal standards and church government of the PCK. Synod notes that the CRCA has consistently recommended that an official relationship be established with the PCK, whereas previous Synods have not acceded to this request (Acts, 1980, Art 153; Acts, 1983, Art. 105; Acts, 1986, Art. 150).
- E. A regional approach towards contact with other churches does not exclude the worldwide calling, and cannot avoid worldwide contacts, although by reason of proximity, resources and other practical factors, priority should be given to the ecumenical calling in the churches' own environment.
- F. According to the testimony of the PCK itself and the testimony of the RCN and

of the FRCA, as well as the CRCA, the PCK is faithful in its adherence to the Westminster Confession and the Presbyterian Form of Government.

- G. The church at Attercliffe, ON is correct in its observation that the CanRC do not as yet have ecclesiastical fellowship with a Presbyterian church maintaining the Westminster Confessions and the Presbyterian Form of Government. The church at Attercliffe, ON and the church at Port Kells, BC rightly point towards the discussion about “divergencies” with the OPC. Previous Synods mention the same concerns (Acts, 1986, Art. 150, C,6).

With regard to the OPC Synod Lincoln 1992, however, decided that the divergencies are not impediments to ecclesiastical fellowship with the OPC, but may be discussed within the framework of church unity. At the same time Synod Lincoln 1992, mandated the CCOPC to continue the discussion of divergencies which are considered to be impediments (i.e. confessional membership and supervision of the Lord’s table) to ecclesiastical fellowship, and to see whether these divergencies stem from ecclesiological and/or historical differences with the purpose of having these impediments removed. Such discussion has not taken place with the PCK and therefore should as yet be done in order that the one discussion does not pre-empt the other.

- H. The suggestion made by the church at Fergus, ON is too premature but the CanRC should further consider the implications of a sister church relationship with a Presbyterian church maintaining the Westminster Confessions and the Presbyterian Form of Government, to ascertain whether the newly adopted (Synod Lincoln 1992) Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship can function meaningfully.
- I. Previous Synods have not evaluated current third party relationships (although the CRCA Report to Synod 1983 only mentioned them) which the PCK maintains. In view of the adopted Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship this should as yet be done.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

- A. to thank the CRCA for its work done with regard to the PCK and express our appreciation for the improved contact and PCK’s offer of sister church relationship.
- B. not to offer the PCK’s a sister church relationship at this time.
- C. to encourage the CRCA to utilize the improved contact in order to further work towards a sister church relationship with the PCK.
- D. in further discussion, if feasible during a visit by two CRCA delegates to Korea, with the PCK the CRCA should focus on:
 - 1. how the confessions and church government are practically maintained, while considering similar discussions taking place with the OPC;
 - 2. whether due to distance and language an official ecclesiastical fellowship according to the Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship adopted by Synod Lincoln 1992, can function;
 - 3. to discuss and evaluate the current third party relationships of the PCK.
- E. to instruct the CRCA to report to the next General Synod.

The chairman notes that this is a historic moment for the Canadian Reformed Churches. The Presbyterian Church in Korea is now our fourth sister church. He expresses the hope that God will bless this relationship so that it may be a benefit to both the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Presbyterian Church in Korea.

ARTICLE 112

Relations with Churches Abroad re Committee Mandate

Committee I presents:

Agenda item VIII G1a,b,3,4,5,6

The following motion is made and defeated:

To delete Consideration G and Recommendation C.

I. MATERIAL

- A. Report from the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) re the Mandate of the Committee.
- B. Letter of the church at Guelph, ON.
- C. Letter of the church at Attercliffe, ON.
- D. Letter of the church at Burlington South, ON.
- E. Letter of the church at Fergus, ON.

II. OBSERVATIONS

- A. The CRCA recommends that they receive the following mandate:
 1. To investigate diligently all the requests received for entering into a sister church relationship;
 2. To respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests made to attend Assemblies, Synods, or meeting of other churches;
 3. To report on its findings with suitable recommendations, to the next General Synod.
- B. The CRCA considers that the ecumenical calling which our churches have, may better be carried out if the CRCA receives a mandate to respond to the various requests received, as well as to the invitations extended, if feasible, and report its findings to the next General Synod.
- C. The churches at Guelph, ON and Attercliffe, ON ask Synod to maintain the present mandate because it prevents the CRCA to make decisions that properly belong to the churches in common.
- D. The church at Guelph, ON acknowledges the concern also expressed by the CRCA to the Dutch churches that "the Dutch approach does not sufficiently recognize the fact that the churches and not committees are to determine the agenda of the major assemblies. Such an approach can easily lead to excess" (p.34).
- E. The requested mandate by the CRCA to respond to requests made to them by other churches is not nearly as far-ranging as that which our Dutch sister churches have given to their Committee, which is to charge the deputies to seek and initiate contact with other churches. The CRCA in its requested mandate aims not to seek or to initiate contacts, but only to be able to respond to overtures.
- F. The church at Burlington South, ON is of the opinion that a renewal of a specific mandate with specific contacts every three years is beneficial as a "sober" second thought and will prevent "hasty" reactions.
- G. The church at Burlington South, ON also suggests to establish a budget for the CRCA because the financial implications on our relatively small federation, may be too great, if the CRCA is going to respond to all the invitations and requests that may come their way
- H. The church of Fergus, ON is of the opinion that the CRCA is moving far too quickly and is demanding too much autonomy in making the Recommendation "to investigate all requests to enter sister church relations."

- I. The CRCA recommends to Synod that study should be undertaken of the Reformed Churches in South Africa (RCSA) and the Reformed Church in Zaire known as the Eglise Reformee Confessante au Zaire (ERCZ).

III. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. According to the Word of God and the Confession (John 17:11, 17,20,21; Eph. 3:14-4:16; 2 Tim.3:15, 16; L.D. 21, H.C. and Art. 27-29 B.C.), true believers and churches have the calling to seek ecclesiastical fellowship with all those who with them confess the same faith and maintain and practice it in preaching, worship, discipline and government.
- B. The following up of this calling lawfully belongs to the jurisdiction of the combined churches, on the ground that this calling has been accepted by the churches together in their confession (Art. 27, B.C.; Art. 50, C.O.), and should therefore not be made dependent on the initiative of a local church only.
- C. A regional approach towards contact with other churches does not exclude the worldwide calling, and cannot avoid worldwide contacts, although by reason of proximity, resources and other practical factors, priority should be given to the ecumenical calling in the churches' own environment.
- D. Investigating requests and responding to invitations is the most efficient and responsible way of gathering the information needed for the churches in common to judge whether ecclesiastical fellowship ought to be pursued or not.
- E. The churches at Attercliffe, ON, Burlington South, ON, and Guelph, ON do not sufficiently consider that the task of a federation can only be properly executed by deputies appointed by the federation.
- F. The adoption of the recommended CRCA mandate would make possible the further investigation of the Reformed Churches in South Africa (RCSA) and the Eglise Reformee Confessante au Zaire (ERCZ).
- G. The financial requirements of the CRCA, and its implications for the churches, do require further consideration. Therefore a detailed financial statement and budget ought to be submitted by the CRCA to Synod 1995.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

- A. to give the CRCA the following mandate:
 1. to investigate diligently all the requests received for entering into ecclesiastical fellowship;
 2. to respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests made to attend Assemblies, Synods, or meeting of other churches;
 3. to report on its findings with suitable recommendations, to the next General Synod.
- B. this mandate allows the CRCA to further investigate the Reformed Churches in South Africa (RCSA) and the Eglise Reformee Confessante au Zaire (ERCZ).
- C. that the CRCA submits to Synod 1995 a financial statement and budget.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 113

Committee on Ecumenicity and InterChurch Relations of the OPC

Committee IV presents:

Agenda item VIII F10

I. MATERIAL

Letter, dated February 10, 1992, from Committee on Ecumenicity and InterChurch Relations (CEIR) of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

II. ADMISSIBILITY

Since this letter is addressed to General Synod, and its contents are referred to by the CCOPC in their report, Synod declares the letter admissible.

III. OBSERVATIONS

- A. The CEIR has sent a letter directly to Synod, requesting help with respect to their mandate to “direct the Committee on Ecumenicity and InterChurch Relations to consider the desirability and feasibility of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church adding the Three Forms of Unity (Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort) to its present confessional standards (the Confession of Faith, the Larger Catechism and the Shorter Catechism) and of establishing a common Presbyterian and Reformed church order, so as to provide a basis for unity into one church body of those who are committed to one faith.”
- B. The CCOPC refers to this matter of the appointment of this committee under 3.3.b. in their report to General Synod 1992.

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. The communication of the CEIR should be gratefully recognized as containing valuable information.
- B. To keep the proper procedures in place, communications from Committees of other churches should first be referred to our committees for consideration and recommendation.
- C. The CCOPC includes part of the matter under its mandate 5(b) “to encourage the OPC to remain faithful to the Scriptures ... in their study of the desirability and feasibility of adding the Three Forms of Unity to its present doctrinal standards.”

The other part of the CEIR mandate (re Church Order) ought to be included as well.

V. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide to forward this letter from the CEIR to the CCOPC to be included in their further discussions.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 114

Printing of Acts of Synod

Committee III presents:

Agenda item VIII E5

I. MATERIAL

- A. Letter from the church at Lincoln, ON re printing of Acts of Synod.
- B. Quotation (verbal) from Premier Printing.

II. OBSERVATIONS

- A. The church at Lincoln, ON requests that Synod “make copies of Acts of Synod available on request only” arguing that such would be stewardly and cost-effective. They suggest that many copies are distributed to members and never looked at again. Those interested in owning a copy will make the effort to order one.
- B. Premier Printing advised members of Synod with a verbal quotation that it will be able to provide copies for all the church members at a substantially reduced price provided that the Acts are properly proofread and formatted.

III. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. The practice of previous Synods has been to ensure that a copy of the Acts finds its way into every Canadian Reformed home with the intention that all church members may be acquainted with the decisions of Synod.
- B. The quotation from Premier Printing indicates that the cost of printing the Acts will be substantially lower than expected.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide not to accede to the request of the church at Lincoln, ON.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 115

Appeal of Br. L. Van Zandwyk re Acts Winnipeg 1989, (Art. 153)

Committee II presents:

Agenda item VIII H4b

I. MATERIAL

Appeal from br. L. Van Zandwyk.

II. ADMISSIBILITY

Although the material was submitted too late according to the Guidelines for General Synod (Acts 1983, Art. 45), the nature of the contents is such that it can be considered by Synod. As well, because br. Van Zandwyk contends that the matter he appeals is incompatible with Scripture and Church Order, Synod declares this appeal admissible. (Art. 31 C.O.)

III. OBSERVATION

Br. L. Van Zandwyk requests Synod 1992 to as yet deal with his appeal re: Acts Synod 1986, Art.101, seeing that Synod Winnipeg 1989 did not deal with his requests 1, 2, and 4.

IV. CONSIDERATION

Considering the language of the material submitted by br. L. Van Zandwyk to be "harsh, unbrotherly and therefore unchristian," Synod 1986 could not disclose the evidence for its decision. Br. L. Van Zandwyk is incorrect when he maintains that Synod 1980 condemned him "rashly and unheard," seeing that it did so on the basis of the documents at its disposal.

V. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide to deny the appeal of br. L. Van Zandwyk.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 116

Adjournment

Elder P. VanderPol asks that Psalm 25: 1 and 2 be sung, and closes in prayer.

MORNING SESSION – WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1992

ARTICLE 117

Reopening

The chairman asks that Hymn 49: 1 and 2 be sung, he reads Revelation 2: 1-7 and leads in prayer. Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 118

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 98-116 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 119

Appeals of a Decision of Regional Synod West, June 16, 1992 (Art. 7a)

Committee IV presents:

Agenda item VIII D6,7,8,10, F9

After some discussion the Advisory Committee takes its report back for reconsideration. (see Article 127)

ARTICLE 120

Appeal of Br. G. Kruyswijk

Committee III presents:

Agenda item VIII D15

I. MATERIAL

Letter from br. G. Kruyswijk re Acts of General Synod 1989, Art. 152.

II. ADMISSIBILITY

A. Synod decide to declare requests 2-6 of the appeal inadmissible on the following grounds:

1. Article 31 of the Church Order points out that whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote, in the major assemblies "shall be considered settled and binding, unless it is proved to be in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order." In requests 2-6 br. Kruyswijk does not demonstrate that he has been wronged by the decisions of General Synod 1989 on the basis of the Word of God and the Church Order.
2. In requests 2-6 br. Kruyswijk offers no new grounds to show that the matter he appealed to General Synod 1989 should be reconsidered.

B. As to the first request of the appeal, br. Kruyswijk raises a new matter protesting the use by General Synod 1989 of a confidential letter from the consistory of the church at Grand Rapids (April 3, 1989) addressed directly to General Synod, which relates to matters of br. Kruyswijk's appeal. This request is therefore deemed admissible.

III. OBSERVATIONS

- A. The appellant alleges that "General Synod accepted a confidential letter in which the consistory of Grand Rapids made a false accusation."
- B. The appellant questions the validity of Synod in accepting a confidential letter from the consistory, and asks "Are the official documents not enough for Synod to make a judgment?"
- C. The appellant requests Synod to declare "that General Synod 1989 erred in using a confidential letter in which the consistory of Grand Rapids made a false and unproven accusation...."
- D. From the documentation it appears no copy of the April 3, 1989 letter was sent to br. Kruyswijk.
- E. From the Acts of Synod 1989, Art. 152 D 1, 7, it is clear that the April 3, 1989 letter contained the consistory's assessment of the situation.

- F. In the Acts of Synod 1989 Art. 111, Synod considered the matter of receiving a confidential letter from the consistory of Grand Rapids but defeated a motion to declare the confidential material inadmissible.

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. The appellant does not prove that the confidential letter contained a false accusation. Nevertheless, it contained information pertaining to the appeal, of which the appellant had not been informed and against which the appellant could not defend himself.
- B. Synod's use of the confidential letter in this manner is improper, for it infringes upon the principle of impartiality.

V. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide that General Synod 1989 erred in using a confidential letter without the appellant's knowledge, and thus jeopardized the principle of impartiality.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 121

Letter from the Church at Langley, BC re Synodical Decisions

Committee III presents:

Agenda item VIII D4

The following motion is made and defeated:

To add to Consideration D: according to Art. 31 C.O., a decision is considered settled and binding when agreed upon by majority vote unless it is proved to be in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order.

I. MATERIAL

Letter from church of Langley, BC re synodical decisions e.g. Acts Winnipeg 1989 Art. 161, 91 & 108.

II. OBSERVATIONS

- A. The church at Langley, BC expresses its concern with regard to decisions made by a number of Synods which were not substantiated by proper grounds and considerations.
- B. By way of this letter they appeal two particular synodical decisions and at the same time warn against a wrong synodical procedure which they say is becoming more and more common at our broadest assembly.
- C. The first example the church at Langley, BC uses to demonstrate what they call improper decision making is found in the Acts of Synod 1989 Art. 161. They argue that there were never any grounds or compelling reasons given to change the statements of the forms for baptism and public profession of faith from "summarized in the articles of the Christian faith" to "summarized in the confessions."
- D. The second example concerns Acts 1989 Art. 108. The church at Langley, BC refers to the fact that consideration D.3 of the aforementioned article did not give any reason explaining why Synod 1983 changed the formulation of the answer for the ordination of elders and deacons "I do" to "I do with all my heart" when answering the appeal of br. J. VanderMeulen. The church at Langley points out that Synod 1983 did not publish any reason for this change.
- E. The church at Langley, BC requests "those who propose or make the changes to our Confessions, Forms or Church Order have the duty to supply the grounds or the 'compelling reasons' for doing so." It also requests "Seeing that in the case of Art. 108 and 161, Acts 1989 this was not done...to declare these changes null and void and to return to the original wording."

III. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. The Committee for Liturgical Forms was given the mandate by General Synod 1977 (Article 60, Recommendation 4) to “update the language” of the forms. This indicates linguistic changes, and not changes in meaning. The example of a change in wording in the forms for baptism and public profession of faith from “summarized in the articles of the Christian faith” to “summarized in the confessions,” as raised by the church at Langley, BC, was judged by General Synod 1989 to be a linguistic change and not one in meaning (Article 161 C1; compare Acts of Synod 1986, Article 144 C1,2,3).
- B. As to the second example, the church at Langley, BC is not correct that no grounds were given when the wording of the answer to the questions in the Form for the Ordination was changed from “I do” to “I do with all my heart.” Even though Synod 1983 did not provide reasons for the change in the Form for Ordination of Elders and Deacons, Synod 1980 did so when it revised the Form for Ordination/Installation of Ministers of the Word. It was argued that since the first question asked of those ordained to office reads “Do you feel *in your hearts* that God Himself ... has called you to these offices?” this should be reflected in the answer given, “I do with all my heart.” (see Acts of Synod 1980, Art.139 C.4).
- C. In his letter br. VanderMeulen asked Synod 1989 to give *scriptural* reasons for the addition “with all my heart.” The addition of the words “with all my heart” do not change the meaning of the answer given by the elders and deacons. It is not always possible or necessary to give scriptural grounds for a linguistic change. General Synod 1989 was correct when it answered the appellant that General Synod 1983 did not need to give any special scriptural reasons for this addition (Acts 1989, Art. 108 D.3).
- D. Synod agrees with the principle that decisions of broader assemblies should be based on proper grounds and considerations. However, the two examples cited by the church at Langley were not made without grounds.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

- A. that the examples given by the church of Langley, BC do not support the contention that Synods have made decisions without giving proper grounds and considerations.
- B. not to accede to the church at Langley’s request to declare the particular changes to which they refer “null and void.”

ADOPTED

Rev. J. Visscher and elder P. VanderPol abstain from voting in accordance with Art. 32 C.O.

ARTICLE 122

Appeal of the Church at Abbotsford, BC re Acts General Synod Winnipeg 1989

Committee III presents:

Agenda item VIII D17

I. MATERIAL

Letter from the church at Abbotsford, BC re Acts General Synod 1989, Article 161.

II. OBSERVATION

The church at Abbotsford, BC claims that “changing ‘Apostles Creed’ to ‘confession’ in the second question in the form for Baptism and in the form for Public

Profession of Faith was illegally dealt with by previous Synods.” The ground adduced is “that the change in the above named forms has never been dealt with by any minor assembly, as per what is required in the last paragraph of Church Order Article 30.”

III. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. The church at Abbotsford, BC is mistaken when it states that the forms for Baptism and Public Profession of Faith used to speak of the “Apostles’ Creed.” In fact, these forms spoke of “articles of the Christian faith.”
- B. The church at Abbotsford, BC wrongly concludes that this change in the wording of the forms is a matter of the minor assembly since the forms in our *Book of Praise* are a matter of the churches in common.
- C. General Synod 1977 mandated the Committee for Liturgical Forms to update the language of the forms in the *Book of Praise*. Subsequent Synods have maintained that the resulting change from “articles of the Christian faith” to “confessions” was a linguistic revision. This is not a matter which has to be initiated at the minor assembly.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

Synod decide not to accede to the request of the church at Abbotsford, BC.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 123

Adjournment

Synod is adjourned for committee work.

EVENING SESSION – WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1992

ARTICLE 124

Appointments

The appointments are dealt with in closed session.

The following appointments are made:

I. Board of Governors

Ministers

Eastern Canada: Revs. D.G.J. Agema, W. den Hollander, P.G. Feenstra.

(Substitutes: Revs. G. Nederveen, P. Aasman, D. Moes (in that order).

Western Canada: Revs. B.J. Berends, C. VanSpronsen, J. Visscher.

(Substitutes: Revs. R. Aasman, J. Moesker, P.K.A. DeBoer (in that order).

Non-ministers: Brs. H. Buist [Burlington], C.G. Heeringa [Ancaster], H.J. Sloots [Burlington] K.J. Veldkamp [Toronto], A. VanEgmond [Smithville].

II. Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad

Revs. Cl. Stam, J. Visscher(convener), C. VanSpronsen, E. Kampen, brs. H.A. Berends, A. Nap, J. VanderStoep, S.H. de Boer.

III. Committee on Deputies for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity

Eastern Canada: Rev. W. den Hollander, Dr. C. VanDam(convener), br. H.T. VanderVelde.

Western Canada: Revs. J.D. Wielenga, R. Aasman, br. P. VanWoudenberg.

- IV. Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise*
Dr. J. deJong, Rev. G. Nederveen, brs. W. Helder(convener), M. Kampen.
- V. Committee on Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church
Revs. D.G.J. Agema(convener), P.G. Feenstra, Prof. Dr. N.H. Gootjes, brs. T.M.P. VanderVen, G.J. Nordeman.
- VI. Committee on Bible Translations
Prof. J. Geertsema(convener), Dr. C. VanDam, Revs. P. Aasman, G.H. Visscher, br. W. Smouter.
- VII. Churches for Days of Fasting and Prayer
The churches at Burlington West, ON and Edmonton(Providence), AB.
- VIII. Church for the Administration of the General Fund
The church at Carman, MB.
- IX. Church for the Archives of General Synod
The church at Burlington East(Ebenezer), ON.
- X. Church for the Inspection of the General Archives
The church at Burlington West(Rehoboth), ON.
- XI. Church to Audit the Finances of General Synod 1992
The church at Rockway, ON.
- XII. The Address Church
Canada: The church at Burlington East(Ebenezer), ON.
USA: The church at Grand Rapids, USA.
- XIII. The Committee for the Printing of the Acts
The first and second clerks of General Synod 1992.
- XIV. The Convening Church for the next General Synod 1995
The church at Abbotsford, BC. (May 1995)

Synod decide that the Committees shall have the right, in case a vacancy occurs, to bring the membership up to original strength in order to fulfill their mandate.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 125

Reopening

The chairman asks that Hymn 2: 1 and 5 be sung. Roll call shows that all members of Synod are present.

ARTICLE 126

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 117-123 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 127

Appeals of a Decision of Regional Synod West, June 16, 1992, (Art. 7a)

Committee IV presents:

Agenda item VIII D6,7,8,10, F9

A motion is made which the chairman rules inadmissible. This ruling is challenged, but the chair is sustained by a vote.

I. MATERIAL

- A. Letter from the church at Carman, MB re Acts Regional Synod West June 16, 1992, Art. 7.
- B. Letter from the church at Winnipeg, MB re same
- C. Letter from the church at Neerlandia, AB re same
- D. Letter from br. W. De Haan, Wardsville, ON re decisions of Regional Synod West, June 16, 1992.
- E. Overture from the church at Grand Rapids, USA re "Denver."

II. ADMISSIBILITY

- A. The submissions from the churches at Carman, MB, Neerlandia, AB and Winnipeg, MB, and from br. W. De Haan appeal a decision of Regional Synod West of June 16, 1992.
- B. The "overture" of the church at Denver, submitted by the church at Grand Rapids, USA, serves "as additional information."

III. OBSERVATIONS

All of the letters appeal the decision by Regional Synod West in response to the appeals to the decision of Classis Alberta/Manitoba of March 17-19, 1992 not to grant the request from Christ American Reformed Church, Denver (CARC) for affiliation with the Federation of Canadian Reformed Churches.

- A. The church at Carman, MB requests "General Synod to judge that Regional Synod West erred in its judgment, Article 7 concerning the decision of Classis Alberta/Manitoba of March 17-19, 1992 and that therefore this Classis decision cannot stand," on the following grounds:
 - 1. A proper investigation should have been made, "including investigating the reasons for the CARC rescinding its first intention to join the OPC, before it can decide to advise the CARC that it should renew this intention."
 - 2. The judgment of Regional Synod West was "based entirely on previous decision of the Canadian Reformed Churches to recognize the OPC as true churches," and not on other "material on the table of Classis and Regional Synod," whether or not this material was sufficient.
 - 3. The recognition of the OPC as true church in 1977 has "not been put into practice because serious divergencies remain."
 - 4. There are precedents in the Canadian Reformed Churches for admitting former OPC churches on the same points, which should have been investigated before deciding on the appeals re Denver.
- B. The church at Winnipeg, MB urges General Synod to rule "that the Regional Synod West 1992 has erred in upholding the decision of Classis AB/MB of March 1992 not to accede to the request of the church at Denver" and "that the Classis AB/MB should as yet examine the request at its own merits and deal with it accordingly." The following grounds are advanced:
 - 1. Regional Synod has taken part of the decision of Synod 1977 "out of context."
 - 2. Regional Synod fails to recognize "the temporary nature of the ecclesiastical contact."
 - 3. Regional Synod fails to read the decision of Coaldale 1977 "in its entirety."
 - 4. The arguments based on decisions of previous General Synods on similar matters were dismissed, and "continuity ... will be impaired if an assembly can dismiss an argument in this manner."

5. Regional Synod was wrong in stating that the church of Denver should “bring [their] concerns to the courts of the OPC and to request a judgment on these matters,” since “such requests for judgment had already been made by others.”
 6. Regional Synod did not take into account that the CARC in Denver adopted the Three Forms of Unity as its standards, and thus “would have to imply that the formal acceptance of the Three Forms of Unity by the church of Denver was illegitimate.”
- C. The church at Neerlandia, AB regrets that its appeal was lumped “together with the appeals of the churches of Carman and Winnipeg, MB.” Neerlandia was not in favour of granting Denver its request, but wanted to have the matter addressed “within the larger context of our relationship as Canadian Reformed Churches with the OPC,” i.e. recognizing the OPC “as a true church” while not having “full correspondence expressing the unity of faith.”
- D. Brother De Haan appeals that Regional Synod West, in upholding the decision of Classis AB/MB of March 17-19, 1992 not to grant the request of the church at Denver to be admitted as a sister church, asking this church instead to seek affiliation with the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the OPC, “acted very careless in not taking into account”:
1. the existing divergencies.
 2. difficulties encountered by the Denver church regarding the OPC.
 3. the adoption of the Three Forms of Unity and Church Order of Dort.
 4. the fact that the Canadian Reformed Churches do not have a sister church relationship with the OPC.

He requests that the decisions of Regional Synod West and Classis AB/MB be rescinded “and so open the way that this church can be admitted into the Federation of American and Canadian Reformed Churches.”

- E. The church at Grand Rapids, USA supports an overture of the American Reformed Church at Denver as follows, “it is our conviction that the American Reformed Church Denver should have been accepted within the federation of the Canadian/American Reformed Churches. This church could not, and never did, join the OPC, as confirmed in the attached overture.”

The overture of the church at Denver focuses on the question “how can a request by a church for affiliation be denied without hearing and weighing the motivation for that request from the church itself? The decision of classis was made without the benefit of further inquiry into our situation and contact with the OPC.”

- F. The objections by the appellants may be summarized as follows:
1. The decision of Regional Synod West was not based on the entire decision of Synod 1977 to recognize the OPC as a true church, but only on a part, and it was taken out of context.
 2. The Christ American Reformed Church did not receive a fair hearing since no committee was appointed to investigate the situation.
 3. There are precedents for admitting former OPC churches on the same points as advanced by Denver.
 4. The request of the Christ American Reformed Church was a request of an independent church which had adopted the Three Forms of Unity and the Church Order of Dort and therefore should be accepted.

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. General Synod considers that Regional Synod West attempted to place the admission of the church at Denver within the context of the history of the con-

tact between the OPC and the Canadian Reformed Churches (Acts, article 7, II B-E). Regional Synod considered both the recognition as true church and the temporary contact relationship. Regional Synod did not provide clarification with respect to the manner in which to deal with congregations which withdraw from the OPC and seek affiliation with our churches before the resolution of this temporary relationship.

The decision of Classis AB/MB of March 17-19, 1992 does not sufficiently reflect appreciation for the difficulties resulting from this temporary and undefined relationship. In this respect General Synod Lincoln refers to its considerations (Acts, Art. 72,IV,A,2,c,ii, and vi) which take into account “outstanding issues” as well as “proper procedures.”

- B. General Synod considers that no church specifically requested Regional Synod that further investigation be undertaken to examine the request from the church at Denver. The matter of “proper investigation” is now placed before General Synod. It is regrettable that a motion for such an investigation was defeated by Classis (Acts, Art.13). General Synod Lincoln refers in this connection to the consideration that such requests be dealt with “in open consultation with the ecclesiastical assemblies involved” (Acts, Art. 72,IV,A,2,b, and c,vi). This would imply that such consultation between Classis AB/MB, the Presbytery of the Dakotas, and the Christ American Reformed Church as yet may be beneficial.
- C. General Synod considers that earlier admissions of other churches from the OPC in other classical areas should not be unreservedly viewed as precedents, for each case must be judged on its own circumstances and merits. Regional Synod could have taken into account that there are overlapping issues in these cases, although it must also be kept in mind that the discussion of “the divergencies” takes place at the level of General Synod through its contact committee.
- D. General Synod considers that it is not evident from the material provided that the matter of the Christ American Reformed Church being an independent church which had adopted the Three Forms of Unity was placed before Regional Synod. Rather, the question was whether the position of the Denver church vis-a-vis the OPC had been legitimately resolved. Since Regional Synod did not have clarity on this matter it questioned the legitimacy of the request for affiliation, in order to preserve the integrity of our official ecclesiastical contact relationship with the OPC. General Synod Lincoln refers in this respect to the procedure outlined earlier (Acts, Art. 72,II,A,2,c,ii and vi).

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

- A. to send the above considerations as a response to the submissions of the churches at Carman, MB, Winnipeg, MB, Neerlandia, AB, Grand Rapids, USA and br. W. De Haan.
- B. to send a copy of this response to the Christ American Reformed Church and the convening church of the next Classis AB/MB and to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the OPC.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 128

Relations with Churches Abroad re FCS

Committee I presents:

Agenda item VIII G1a,b

I. MATERIAL

- A. Report of the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad re The Free Church of Scotland (FCS); Supplementary Report.

- B. Letter from the church at Guelph, ON.
- C. Letter from the church at Attercliffe, ON.
- D. Letter from the church at Fergus, ON.
- E. Letter from the church at Port Kells, BC.

II. OBSERVATIONS

- A. Synod Winnipeg 1989 regarding the Free Church of Scotland (FCS) decided:
 - 1. to renew the mandate given to the Committee by Synod 1986 Art. 178, E, Recommendations 2, a,b,
(This mandate reads as follows:
 - a. to charge the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad to open contacts with the FCS to investigate and evaluate their history, background, doctrinal standards and their maintenance, church government, and their practices in order to ascertain whether we should recognize them as a true church of our Lord Jesus Christ and should enter into a sister church relation with them;
 - b. to instruct the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad to continue to inform the churches about the history, background, doctrinal standards and their maintenance, church government, and practices of the other churches which participate in the ICRC and with whom we have no sister church relationship.)
and charge the Committee to come to Synod 1992 with a report of its findings and recommendations.
 - 2. to inform the FCS that it is our desire to do full justice to the scriptural call for church unity by putting this unity to practice and be united in the same federation of churches with all the faithful congregations in Canada and the USA.
 - 3. to keep the current sister churches informed of all progress made in this regard, and to work in cooperation with them.
 - 4. to inform the churches concerning the affiliated churches of the FCS in Canada and the USA.
 - 5. to keep the churches informed of progress made (Acts 1989, Art. 116, D,2,3,4,5,6).
 - 6. that the Committee for Contact (Relations – correction Committee) with Churches Abroad take into account in its discussions with the FCS the relationship of local Canadian Reformed Churches and local congregations of the FCS in Canada with respect to expressing full unity of the faith (Acts 1989, Art. 117, D).
- B. The CRCA records that its members have studied the history, background, doctrinal standards and their maintenance, church government and practice of the FCS. "We have done so by acquainting ourselves with their history (see our Report to Synod 1986). We have done so by reading and studying the Acts of the General Assembly 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991. We have taken note of an extensive report of the Dutch deputies sent to Synod Heemse 1984 and found in the Acts 1984, pp. 57-69, of a report made by the Australian deputies who visited Scotland and reported to Synod Armadale 1989 (see Acts 1989 Winnipeg, pp. 155-159). Two members of our Committee, as well as Prof. Dr. J. Faber, visited Edinburgh in 1985 in conjunction with the first ICRC and experienced church life firsthand, as well as meeting and conversing with many members of the FCS. Finally, in 1990 two members of our Committee visited the FCS again and were confirmed and established in our

earlier impressions and evaluation. The sum total of all of these reports and visits indicates that in the FCS we have to do with a faithful church of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (CRCA Report, Consideration 3a, p.15)

- C. The CRCA also notes that a relationship with the FCS will also have a bearing on our relations with the four Free Church congregations in Canada, namely one in Toronto and three in Prince Edward Island; and may prove to be a mutual blessing. The CRCA stated, “We pointed out to the FCS that should we enter into a sister church relationship with them in the future that this would have a bearing on the relationship in Canada between our local churches and theirs. It was felt that then some form of mutual recognition and cooperation could be worked out and implemented. It was pointed out to the FCS that some in the CanRC were of the opinion that a sister church relations calls for an immediate merger between their churches and ours; however, we informed them that this would be a matter for Synod to decide and that as Deputies we would be more in favour of a process whereby the bonds between our respective local churches would grow and mature. One must be realistic enough to realize that it is not an easy matter to bring together immigrant churches from two different cultures and with two different ecclesiastical traditions. This requires careful planning and sensitive implementation.”
- D. The FCS has not offered the Canadian Reformed Churches a “fraternal relationship.” The Acts of the 1991 General Assembly include the following statement: “the General Assembly are encouraged to learn of continuing fraternal relations with churches abroad. They await the outcome of discussions with churches in the Dutch tradition desirous of securing sister church relations. They charge the Committee to report progress on these matters to next General Assembly” (pp.14-15).
- E. The FCS General Assembly (May 27, 1992) approved and adopted the following statement regarding inter-church relations:

“There should be one simple rule to the following effect.

Fraternal Relations should exist between churches that openly and practically profess the true faith of Christ as summarized in one or more of the classical Reformed symbols i.e. the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgian Confession, the Canons of the Synod of Dort.

Certain duties and courtesies devolve upon churches sustaining fraternal relations.

1. There should be a spirit of cordial love and trust as becomes brothers in the faith.
2. There should be an attitude of mutual helpfulness. Each should be willing to share problems and difficulties with the others. By the same token each should be allowed to exhort to more exact obedience any who appeared to relax faithfulness to their avowed confession. This should not invite to inquisitorial interference but to strengthening one another in love for Christ.
3. There should be willingness to accept certificates of communicant membership, normally without personal examination.
4. There should be in the highest courts of the churches a cordial welcome to visiting delegates from other churches recognised as in fraternal relationship. This need not amount to according membership in the court to the visiting delegate.
5. There should be willingness to allow ministers of one church access to the pulpits of fraternal churches as a matter of courtesy.
6. Churches should exchange copies of the Acts and Proceedings of their

highest courts or at least inform one another of major decisions.” (CRCA Report, p.15)

- F. The CRCA in its Supplementary Report (1992) states that the FCS has, in addition to the Westminster Standards, also adopted the Scottish Confession of Faith of 1560 (see Acts, 1986, p. 194, 3,c).
- G. The CRCA recommends:
 - 1. to offer to the FCS a sister church relationship called “Ecclesiastical Fellowship” and to do so under the rules adopted by Synod 1992.
 - 2. to the churches of Classis Ontario North that the Free Church congregations in Toronto and PEI be invited to attend Classis in an advisory capacity.
- H. The church at Guelph, ON suggests regarding the manner of contact with the FCS that the CRCA should not have spoken to the FCS until the Canadian congregations “both Canadian Reformed and FCS” had declared willingness to seek closer contact with each other. The church at Guelph also requests Synod to defer the matter (regarding the CRCA recommendations) until the churches bring it to the attention of the Federation.
- I. The church at Attercliffe, ON urges Synod not to accept the recommendations regarding the FCS. Grounds:
 - 1. these recommendations did not come from the churches.
 - 2. a sister church relationship can only be established after divergencies between the Westminster Confessions and the Three Forms of Unity have been resolved.
 - 3. they question whether it is our task, our ecumenical task, to search the whole world for sister churches.
 - 4. they suggest a regional approach towards our contact with other churches.
- J. The church at Fergus, ON feels that the recommendation to invite the FCS churches to Classis in an advisory capacity may create more problems than are actually solved i.e. lording it over Classis Ontario North.
- K. The church at Port Kells, BC has concerns about the recommendation of the CRCA to establish sister church relations with FCS. The consistory of Port Kells suggests that “such a step abroad would tend more toward disunity than unity on the home front.” The church at Port Kells, BC states:
 - 1. “It seems unwise to... establish full sister church relations with churches abroad when we have not reached that stage with churches in our own area who have the same confessions and church government.
 - 2. Let us not pre-empt the discussions we are having with ... [the OPC] by extending sister church relations to similar groups abroad.”

III. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. According to the Word of God and the Confession (John 17:11, 17,20,21; Eph. 3:14-4:16; 2 Tim.3:15, 16; L.D. 21, H.C. and Art. 27-29 B.C.), true believers and churches have the calling to seek ecclesiastical fellowship with all those who with them confess the same faith and maintain and practise it in preaching, worship, discipline and government.
- B. The churches at Attercliffe, ON and Guelph, ON fail to take into account that the following up of this calling (mentioned in consideration A) lawfully belongs to the jurisdiction of the combined churches, on the ground that this calling has been accepted by the churches together in their confession (Art. 27, B.C.; Art. 50, C.O.), and should therefore not be made dependent on the initiative of a local church only.

- C. The churches at Attercliffe, ON and Guelph, ON also overlook that Synod 1986 already mandated the CRCA to open contacts with the FCS to investigate the possibility of entering into Ecclesiastical Fellowship.
- D. As to the points raised by the church at Attercliffe, ON under Observation I 2,3,4, Synod considers that the fact the FCS has the Westminster Standards and Presbyterian Form of Government is not in itself a hindrance to Ecclesiastical Fellowship.

Further, a regional approach towards contact with other churches does not exclude the worldwide calling, and cannot avoid worldwide contacts, although by reason of proximity, resources and other practical factors, priority should be given to the ecumenical calling in the church's own environment.

- E. Synod 1989 mandated the CRCA to contact the FCS while taking into account the existence of the FCS congregations in Canada and their relationship to the CanRC. The opinion of the church at Guelph under Observation H is in conflict with the mandate of the CRCA, given by Synod 1989.
- F. With regard to the church at Port Kells, BC, Synod considers that entering into Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the FCS need not be a cause for disunity on the home front. The reason Ecclesiastical Fellowship has not been finalized with the OPC is because of certain specified divergencies still under discussion and not due to their different confessions or form of government as such.
- G. In answer to the concern of the church at Fergus, ON, Synod notes that the recommendation to the Classis Ontario North that the FCS congregations in Toronto and PEI be invited to attend Classis in an advisory capacity is not lord-ing it over Classis but giving in to the churches' consideration.
- H. The report of the CRCA on its extensive investigations warrants the conclusion, which is also supported by the findings and conclusions of the sister churches in Australia and the Netherlands, that the FCS may be recognized as a true church to which Ecclesiastical Fellowship should be offered.
- I. Synod, 1989, decided that the CRCA take into account in its discussions with the FCS the relationship of local Canadian Reformed Churches and local congregations of the FCS in Canada with respect to expressing full unity of the faith (Acts 1989, Art. 117, D). Noting that the FCS congregations in Canada are considered a part of the FCS (see Appendix I, CRCA Report, p. 28), the relationship to the FCS in Canada with the CanRc shall, for the time being, be regulated according to the Rules of Ecclesiastical Fellowship.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Synod decide:

- A. to recognize with gratitude the Free Church of Scotland as a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. to offer the Free Church of Scotland, including the Free Church of Scotland congregations in Canada, a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship under the adopted rules.
- C. to thank the CRCA for completing its mandate thus far with respect to the FCS and to charge the CRCA to convey to the FCS the decision of Synod 1992, and to advise the churches and Synod 1995 of the response of the Free Church of Scotland.

ADOPTED

The chairman expresses thankfulness that we are able to extend a sister church relationship to the Free Church of Scotland. He expresses the hope that God will bless this and that it may serve to edify both the Free Church of Scotland and the Canadian Reformed Churches.

ARTICLE 129

Letter from the Church at Langley re Convening Date of General Synod

Committee III presents:

Agenda item VIII E6

I. MATERIAL

Letter from the church at Langley, BC re convening date of General Synod.

II. OBSERVATIONS

A. The church at Langley, BC is of the opinion that the month of November is not a very suitable time of the year for the convening of Synod and suggests that future Synods be convened during the month of June for the following reasons:

1. The Catechism and Profession of Faith classes will be over; hence there will be no need to cancel them or to parachute in other teachers.
2. The pastoral workload is lighter seeing that there is often less sickness at this time of the year;
3. The members of Synod can return home and, if they wish, go on holidays and so recover fully from their Synodical experience;
4. Weather-wise, the month of June is very well-suited for meetings in almost every part of the country; thereby allowing the members of Synod ample opportunity to get whatever exercise they need.

B. Article 34 of the Church Order (as revised by Synod 1989) states, "Furthermore each classis, regional synod, or general synod shall determine the time and place of the next classis, regional synod, or general synod respectively and appoint the convening church for that meeting."

III. CONSIDERATIONS

A. Synod agrees with the suggestion made by the church at Langley, BC that the month of November is not the most appropriate month of the year for the convening of Synod.

B. If Synod would be convened in June it would conflict with the convening of Classis Ontario South and Classis Ontario North. It would mean that the ministerial delegates would be out of their congregation for a considerable amount of time. This would not be a problem if Synod were convened in the month of May.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

Synod give due consideration to the matter raised by the church at Langley, BC when making preparations for the next Synod.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 130

Proposal to Amend Guidelines of General Synod

The following motion is made:

Add to Guideline 1D, Acts 1983 (page 28): This rule may be waived only if Synod determines that sufficient reasons for late submissions are included.

DEFEATED

ARTICLE 131

Proposal re Acts General Synod

The following motion is made:

Synod decide:

- A. to remove from the Acts the Observations and Considerations of Art. 68 because of their confidential character.
- B. to send two copies of the above mentioned article including the observations and considerations to every church.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 132

Censure According to Article 44 C.O.

The chairman expresses gratitude that censure is not necessary.

ARTICLE 133

Preparation for Next General Synod

The church at Abbotsford, BC. is appointed to convene the next General Synod in Abbotsford mid May of 1995.

ARTICLE 134

Adoption of Acts

The Acts, Articles 124-133 are read and adopted.

ARTICLE 135

Publication of Acts General Synod

The first and second clerks are appointed to take care of the publication of the Acts.

ARTICLE 136

Approval of the Press Release

Synod decides that the present executive is appointed to scrutinize and approve the Press Release.

ARTICLE 137

Closing

The chairman thanks the two clerks for the work they did. A special word of appreciation is extended to br. A. Kingma for his assistance in the secretarial duties which he so generously offered. Also the ladies who prepared all the meals and refreshments are given a hearty word of appreciation. The church at Lincoln, ON is thanked for their great hospitality.

In closing the chairman speaks the following words:

Brothers, we have come to the end of our agenda and that means that we have also come to the end of General Synod Lincoln 1992 of the Canadian Reformed Churches. For slightly over two weeks we have worked together: debating, discussing, sharing, walking, deciding and considering. It has been a very intensive time but also a very rewarding time in terms of the fellowship that we have experienced and the work that we have done.

Now, it is time to close and that means that some words of appreciation are in order. First of all, we extend a hearty word of thanks to the church at Lincoln which has hosted this Synod. Brothers and sisters, your preparations, your hospitality and your assistance on a daily basis have served to enable us to function in a most effective manner. May I add, that special words of thanks are fitting for the ladies who wined and dined us so well. We can only express our highest compliments for your cooking. That also explains why the members of Synod will be carrying home more than just extra papers.

Speaking to you, brothers, I would like to express my appreciation for the great way that you have worked together in your advisory committees. You have had to come to grips with some very difficult matters, and in all cases you have done so in a constructive and co-operative manner. This does not mean that you always agreed, but even when you disagreed you continued to respect each other and to work together. Personally, I am thankful that you made life relatively easy for your rookie chairman. I hope that you will forgive any mistakes that I have made.

Of course, it also needs to be said that a chairman does not function alone, and I wish to extend the warmest of thanks to the other members of the Executive. I have had a very trusty and experienced side-kick in the person of Rev. Cl. Stam, very obliging and diligent clerks in the persons of the Revs. Aasman and Agema. It would be hard to find better executive members than these.

In closing, brothers, the time has come for us to head homeward. In due course the churches will be informed of the decisions that we have made here and they will have to judge whether or not we have served them well. Still, they are not the only judges. For I would remind you all that in the final analysis there is only one to whom we must all give account, namely our Lord Jesus Christ, the Head and the Saviour of the church. May He see fit to bless our humble and sin-stained efforts and use them to advance the cause of His church and the glory of His Most Holy Name.

Brothers, farewell and the peace of the Lord be with you and with all the churches.

The chairman asks Rev. Cl. Stam to close Synod. Rev. Cl. Stam thanks Rev. J. Visscher for the excellent leadership he gave during this Synod. He also asks that Hymn 58: 1 and 2 be sung, and closes in prayer.

Synod is closed.

By order of Synod

Rev. J. Visscher

Chairman

Rev. Cl. Stam

Vice-chairman

Rev. R. Aasman

First clerk

Rev. D.G.J. Agema

Second clerk

APPENDIX I

COMMITTEE ON RELATIONS WITH CHURCHES ABROAD OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD LINCOLN 1992

Esteemed Brethren,

We hereby submit to you our report on the activities of the Committee on Relations With Churches Abroad (CRCA), appointed by General Synod 1989.

I. MANDATE

General Synod Winnipeg 1989 gave our Committee the following mandate:

A. General

1. To continue the Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, and Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika in accordance with the adopted rules.
2. To charge the committee to send an invitation to sister churches abroad at least one year prior to the date the next general synod is to convene and to have our churches represented by a delegate to general synods of such churches abroad if invited and when feasible.
3. To renew the mandate of the Committee as given by Synod 1986 concerning the following points:
 - a. to request the churches abroad that in the matter of relationship or contact with third parties "there be consultation and coordination between sister churches."
 - b. to request the churches abroad that contacts in countries where sister churches are already established be made not independently but in consultation with these sister churches.
 - c. to continue to address the sister churches on the matter of church relations, setting forth the decisions and concerns of the Canadian Reformed Churches, as outlined by the General Synods of Smithville (Acts, Art. 154, D, 1, 2) and Cloverdale (Acts, Art. 110, D, 1).
 - d. to evaluate the reaction of the sister churches in these matters with respect to a possible common approach.
 - e. to report to the next General Synod with suitable recommendations.
(Acts 1989, Art. 102, E, 2, 3, 4)

D. The Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK)

4. to charge the Committee to continue to be diligent regarding the matter of communication with the PCK, and report to the next General Synod.
(Acts 1989, Art. 103, D, 2)

E. The Free Church of Scotland (FCS)

5. to renew the mandate given to the Committee by Synod 1986 Art. 178, E, Recommendations 2, a,b,
(This mandate reads as follows:
 - a. to charge the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad to open contacts with the FCS to investigate and evaluate their history, background, doctrinal standards and their maintenance, church govern-

ment, and their practices in order to ascertain whether we should recognize them as a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ and should enter into a sister church relation with them;

- b. to instruct the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad to continue to inform the churches about the history, background, doctrinal standards and their maintenance, church government, and practices of the other churches which participate in the ICRC and with whom we have no sister church relationship.)

and charge the Committee to come to Synod 1992 with a report of its findings and recommendations.

6. to inform the FCS that it is our desire to do full justice to the scriptural call for church unity by putting this unity to practice and be united in the same federation of churches with all the faithful congregations in Canada and the U.S.A.
7. to keep the current sister churches informed of all progress made in this regard, and to work in cooperation with them.
8. to inform the churches concerning the affiliated churches of the FCS in Canada and the U.S.A.
9. to keep the churches informed of progress made.
(Acts 1989, Art.116, D, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)
10. that the Committee for Contact (Relations – correction Committee) with Churches Abroad take into account in its discussions with the FCS the relationship of local Canadian Reformed Churches and local congregations of the FCS in Canada with respect to expressing full unity of the faith.
(Acts 1989, Art. 117, D)

F. The International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC)

11. that the Committee overtures the ICRC to make discussion of the Constitution a matter of priority.
12. that the mandate as expressed by Synod 1986, Art. 175, D, 2, a, b, c be maintained.
(This mandate reads as follows:
To advise the executive of the ICRC that the amendments as proposed by the General Synod of Burlington West 1986 be placed on the agenda instead of those proposed by Synod Cloverdale 1983, to wit:
 - a. that a stipulation be included in the “Basis” of the ICRC that the delegates subscribe only to the standards of the churches of which they are a member;
 - b. that membership of the RES is an impediment to membership of the ICRC;
 - c. that “CONSTITUTION Art. V – Authority” be amended to read:
“The conclusions of the conference shall be advisory in character. Member churches are to be informed of these conclusions and are recommended to work towards their implementation.”)
13. that the delegates keep the churches informed regarding the activities of the Conference by means of Press Releases. (Acts 1989, Art. 128, D, 2, 3, 4)

II. RULES FOR ECCLESIASTICAL FELLOWSHIP

The rules for ecclesiastical fellowship referred to in our mandate are:

- a. “To take mutual heed that the corresponding churches do not deviate from the Reformed Confession in doctrine, liturgy, church government and discipline.
- b. “To forward to each other the agenda and decisions of the broader Assemblies and to admit each other’s delegates to these Assemblies as advisors.

- c. "To inform each other concerning changes of, or additions to, the Confession, Church Order and Liturgical Forms, while the corresponding churches pledge to express themselves on the question whether such changes or additions are considered acceptable. Regarding proposals for changes in the Three Forms of Unity, the sister churches abroad shall receive ample opportunity (at least three years) to forward their judgment before binding decisions will be made.
- d. "To accept each other's attestations and to permit each other's ministers to preach the Word and to administer the sacraments.
- e. "To give account to each other regarding correspondence with third parties."
(Acts 1962, Art.139; Acts 1968, Art.79, 6, b)

III. GENERAL ACTIVITIES

1. Declarations

- a. The following ministers and professors of the Canadian Reformed Churches, planning to travel abroad, requested and received a declaration that they are ministers in good standing in the Churches:
The Revs. B.J. Berends, R.F. Boersema, D. DeJong, K. Deddens, J. Faber, J. Mulder, J. van Rietschoten, G. Wieske.
- b. The following ministers of the Free Reformed Churches in Australia and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands visited Canada:
The Revs. C. Bouwman, K. Jonker, A.J. Pol, L. Moes.

2. Acts

When the Acts of General Synod Winnipeg 1989 were received, a sufficient number of copies was sent to the sister churches, as well as to the Free Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian Church in Korea.

3. Notifications and Invitations

Letters of notification and invitation were sent to the sister churches regarding the convening of General Synod Lincoln 1992. Copies of the Provisional Agenda were sent.

4. Interim Reports

Two members of the Committee, namely Rev.CI. Stam and Dr.J. Visscher, travelled to the Netherlands and Scotland from September 11-26, 1990. An extensive report of this visit was published in *Clarion* (Vol.40, No.2, January 18, 1991). This report has been added to the appendices.

IV. THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA (FRCA)

1. Correspondence

- a. After Synod 1989 met, the Free Reformed Churches of Australia were informed about the decisions taken that pertained to them, as well as other matters that had to do with inter-church relations generally. Copies of the Acts 1989 were sent as soon as they were received from the printer.
- b. In a letter dated Oct.30, 1989, the Deputies for Relations with Churches Abroad informed us that Synod Armadale scheduled to meet on Nov.7, 1989, had to be postponed to May 1, 1990, due to a domestic airline strike.
- c. On April 5, 1990, your Committee sent the best wishes of our churches to the FRCA on the occasion of their General Synod Armadale.
- d. On Dec. 11, 1990 the Australian Deputies informed us about some of the highlights of Synod Armadale and stated that two copies of the Acts were underway.

- e. On Aug. 21, 1991, the same Deputies sent us a letter in which they asked your Committee to react to a number of considerations found in the Acts of Synod Armadale. These considerations have to do with the matter of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC). Our Committee studied this request and informed them that as far as we could see these considerations had to do with internal matters in the FRCA and that as such it would be inappropriate for us to comment on them. With respect to the ICRC and our evaluation of it, we referred the Deputies to this Report. The Australian Deputies also wanted to know our reaction to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church's (OPC) application for membership in the ICRC. We replied that this application would be a matter on which the ICRC itself will have to come to a judgment. Furthermore, we added that our churches have never taken the position that a church with which we have as yet no permanent relationship should for that reason be denied membership in the ICRC.

2. Acts of Synod Armadale 1990

Synod Armadale 1990 met from May 1 - 21. Some of the following highlights have been gleaned from the Acts of 1990:

- a. The following officers were elected: Chairman - Rev.W. Huizinga, Vice-Chairman - Rev.C. Bouwman, 1st Clerk - Rev.C. Bosch, 2nd Clerk - Elder A. Slobe. Following the Dutch custom the delegates rise to express their agreement with the Three Forms of Unity.
- b. A number of decisions were taken with respect to other churches:
- i. The Reformed Churches of Australia (RCA) sent an observer to Synod. Seeing that the designation and status of an "observer" has never been defined, Synod decided to receive him as a visitor and welcomed him as such. Synod also stated that before real progress can be made with the RCA, attention has to be paid to the issues that divide the respective churches. Deputies for contact were appointed to pursue the matter.
 - ii. The Deputies have had contact with the Reformed Churches of New Zealand (RCNZ) and reported on it. It was noted with joy that the RCNZ had withdrawn from the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC, formerly RES). Synod decided to continue the contact, but at the same time expressed the view that the relations which the RCNZ maintained with certain third parties continued to be an impediment. Deputies were given permission to visit the RCNZ in order to deal with outstanding issues.
 - iii. Synod received a request from the Reformed Church of Papua-New Guinea (RCPNG) for a sister church relationship. It decided that such a request was premature and sent a letter of encouragement to these young mission churches, under the care of the church at Albany.
 - iv. Synod instructed its Deputies to continue to investigate the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore (ERCS) with a view to establishing sister church relations. In this connection matters relating to covenant and election need to be discussed further. Deputies were also told to visit this church. In its considerations Synod renewed its support for a policy which sees the Australian sister churches concentrating more on churches which are geographically close to them.
 - v. Synod decided to continue its sister church relationship with the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK). Synod also stated that recent additions to the Westminster Confession indicated that the PCK was obedient to the Scriptures. Deputies were instructed to improve on the exchange of information between the churches.

Synod also decided to continue the sister church relationship with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN), the Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika (VGKSA), the Reformed Churches of Sumba-Savu-Timor (RCSST), and the Canadian Reformed Churches (CRC),

- vi. Synod instructed its Deputies to seek contact with the Gereja Masehi Musyafir Church (GMMC) on Timor with a view to establishing sister church relations. Deputies were also told to send information to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia (EPCA) and to investigate these churches if they seek membership in the ICRC.
 - vii. Synod decided to discontinue attempts to contact the Presbyterian Church of Uganda (PCU), and the Reformed Church of Japan (RCJ).
 - viii. Synod decided to keep contact with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland (RPCI) “at a low level” relying on the Dutch sister churches for information and perhaps requesting some from the RPCI itself. Much the same appears to be case with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Taiwan (RPCT).
 - ix. Synod decided to continue to move in the direction of a sister church relationship with the Free Church of Scotland (FCS). Deputies were instructed to get clarification on whether or not their offer of Temporary Ecclesiastical Contact has been accepted by the FCS.
 - x. Synod expressed thankfulness that the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland has accepted its offer of Temporary Ecclesiastical Contact and will use it to come to a full sister church relationship.
- c. Synod spent a considerable amount of time dealing with the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (PCEA). It expressed thankfulness for the willingness of the PCEA deputies to discuss matters, requested further discussion on matters relating to supervision of the Lord’s table, the practice of pulpit exchange, the position of children in the covenant; and appointed new deputies to work towards mutual recognition.
 - d. Synod spent even more time dealing with matters relating to the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC). It instructed new deputies to deal with a list of concerns with respect to the ICRC, to consult the sister churches on these concerns, to publish the results and to state that the concerns raised may affect the FRCA’s continuing membership in the ICRC. These concerns appear to center around whether there is real unity of faith between Reformed and Presbyterian churches, how the expression in the ICRC Constitution to seek the “fullest ecclesiastical fellowship” is to be interpreted, and the fact that previous FRCA synods “have hardly forwarded positive grounds for joining the ICRC.” (For our comments on these concerns see the part of our report dealing with the ICRC.)
 - e. Synod dealt with a request from the church of Kelmescott to include the word “Christian” in the Apostles’ Creed. This was rejected.
 - f. Under the heading of “Training for the Ministry,” Synod decided to continue its support for our Theological College in Hamilton.
 - g. Synod received a very extensive report on Bible Translations and declared that the NASB, NKJV and NIV are better translations than the RSV. It decided to charge new deputies with the task of dealing further with the former three translations, as well as to consult the sister churches on the feasibility of undertaking the task of translating the Bible.

3. Conclusion

From the correspondence received and from the Acts of Synod 1990, we may conclude with gratitude that the Free Reformed Churches of Australia continue to be faithful to the Word of the Lord, to the Confessions and to the adopted Church Order.

4. Recommendation

Your Committee recommends to General Synod 1992 that we continue to maintain a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia in accordance with the adopted rules.

V. THE REFORMED CHURCHES IN THE NETHERLANDS (RCN)

1. Correspondence

- a. After Synod 1989 met the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN), also called De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, were informed about the decisions taken that pertained to them, as well as other matters that had to do with inter-church relations generally. Copies of the Acts 1989 were sent as soon as they were received from the printer.
- b. We received a letter dated Oct. 16, 1989, inviting us to send delegates to the forthcoming Synod of Leeuwarden 1990. (Our Committee decided to do so and appointed the Revs. Cl. Stam and J. Visscher to attend this Synod; however, Synod Leeuwarden completed its agenda before anyone expected it would. The result was that your delegates had to decide whether to still travel to the Netherlands or not. After some further consultation with the Dutch deputies, as well as with the Scottish deputies, it was decided to proceed. In this way it would still be possible to have a fruitful meeting seeing that we would be dealing with Synod decisions and not just with proposals or recommendations to Synod that still would need to be adopted.)
- c. A letter sent by the Dutch deputies on March 19, 1990, was received informing us that they were recommending that the RCN enter into a sister church relationship with the Reformed Church of the United States (RCUS). They came to this decision as the result of the contacts they had with the Reformed Church of Zaire (RCZ) in which the RCUS is also active. Some further information about the RCUS was included. (See f. below about this matter, as well as that part of the Report dealing with the RCUS.)
The Deputies also asked whether we had discussed the document “Biblical Principles of the Unity of the Church” authored by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
- d. On April 5, 1990, we sent our fraternal greetings and best wishes to Synod Leeuwarden and stated that the matter of personal delegation still needed to be decided.
- e. We received a letter from the Dutch deputies, dated April 12, 1990, dealing with a request which they had received via *Nederlands Dagblad* (Netherlands Daily – a Dutch Reformed newspaper) about an advertisement submitted by the Church at Ottawa. This ad asked Dutch readers for donations towards the building of a manse and/or church building.
Our Committee took up contact with the Church of Ottawa, received information from them, as well as a declaration from Classis Ontario-North endorsing this request. We informed the Dutch deputies that as far as we could determine the need was there.
- f. A letter was sent by us to the Dutch deputies on June 18, 1990, in which we state the following:
“In the first place, we were surprised and caught off-guard by your letter of March 19, 1990, in which you informed us that you had decided to recommend to Synod Leeuwarden that the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland enter into a sister church relation with the Reformed Church in the United States.
For our part we were not aware that your considerations had progressed to such a point and we regret that more consultation on this matter did not materialize.
This is not to imply that your recommendation was incorrect, for we have no definite reason to conclude that. We do, however, have some questions about the RCUS in relation to church discipline, Sunday worship (once per Lord’s day), and theonomy. It might have been a wiser course

of action if you had sent a delegation to visit these churches instead of relying on indirect sources and impressions....”

This letter shows you that contrary to what the Acts of Synod Leeuwarden 1990 state we were not consulted before this relationship was offered to the RCUS. We were merely informed that a recommendation in this regard was being made to Synod Leeuwarden.

In addition, the letter also dealt with the financial request of the Church at Ottawa, as well as informing the Dutch deputies of our planned visit to the Netherlands from Sept.18-26, 1990.

- g. On March 4, 1991, we sent the Dutch deputies a copy of our proposed new rules that would be sent to Synod Lincoln 1992 and asked for their reactions. To date none have been received.

2. Acts of the General Synod of Leeuwarden 1990

- a. The Synod of Leeuwarden received visitors from the Free Church of Scotland (FCS), the Dutch Reformed Church of Sri Lanka, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland, the Free Reformed Church of the Philippines, and the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS).
- b. A number of appointments were made to the Theological University in Kampen. Synod appointed Drs.C.J. de Ruyter as lecturer in Diaconology and successor to Prof. Dr.C. Trimp. Dr.F. van der Pol (previously appointed as lecturer) was promoted to professor of Ecclesiology (the history of the early church and the middle ages). As part-time lecturers were appointed: Drs.C. Bijl (Homiletics), Dr.A.N. Hendriks (Poimenics), and Dr.J.R. Luth (Liturgics; church music).
- c. Regarding the support of needy students (Art. 19 C.O.), Synod maintained that the system of having national deputies for this fund, be continued. The Church Order was amended to reflect the change in the name of the Theological University (from College to University). No other changes were made.
- d. No changes were made with respect to the text of the Three Forms of Unity.
- e. Synod expressed agreement with the plans of the Dutch Bible Society (Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap – NBG) to come up with a revision of the 1951 translation (NV) and urged the NBG to insure “that a new translation renders the Holy Scriptures in a careful and trustworthy manner in contemporary Dutch, doing justice to the unity of the Scriptures and the reality that the translated Bible already functions for centuries within a confessing community.” The Deputies for Bible Translation are given the mandate to monitor the progress, to cooperate in this venture, and to report to the next General Synod on the developments.
Synod decided to maintain a decision of earlier Synods (Spakenburg and Heemse) to retain the old practice that elders do not give the benediction in the worship services.
- f. It was decided to ask the Deputies/Governors for Reformed Missionary Training (Gereformeerde Missiologische Opleiding – GMO) to investigate whether the missionary training can be expanded to include training for evangelism work (for ministers and others). The Deputies are asked to report to the next Synod on this matter.
- g. With respect to relations with churches abroad quite a number of decisions were made.
 - i. Rules for Correspondence: Synod decided to do away with the relationship known as “the temporary ecclesiastical contact relationship” and instead adopted newly-formulated “rules for sister church relationships.” (see Report of CRCA members to RCN, dated Sept.20, 1990, and attached.) The existing sister churches will be asked to continue their relationship with the Reformed Church in the Netherlands on the basis of the

- new rules. The matter will be discussed with those churches with whom a temporary contact relationship was established earlier.
- ii. Financial help foreign churches: Synod decided to request the Deputies for contact with churches abroad (BBK) to study whether it is responsible and feasible to give Deputies the mandate to offer help to foreign churches for theological training and educational work. Deputies were also given the right to give immediate financial assistance to foreign churches in case of need and to do this in consultation with the (mission) sending churches.
 - iii. Synod decided to continue sister church relationships with the following churches:
 - the Reformed Church of Sumba-Savu-Timor (plus sending to these churches an additional missionary lecturer for their theological training institution),
 - the Presbyterian Church in Korea,
 - the Canadian Reformed Churches,
 - the Free Reformed Churches in Australia,
 - the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland,
 - the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa.
 - iv. Synod decided to offer a sister church relationship to the following churches:
 - the Free Reformed Churches of the Philippines,
 - the Free Church of Scotland,
 - the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland,
 - the Reformed Church in the United States,
 - the Reformed Church of Zaire.
 - v. Synod decided to establish (or continue) contacts with the following churches:
 - the Musyafir Churches (Timor),
 - the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Korea (Hapdong),
 - the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Taiwan (First Presbytery),
 - the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Taiwan (Second Presbytery),
 - the Dutch Reformed Church of Sri Lanka (with official support up to Fl. 20,000, if needed),
 - the Reformed Church of Japan,
 - the Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore,
 - the Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore,
 - the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia,
 - the Reformed Churches of New Zealand,
 - the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (possibly intensifying these contacts),
 - the Presbyterian Association in England,
 - the Union of Evangelical Independent Reformed Churches of France,
 - the Greek Evangelical Church,
 - the Church of Christ Under the TIV (Nigeria),
 - the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Spain,
 - the Reformed Churches of South Africa,

Various Churches (e.g. in Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Eastern Australia, New Zealand, South Africa) will be visited by Deputies.
 - vi. Synod decided not to give the Deputies the mandate to initiate contact with the Presbyterian Church of Brazil.
 - vii. It is of interest to note that Synod decided to ask the Deputies (BBK) to raise with the Presbyterian Church of Korea (Kosin), the matter of maintaining discipline with regard to doctrine and the adhering to the church order, because questions have arisen on these points. But Synod did not consider that these matters were of sufficient weight to affect sister church relations.

- viii. Regarding the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC), Synod made various decisions regarding the meeting of the ICRC in Langley, B.C. (June 1989). The Deputies were given the mandate to cooperate in organizing the next meeting of the ICRC in the Netherlands, if the meeting cannot take place in Korea.

The Deputies were urged to place the following on the agenda of the ICRC: mission work (among the Jews), and a necessary “Christian Witness” to the world.

- h. The following highlights are passed on and deal with internal affairs:
 - i. Synod received various Deputies from the Christian Reformed Churches (Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerken – CGK). Disappointment was expressed that the CGK had rejected an appeal to come to ecclesiastical unity with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, mainly on the ground of perceived differences in doctrine (namely, the appropriation of salvation and the work of the Holy Spirit in the preaching). Synod decided to appoint Deputies to continue contact with the CGK to seek further clarification of the differences so that it may be determined which obstacles must be removed to come to unity on the basis of the Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity.
 - ii. Synod appointed Deputies to promote ecclesiastical unity in the Netherlands with the task to seek contacts with others who want to stand on the same basis of faith and, when asked, to advise local churches in making and maintaining contacts in their area.
 - iii. Synod reacted to a letter of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (also called GKN or GKN – synodical) in which regret was expressed over the wrong disciplinary measures taken in 1944 which led to the Liberation. Synod did not see in this letter a return to the truth of Scripture but a result of a wrong spirit of tolerance currently prevailing in the GKN. An answer was sent conveying the sentiments of Synod.

3. Considerations

- a. From the correspondence and the Acts of the General Synod of Leeuwarden, the Committee may gratefully conclude that the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands have shown faithfulness to God’s Word and have abided by the Reformed Creeds and Church Order.
- b. Since the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands have adopted new rules for sister church relationships with churches abroad, with the request that the relationship be continued in this way with the Canadian Reformed Churches, this request must be answered. The Committee is of the opinion that the new Dutch rules do not indicate any significant change in the relationship maintained until now and may well be accepted.
- c. Since the Dutch sister churches have entered into a sister church relationship with the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS), which churches are geographically closer to the Canadian Reformed Churches, Synod should consider giving the Committee on Relations With Churches Abroad (CRCA) the mandate to seek contact with the RCUS with respect to mutual recognition. The Committee should then present a comprehensive report on this matter to the next General Synod. (see also IX)

4. Recommendations

- a. Your Committee recommends that Synod continue to maintain a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands in agreement with the new rules as suggested by Synod Leeuwarden 1990 and adapted by General Synod Lincoln 1992.
- b. Furthermore, your Committee recommends that it receive a mandate to seek contact with the Reformed Church in the United States with the purpose of investigating whether these churches may be recognized as sister churches.

VI. THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA (FRCSA)

1. Correspondence

- a. After our General Synod 1989 met the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa (FRCSA), also called Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika, were informed about the decisions taken that pertained to them, as well as other matters that had to do with inter-church relations generally. Copies of the Acts 1989 were sent as soon as they were received from the printer.
- b. On Feb.3, 1989, the South African deputies informed us that the Acts of Synod Johannesburg 1987 were on their way to us.
- c. On Feb. 6, 1990, a letter was sent informing us that Synod Capetown would meet from April 5 - 9, 1990. We sent them our best wishes on March 10, 1990.
- d. On Oct.2, 1990, we were sent an English summary of the proceedings of the General Synod of Capetown 1990, as well as a couple of copies of the Acts in the Afrikaans language.
- e. On Jan. 20, 1992, a letter was sent to us informing us that the next General Synod of the FRCSA would be held from April 29 - May 2, 1992. No place was mentioned. A letter expressing the blessings of the Lord was sent.

2. Acts of Synod Johannesburg 1987 and 1988

Synod Johannesburg met from October 9 - 13, 1987 and from May 12 - 14, 1988. Some of the highlights include:

- a. Synod decided to continue sister church relations with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, the Canadian Reformed Churches, and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. A relationship of ecclesiastical contact was continued with the Reformed Churches on Sumba-Savu and the Presbyterian Church in Korea.
- b. Synod spent a great deal of time dealing with the revision of the South African Church Book: confessions, forms, church order.
- c. Synod took note of the growth that was being experienced in connection with the mission work in Belhar.
- d. A letter was sent to the Reformed Churches in South Africa dealing with the outstanding issues between RCSA and the FRCSA.
- e. It was decided to take up ecclesiastical contact with the Free Church of South Africa in the same manner as this is done with several foreign churches.
- f. Synod decided in favour of an overture of the church at Capetown and declared that it is not necessary for an elder to change the salutation and benediction from "you" to "us."
- g. Synod decided to have the English Form for Marriage translated and to use this as a basis for a South African form. In the process the Deputies were told to leave out the reference to Christ's presence at the marriage feast in Cana and to include the full text of Ps. 128: 1, 2.

3. Acts of Synod Capetown 1990

Synod Capetown met from April 4 - 9, 1990. All three churches, Capetown, Johannesburg, and Pretoria were legally represented. Also present was the Rev. A.J. Visser, missionary of the Dutch church of Drachten Southeast. We mention the following decisions and events because they are of interest to our churches:

- a. A sister church relationship will be continued with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, the Canadian Reformed Churches, and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.
- b. Synod decided to continue ecclesiastical contact with the Reformed Church-

es in Sumba-Savu, the Presbyterian Church in Korea, and the Free Church of South Africa.

- c. With respect to the International Conference of Reformed Churches, Synod judged the speech of Prof. Dr.J. Douma, regarding the subject “Apartheid” too narrow in its scope. “The subject should have been, for example, ‘The responsibilities of the church regarding the social and political structures of the society it stands in.’” Synod decided to send two delegates to the ICRC in Seoul (1993).
- d. Synod decided not to go so far as to recognize the Reformed Churches of South Africa as a true church, but to ask for a clear memorandum on the main differences with the RCSA. It also decided to mandate new delegates “to participate on behalf of our churches in interdenominational gatherings to which we are invited and where matters regarding the FRCSA are discussed or where we might give a contribution which has a testimonial character; to reflect on the practical application of contact with churches with whom contact is considered significant; and to implement such contact.”
- e. Synod decided to adopt the recommendation of delegates not to pronounce its judgment about the definite approval or disapproval of the New Afrikaans Bible (NAB).
- f. The new 1987 translation of the three Ecumenical Articles of Faith and the Three Forms of Unity was made available for use in the churches.
- g. A new committee was appointed to review the liturgical forms. The final text is to be published in a booklet with the new text of the Church Order and the alternative Order of Service.
- h. Synod accepted the recommendation of the delegates appointed by the previous Synod to return to the Order of Service from the 16th century and recommended an order for the morning and evening service.
- i. Although the churches would like to keep the Genevan melodies, it was questioned whether that was possible in such a small federation. Synod decided to refer the matter of the melodies back to the church at Pretoria with a request to study the prerequisites of the choice of melodies and rhythms and to spell out the consequences of the acceptance of the Afrikaans Psalm Book of 1987.

4. Consideration

From the correspondence and the Acts received, we may conclude, with gratitude, that the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa (FRCSA) desires to be faithful to the Word of God, the Reformed Confessions, and the Church Order.

5. Recommendation

Your Committee recommends to General Synod 1992 that we continue to maintain a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa in accordance with the adopted rules.

VII. THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN KOREA (PCK)

1. Context

General Synod Winnipeg 1989, following in the line of many previous synods (Burlington, Cloverdale, Smithville, Coaldale), charged the Committee to continue to deal with the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK) with a view to establishing a sister church relationship with them. Due to the fact that all the outstanding issues between our churches and the Korean churches had been dealt with, but that communication remained a problem, Synod 1989 instructed us “to be diligent regarding the matter of communication” (Acts 1989, Art. 103, D, 2).

With a view to these communication difficulties, two members of the Committee, namely the Revs. Cl. Stam and J. Visscher spoke with Prof. Dr. Ho Jin Jun of the PCK at the last meeting of the ICRC held in Langley, B.C. from June 19 - 28, 1989. We explained our difficulties to him and he supplied us with some insight into how this situation had come about. It appears that up until then the PCK had the custom of appointing a new secretary to their Fraternal Relations Committee on an annual basis. The result was that a new secretary hardly had an opportunity to adjust to his task and then he would be replaced with a new one. In addition, it appears that the qualifications for secretary did not always take into account the ability to communicate in the English language. We explained to Dr. Ho Jin Jun that this kind of setup would make it very difficult for us ever to overcome our communications problem. We informed him that the inability to communicate would hinder the establishment of a sister church relationship with our churches. As a result, he promised to recommend certain changes to the General Assembly of the PCK. Obviously he has followed through on his word for since that meeting we have had no lack of correspondence from the PCK.

2. Correspondence

- a. On July 20, 1989, the Fraternal Relations Committee of the PCK invited us to send a fraternal delegate to their 39th General Assembly meeting in Masan, Korea from Sept. 18 - 22, 1989. We replied to their Committee on Sept. 5, 1989, thanking them for their invitation but telling them that the absence of an official relationship between our respective churches prevented us from sending a delegate. We expressed the hope that communications would improve and pave the way to a sister church relationship. We also gave the PCK some information about our churches, as requested by them. In a separate letter to the General Assembly we extended to them our best wishes and stressed the matter of communication once again.
- b. On Feb. 1990, the Korean deputies informed us that they were considering the possibility of establishing fraternal relations with us. We replied on March 5, 1990, and pointed out that our next Synod would not be meeting until the fall of 1992.
- c. On March 27, 1990, the Korean deputies told us that they had received two copies of the Acts of General Synod 1989 and requested our prayers for their churches.
- d. On April 17, 1990, the Korean deputies wrote us that they had decided to recommend to their General Assembly that sister relations be established with us.
- e. On June 27, 1990, the Korean deputies again asked us to send a delegate, this time to the 40th General Assembly meeting in Taegu, Korea from Sept. 17 - 21, 1990. We replied with a letter on July 13, 1990 reiterating that we would not be in a position to send a delegate seeing that Synod had not yet given us instruction in the matter of a mutual relationship. Nevertheless, we extended to them our hope that the Lord would see fit to bless their Assembly.
- f. On Oct. 10, 1990, the Korean deputies sent us an English summary of some of the highlights of their 40th General Assembly. This summary includes the following:
 - the decision to appoint a full-time General Secretary for the PCK;
 - a proposal to enlarge the Seoul seminary is being studied;
 - because the Korean version of the Apostles' Creed did not include the phrase "descended into hell," it was decided that the Theological Committee should study this matter;
 - financial support by the churches was set at \$230,000 U.S. for the Seminary and \$107,000 US for the College;
 - as a first stage of missionary outreach to China it was decided to provide

- training for laymen leaders among the Koreans in China when they visit Korea;
- the youth ministry department of the Church (Students for Christ) already has quite a few staff workers, but it was decided at the Assembly that every Presbytery should appoint full-time staff workers for ministry in high schools and university campuses in their Presbytery and be responsible for their full support.
 - the 40th General Assembly also decided to establish “brother and sister relations” with the Canadian Reformed Churches.
- g. Another letter dated Oct.10, 1990, was also received from Korea in which the deputies thanked us for our letter of best wishes and stressed that their General Assembly had decided to establish “brother and sister church relations” with us. In addition, they suggest that we formulate an agreement in English that can be signed at the appropriate time.
 - h. On Nov. 15, 1990, we received a beautiful booklet in English from the PCK providing us with information on their history, organizational principles and standards, constituency, institutions, home and foreign missions, church education, literature activities and cooperation with other church bodies. Seeing that we have only one copy of this booklet, we shall send it to Synod Lincoln to peruse.
 - i. In Dec. 1990, we received another beautiful publication. This time it was a Christmas card from the Seminary wishing us the best of the season and informing us that their enrollment had increased to 382 students.
 - j. In July 3, 1991, the Korean deputies wrote us and invited us to send a delegate to their 41st General Assembly meeting in Pusan from Sept. 23 - 27, 1991. We replied once again that we were waiting for Synod 1992 and wished them God’s blessing over their Assembly.
 - k. In Dec. 1991, we received another Christmas card from the Seminary in Pusan. For the academic year 1991 348 students had enrolled.
 - l. In April 1992, we received a letter from the Korean deputies, dated: March 30, 1992, informing us about the major decisions of the 1991 General Assembly of the PCK. These decisions deal with such matters as: the addition of a presbytery; the appointment of study committees on divorce and remarriage, the baptism of the Holy Spirit; placing mission societies under the guidance of the General Assembly; purchasing a seminary site in the middle of Korea; financial support to 47 PCK ministers serving as army chaplains; accepting the modernization of the language and structure of the constitution of the church.

3. Considerations

- a. In light of the above, it is clear that the communications problem with the PCK has been resolved, thanks for a large part to the good offices and efforts of Dr. Ho Jin Jun, Chairman of the Fraternal Relations Committee.
- b. The matter of communication was cited by Synod 1989 as an obstacle to offering the PCK a sister church relationship.
- c. The PCK decided at their 40th General Assembly to enter into a sister church relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches.

4. Recommendations

- a. To offer the Presbyterian Church in Korea a sister church relationship called “Ecclesiastical Fellowship” and to do so under the rules adopted by Synod 1992.
- b. To recommend that Synod call on Prof. Dr. N.H. Gootjes, Professor of Dogmatology at the Theological College, if Synod wishes to have more infor-

mation on the PCK. Prof Gootjes served for more than ten years as a professor at the PCK Seminary in Pusan, Korea.

- c. Upon recognition of the Presbyterian Church in Korea, seeing the many requests received from the PCK and their stated desire to formalize the relationship in a solemn ceremony at the appropriate time, Synod decide that the next General Assembly of the PCK be visited by two delegates, to wit Dr.N.H. Gootjes, former professor at Pusan, and Dr.J. Visscher, convener-secretary of the Committee.

VIII. THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND (FCS)

1. Context

General Synod 1986 mandated our Committee to take up contact with the Free Church of Scotland and General Synod 1989 continued this charge. In an attempt to fulfill this mandate our Committee has had contact with the FCS through its delegates to the ICRC at Langley, B.C. from June 19 - 28, 1990. In addition your Committee instructed the Revs. Cl. Stam and J. Visscher to visit the FCS in connection with their trip to the Netherlands. This visit to Scotland took place from Sept. 13 -18, 1990. For a report of that visit we refer you to our article in *Clarion* of Jan. 18, 1991, which contains our report of this visit. It has been appended to this Report.

2. Correspondence

- a. In Sept. 1989 we received the Acts of the General Assembly held in May 1989.
- b. In Sept. 1990 we received the Acts of the General Assembly held in May 1990.
- c. In Sept. 1991 we received the Acts of the General Assembly held in May 1991.
- d. On Feb. 6, 1990 the Immanuel Canadian Reformed Church of Edmonton informed us that the FCS had a congregation (actually it was an unofficial group) in Edmonton and asked our advice in taking up contact with it. We replied on June 18, 1990, that we had no objection to their taking up contact with this group. Since then no further details have reached us.
- e. On Feb. 5, 1991, the Committee on Ecumenical Relations of the FCS sent us a letter requesting a copy of our regulations for inter-church relations, as well as "some account of the discussions between your Church and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A., with particular reference to points of difference and divergence that emerged."
- f. On March 4, 1991, we sent to the Scottish deputies a copy of our present Rules for Correspondence, a copy of our proposed rules to Synod 1992 (see Section XIII of this Report), and a copy of the Report of our Committee for Contact with the OPC, dated October 13th, 1978. The last item had been referred to in the discussions held in Edinburgh between our Committee members and theirs. It also represents the most thorough statement to date on the nature of the "divergencies" between the CRC and the OPC.
- g. The Acts of the 1991 General Assembly include the following statements:
"Dr. J. Visscher and Rev. Cl. Stam met with representatives of the Committee and others both in Edinburgh and in Glasgow. Correspondence continues so as to clarify the conditions on which closer relations can be achieved. The Canadian Reformed Churches have adopted a code of regulations with regard to what they term sister-Church relations. Inter-Church relations have not been so strictly defined and regulated on our side. Negotiations continue...
"The General Assembly are encouraged to learn of continuing fraternal relations with Churches abroad. They await the outcome of discussions with Churches in the Dutch tradition desirous of securing sister-Church rela-

tions. They charge the Committee to report progress on these matters to next General Assembly.” (p.4, 5)

- h. On Feb. 6, 1992, the Scottish deputies wrote and assured us that the matter of inter-church relations continued to have their attention and that proposals were being formulated to the next General Assembly in May 1992 and that these proposals would also be sent to us.
- i. On May 27, 1992, the deputies informed us that the General Assembly had accepted the recommendation of its Committee in the matter of inter-church relations. The Assembly’s decision on “Fraternal Relations Between Churches” reads, in part, as follows:

“There should be one simple rule to the following effect.

Fraternal Relations should exist between Churches that openly and practically profess the true faith of Christ as summarised in one or more of the classical Reformed symbols – ie the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgian Confession, the Canons of the Synod of Dort.”

Thereafter the Assembly proceeded to state the “duties and courtesies” (or rules) that are to govern these relations. (For a complete copy of the decision, see the appendices)

3. Considerations

- a. Your Committee has studied the history, background, doctrinal standards and their maintenance, church government and practice of the FCS. We have done so by acquainting ourselves with their history (see our Report to Synod 1986). We have done so by reading and studying the Acts of the General Assembly 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991. We have taken note of an extensive report of the Dutch deputies sent to Synod Heemse 1984 and found in the Acts 1984, pp.57-69, of a report made by the Australian deputies who visited Scotland and reported to Synod Armadale 1989 (see Acts 1989 Winnipeg, pp.159-166), of a report made by Prof. Dr. K. Deddens who visited Scotland in June of 1987 and which can be found in the Acts 1989 (Appendix I A, pp.155-159). Two members of our Committee, as well as Prof. Dr.J. Faber, visited Edinburgh in 1985 in conjunction with the first ICRC and experienced church life firsthand, as well as meeting and conversing with many members of the FCS. Finally, in 1990 two members of our Committee visited the FCS again and were confirmed and established in our earlier impressions and evaluation. The sum total of all of these reports and visits indicates that in the FCS we have to do with a faithful Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- b. The fact that our sister churches in Australia and the Netherlands have come to the same conclusion supports the assessment of your Committee.
- c. A relationship with the Free Church of Scotland will also have a bearing on our relations with the four Free Church congregations in Canada, namely one in Toronto and three in Prince Edward Island; and may prove to be a mutual blessing.
- d. The view that the only proper approach to FCS congregations in Canada is to demand that a merger take place as a condition for recognition, does not do full justice to the historic roots and ecclesiastical practices of our respective churches. While unity in faith and practice should be an aim that is continually kept in view and worked toward, there must also be an awareness that this will come about only as the result of growing understanding, patient dealing, increased familiarity, and constant prayer.
- e. Your Committee has studied the decision made by the 1992 General Assembly on the matter of inter-church relations and is pleased to inform Synod that after some years of contact on this matter our discussions have borne

fruit. Until now the Free Church has always exercised its relations with other churches in a less structured manner, but it has become convinced that its relations require a more defined character.

It should be noted that although the Assembly speaks of “fraternal relations,” this designation is not to be confused with what is commonly called “fraternal relations” on the North American continent. Among certain Presbyterian churches in North America “fraternal relations” commonly indicates only a statement of mutual recognition and the exchange of fraternal delegates. What the FCS has adopted is similar to our Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship (or correspondence) in that it includes rules relating to mutual helpfulness and confessional watchfulness, exchange of attestations, pulpit access, visiting delegates to major assemblies, and the exchange of Acts.

4. Recommendations

- a. To offer to the Free Church of Scotland a sister church relationship called “Ecclesiastical Fellowship” and to do so under the rules adopted by Synod 1992.
- b. To recommend to the churches of Classis Ontario-North that the Free Church congregations in Toronto and PEI be invited to attend Classis in an advisory capacity.

IX THE REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES (RCUS)

1. Context

In March of 1987 your Committee learned that the Dutch deputies had taken up contact with the RCUS. They sent us copies of the pertinent correspondence and a copy of the minutes of a meeting they had with the Rev. Robert Grossman of the RCUS. We passed on copies of this information to the church at Carman because we were informed that they had some contact with a few RCUS congregations in the Dakotas. Further developments in this matter can be deciphered from the correspondence cited below.

2. Correspondence

- a. The church at Carman sent us a letter on Feb. 15, 1989, and enclosed reports of two visits on Oct. 28, 1987, and Oct. 20, 1988. With respect to the first visit the Rev. P.K.A. de Boer and Br. H. Veenendaal visited the RCUS in Minot, North Dakota and met with Rev. G. Syms, minister of Minot, and Rev. R. Bass, minister of the RCUS at Upham. With respect to the second visit the Rev. G. Syms visited the Consistory of the church at Carman, Manitoba.
- b. The church at Carman sent us a letter on Oct. 9, 1989, suggesting that the Dutch deputies be informed of their contacts with the RCUS and that the Dutch deputies keep the church of Carman informed of their contact with the RCUS. We also received a copy of a report of a visit made from Sept. 27 - 29, 1989, by Rev. P.K.A. de Boer and Elder H. Veenendaal to RCUS congregations in Upham and Hosmer.
- c. Your Committee sent a letter to the church at Carman, dated June 18, 1990, in which we informed the consistory of the fact that the Dutch sister churches had decided to enter into a sister church relationship with the RCUS. We added that two members of our Committee were going to the Netherlands and would discuss the Dutch decision in detail. We also stated that our Committee, while being appreciative of the efforts and reports received from the church at Carman, was of the opinion that in light of the contents of these reports and the action of our Dutch sister churches the time had come to approach Synod Lincoln 1992 in order to ask for a mandate to com-

mence official synodical contact with the RCUS.

- d. On Sept. 7, 1990, the church at Carman sent us a letter in which they disagreed with our decision to ask Synod Lincoln 1992 for a mandate to take up contact with the RCUS with a view to establishing a sister church relationship.
- e. On Nov. 30, 1990, our Committee responded to the Sept. 7, 1990, letter of the church at Carman and re-affirmed its decision to bring this matter to the attention of General Synod Lincoln 1992. (We have appended copies of these letters.)
- f. On Jan. 11, 1991, the Interchurch Relations Committee of the RCUS invited us to send an observer to the 1991 Synod that was scheduled to meet in Garner, Iowa, from April 2 - 5, 1991.
- g. On March 4, 1991, we sent a letter to the RCUS deputies and informed them that we had no mandate from General Synod 1989 to accept their invitation but would refer this matter to the forthcoming Synod 1992.
- h. On July 23, 1991, we received a letter from the RCUS deputies informing us that Synod 1991 of the RCUS would like to establish fraternal relations with our churches and will be sending an observer to Synod Lincoln 1992. The letter was accompanied by various documents: The Constitution of the RCUS, a brochure entitled "The Reformed Church in the United States" and a copy of the 1991 Abstract of the Minutes of the 245th Synod.
- i. On February 6, 1992, the Convener of our Committee, Dr. J. Visscher received a phone call from the Rev. J. Merica, Chairman of the Interchurch Relations Committee of the RCUS, inviting us to send an observer to the forthcoming RCUS Synod in Minot, South Dakota, scheduled to meet from April 20 - 23, 1992. Once again we had to decline the invitation because it is not part of our mandate.
- j. On March 16, 1992, the Interchurch Relations Committee of the RCUS invited us to send an observer to the 246th Annual Synodical meeting to be convened on April 20, 1992. We informed them, as always, that we were unable to do so seeing that we lack a synodical mandate. They also asked for a letter of recommendation from us to accompany their application to join the ICRC. We informed them that such a letter was not needed seeing that Art.IV of the ICRC Constitution applies to them and not Art.VII, 1, e, of the Regulations.

3. Considerations

- a. As a result of the above-mentioned requests and developments, your Committee has come to the conclusion that serious consideration must be given by Synod 1992 to the matter of initiating contact with the RCUS.
- b. The church at Carman is of the opinion that such a step is premature (see correspondence). Although they have many positive things to say about the RCUS, they believe that further local discussions are necessary.
- c. Your Committee is of the opinion that the approach of the church at Carman operates on the premise that the RCUS is not a foreign church but a local church. As a result they feel that a sister church relationship is not sufficient but that full ecclesiastical unity has to be the aim (see their letter dated Sept.7, 1990).

For our part, we believe that the RCUS is not a local church but a federation of foreign churches. The facts that the brothers in Carman have to cross the border into the U.S.A. and travel a considerable distance to visit a RCUS congregation and that none of our American congregations live in close proximity with any RCUS congregation confirms this.

- d. Your Committee has supported the efforts of the church at Carman but is of the opinion that after initial contacts and evaluations have been made at the local level, it is time to present the request of the RCUS to the General Synod.
- e. Your Committee has also taken note of an article published by the Rev. P.K.A.

de Boer in *Clarion* (January 4, 1991) entitled “Contact with the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS).” It has also taken note of another article by Rev. R. Grossman of the RCUS entitled “The RCUS, a View from the Inside” (see *Clarion*, May 10, 1991). This exchange of articles shows that at a number of points the evaluation of the RCUS is disputed. This supports our view that the time has come to refer this matter to Synod.

4. Recommendation

Your Committee recommends that Synod 1992 respond to the requests of the Reformed Church in the United States for an official relationship by mandating the Committee on Relations With Churches Abroad (CRCA) to investigate the RCUS with a view to entering into a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with it and to report its findings to the next General Synod.

X. THE REFORMED CHURCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA (RCSA)

1. Context

On July 25, 1991, the Reformed Churches in South Africa [RCSA, also called Die Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika (GKSA)] sent us a letter in which they stated that it had come to their attention that a relationship of church unity (correspondence) existed between ourselves and the Presbyterian Church in Korea, a church with which they currently have correspondence. They requested that we inform them of our confessional basis and church government in order that they might make a recommendation to their next synod about a relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches.

For their part they state that they hold to the Three Forms of Unity, have a system of church government based on the Church Order of Dordt. In addition, they mention that as of 1988 they have suspended their membership in the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC, formerly RES) due to the unscriptural approaches regarding the authority of Scripture and homosexuality that is accepted in the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (GKN, also commonly referred to among us as the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands – synodical), a member of the REC.

We wrote them back in February, 1992, and informed them that as yet no official relationship of correspondence (or ecclesiastical fellowship) existed between ourselves and the Presbyterian Church in Korea but that such a relationship was being proposed by our Committee to Synod Lincoln 1992. In light of these developments and as a common courtesy, we decided to send them information about the Canadian Reformed Churches and took note of the information that they had sent to us.

2. Considerations

- a. Should General Synod Lincoln 1992 decide to recognize the Presbyterian Church in Korea as a sister church in ecclesiastical fellowship with the Canadian Reformed Churches, we shall have to address the matter of our relationship with the Reformed Churches in South Africa (RCSA).
- b. The results of any and all contact with the RCSA will have to take into account that we currently have sister church relations with the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa (FRCSA). This means that we shall have to consult the FRCSA and work in concert with them. We note from the Acts of Synod Capetown 1990 of the FRCSA and from various published sources that the relationship between the FRCSA and the RCSA is a matter of ongoing study and consideration.

3. Recommendation

Your Committee recommends to Synod that if General Synod 1992 decides to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with the Presbyterian Church in Korea, a study should be undertaken of the Reformed Churches in South Africa and the results forwarded to the next General Synod.

XI. THE REFORMED CHURCH IN ZAIRE (RCZ)

1. Context

For some time already our sister churches in the Netherlands have been involved in Zaire. This involvement began, as far as we know, through the activities of *De Verre Naasten* (Distant Neighbours), an organization that extends social and economic aid to believers in foreign countries. As the result of these contacts and a study done by the Dutch deputies, Synod Leeuwarden 1990 decided to offer the Reformed Church of Zaire a sister church relationship and pledged to give considerable financial support to this church.

2. Correspondence

- a. On June 27, 1991, a letter was sent to us by the Rev. Kazadi Lukonda Ngube-Ngube, Moderator and Legal Representative of the Reformed Church in Zaire (RCZ), asking us to establish a sister church relationship with the RCZ. He informed us that the RCZ has the Three Forms of Unity as their confessional basis. It currently has 70 congregations in various parts of Zaire. He also gave us information about the great need that exists in his churches for ecclesiastical and financial assistance.
- b. On Jan.7, 1992, we received another letter from the Rev. Kazadi Lukonda Ngube-Ngube asking about our reaction to their letter of June 27, 1991, and pleaded with us to help them in various projects and to send them missionaries.
- c. In February of 1992 we responded to their letters informing them that we could not deal with their request for a sister church relationship but would bring it to the attention of General Synod Lincoln 1992 and that we had passed on their request for financial and economic aid to the Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund.

3. Considerations

- a. In light of the request of the RCZ for a sister church relationship, it is only proper that their overture to the Canadian Reformed Churches be weighed carefully and responded to after due study.
- b. In light of their urgent request and the great need in this African church, it behooves the Canadian Reformed Churches as churches of our Lord Jesus Christ to be sensitive to their entreaties and to deal with their request in as speedy and charitable a manner as possible.
- c. In light of their plea for missionary assistance, the churches should be informed and communications exchanged with our Dutch sister churches as to how this plea can best be answered.
- d. The fact that the RCUS is in a sister church relationship with the Reformed Church in Zaire and is assisting the RCZ, underlines the need for Synod to address the matter of our relationship with the RCUS.

4. Recommendations

Your Committee recommends that General Synod 1992 mandate it to take up contact with the Reformed Church in Zaire with a view to establishing a sister church relationship with the RCZ.

XII. THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES (ICRC)

1. Context

The Canadian Reformed Churches are one of the founding members of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC). Delegates were sent to the Constituent Assembly which met in Groningen, the Netherlands, from Oct. 26 - Nov. 4, 1982, to the first official meeting of the ICRC in Edinburgh, Scotland, from Sept. 3 - 13, 1985, and to the second official meeting held in Langley, B.C., Canada, from June 19 - 28, 1989. The third official meeting, which was to take place in Seoul, Korea, has been shifted to Zwolle, the Netherlands, and is tentatively scheduled to meet there from Aug. 31 - Sept. 10, 1993.

2. Correspondence

- a. On December 3, 1990, the Secretary of the ICRC, the Rev. M. van Beveren, sent us a letter in which he asked for information in order to compile a Directory for ICRC member churches. Information was forwarded.
- b. On Feb. 1, 1991, the Secretary sent us an updated address list of member churches.
- c. On May 1, 1991, the Secretary sent us a Newsletter informing us that the 1993 Conference will have as theme: Issues Facing the Church Today. Among the topics mentioned but not yet finalized were marriage and divorce, preaching, theonomy, prophecy today, women in office. The newsletter mentioned that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has applied for membership in the ICRC. Several changes were made in the Committee on Theological Affirmation which now consists of Prof. Dr. J. Faber (convener), Prof. Dr. N.H. Gootjes, Prof. F.S. Leahy, Prof. D. Macleod. The Committee of Missions includes Rev. W. Boessenkool, Prof. A.C. Boyd, Prof. Dr. K. Deddens, Prof. C.J. Haak (convener), Prof. Dr. Ho Jin Jun, and Rev. W.D.J. McKay. Member churches were also reminded that amendments to the Constitution should be sent to the Secretary two years before the meeting of the Conference.
- d. On Nov. 8, 1991, the Secretary sent us another Newsletter in which he informed us that the 1993 meeting of the Conference could not be held in Seoul, Korea. It appears that the PCK could not obtain permission from the Korean government to build a new seminary in Seoul. This leaves them without suitable facilities to house the Conference. The consequence is that the alternate host, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, has been called upon and found willing to host the next meeting of the Conference in September of 1993.
- e. In January of 1992, we received a Directory of the ICRC from the Secretary giving us pertinent information (confessional basis, history, government, statistics, theological training, mission work, interchurch relations, publications, etc.) about the member churches.

3. The Second Meeting of the ICRC in Langley, B.C.

- a. The Second Meeting of the Conference took place in the Canadian Reformed Church at Langley, B.C. from June 19 - 28, 1989.
- b. For details of the meeting we refer you to *The Proceedings of the International Conference of Reformed Churches*, June 19 - 28, 1989.
- c. The delegates of the Canadian Reformed Churches to the meeting were the Revs. Cl. Stam and J. Visscher, with Prof. Dr. J. Faber and Prof. Dr. C. Van Dam as advisors. That there was good Canadian Reformed involvement is evident from the fact that Dr. J. Visscher was chosen to act as Chairman, the Rev. M. van Beveren acted as Corresponding Secretary, br. H.A. Berends was re-appointed as Treasurer, speeches were delivered by Prof. Dr. K. Deddens, Prof. Dr. C. Van Dam, and Dr. J. Visscher. Rev. Cl. Stam was chosen

as substitute for the Corresponding Secretary, Prof. Dr. K. Deddens was appointed to the Committee on Missions, Prof. Dr. J. Faber was appointed as Convener of the Committee on Theological Affirmation, and Prof. Dr. N.H. Gootjes was later added to this Committee as well.

- d. The delegates from the Canadian Reformed Churches were mandated to propose that certain changes be made to the Constitution and By-Laws of the ICRC. These changes pertain to the fact that Synod 1986 wanted to have a stipulation in the Basis saying that delegates subscribe only to the standards of their particular churches, that membership in the RES is an impediment to membership in the ICRC and that the article dealing with the advisory character of conclusions of the Conference be amended.
- e. With regard to amending the Basis of the Constitution, the meeting decided not to accept such an amendment. The Canadian delegates who proposed it had the support of the Australian delegates from the FRCA but not of our sister church delegates from the Netherlands or South Africa, nor from the other delegations.

The reason for this was that the other delegations were of the opinion that such a stipulation was unnecessary, since it should be commonly understood that the relationship of member churches and their delegates to the Basis is not one of subscribing in the sense of a formal act of subscription, but one of subscribing in the sense of recognition. In other words, in accepting the Basis we recognize that the Confessions mentioned there are Reformed in character and should function as the doctrinal underpinnings of the ICRC. That certain member churches may have difficulties with the way in which some points of doctrine in these confessions are expressed is granted, but such difficulties are not deemed to be of such a nature that recognition and cooperation are impossible.

The *Proceedings* on pp. 30 -31, and elsewhere, indicate that the delegates were by and large convinced that our proposal rested on a misunderstanding and that it would be bad precedent to legislate because of a misunderstanding. The point was repeatedly made that “ ‘Subscription’ is what is required of officebearers by their own churches” (p.30).

In connection with this it should be mentioned that the delegates from our sister church, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, had originally proposed that the delegates express their agreement with the Basis by rising. Since the Dutch sister churches follow this practice at their General Synods and thereby re-affirm their official subscription to the Confessions, it was felt that such an action at the meeting of the Conference would convey the wrong impression and send a message that delegates were acting like delegates to a major assembly instead of to a conference. It also would once again confuse the distinction between recognition of the Basis and subscription to the Basis. As a result, the Dutch delegates withdrew their amendment. (see *Proceedings*, p. 11)

One final observation should be made on this matter and that is that it is actually impossible to regard the Basis as being a matter of formal subscription because of the fact that all of the conclusions of the Conference are advisory in character. No one can be confessionally bound to an advisory body such as the ICRC and no delegate or member church can be bound to conclusions that are advisory in nature.

- f. With regard to amending the Constitution to declare that membership in the Reformed Ecumenical Council [REC, formerly the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (RES)], the meeting decided not to adopt such a change. The Canadian delegates had the support only of the FRCA delegates. Once again the *Proceedings* (pp.14, 15) shed light on the decision. A majority of the delegates were of the opinion that an amendment such as this was

both unnecessary and unmanageable. It was considered unnecessary because the Constitution already states that churches applying for membership shall not be “members of the World Council of Churches or any other organization whose aims and practices are deemed to be in conflict with the Basis.” (Constitution, Art. IV, 1, d) It was considered unmanageable because of the problems it would create in “drawing up lists of organizations: Where do you stop? Whom do you include? How often do you update” (*Proceedings*, p.15).

- g. With regard to amending Article V of the Constitution dealing with the nature of Conference conclusions, it was adopted unanimously. In this connection, amendments proposed by the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, the Free Church of Scotland and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands were adopted (see *Proceedings*, pp.15 - 17)
- h. It should also be reported that throughout your delegates functioned together in good harmony. The only difference of opinion that emerged had to do with whether the meeting should appoint a Committee for Theological Affirmation to deal with a request from the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia. This member church had encountered differences with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia and was in favour of having the ICRC develop “an agreed statement as to what constitutes a ‘true church’ and the consequences of such for intercommunion, etc.” (see *Proceedings*, p.53)
One of your delegates was of the opinion that an agreed statement was unnecessary seeing that the Belgic Confession already defines what is a true church. The other delegate was of the opinion that although this may be true, it might be beneficial to have the implications of this worked out in so far as they touch on intercommunion and other areas of difference.
In light of our disagreement, we decided that the best course of action was to abstain from voting on the matter. The Conference discussed the matter further and decided to appoint such a Committee and give it a mandate. For your information, both Profs. Faber and Gootjes are on this Committee.
- i. On a different note, it may be reported that this meeting of the Conference was blessed with many visitors and that members of the Canadian Reformed Churches in the Fraser Valley and beyond were frequently in attendance. In particular the members of the Canadian Reformed Church at Langley were delighted to be able to host the meeting and have since then often expressed the desire to do so again. Their warm hospitality to the delegates and their enthusiastic support deserve to be mentioned.
- j. After the meeting of the Conference there has been some polemics in the press about the ICRC: how it came into existence, the involvement of the Canadian Reformed Churches, the relationship of member churches to the Basis, etc.

4. Considerations

- a. Although not all of our amendments to the Constitution were adopted, the discussions at the meeting of the Conference indicate that our concerns have been aired, debated and understood. The discussions as reported in the *Proceedings* also indicate that further clarification on these points has been forthcoming. The result is that the integrity of our churches is not jeopardized by our being a member of the Conference.
- b. The fact that membership in the Conference is voluntary and that its conclusions are advisory means that the Conference does not undermine our subscription to the Three Forms of Unity. Mutual recognition does not mean the same as official subscription.
- c. Our membership in the ICRC has up till now been subject to a process of on-going review and this policy should be continued. Our participation in

- the Conference should be one of full cooperation and continued evaluation.
- d. The fear that some have voiced that the ICRC will become a super-Synod has not proven to be real. The meetings and the functioning of the ICRC thus far have shown that, as its name suggests, it really is a **Conference** of Reformed Churches. It is a forum in which faithful churches of our Lord from around the world can meet together and discuss matters of mutual concern and explore ways to assist each other.
 - e. It may be noted that the Churches of our Lord in the Western world (Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, Scotland) have developed a great deal as far as internal organization and structure is concerned, as well as regards institutions and resources. In addition, they have also had centuries of experience when it comes to defining their position on various doctrinal issues. The Churches of our Lord in other parts of the world are often young, in the process of organizing, limited in resources and institutions, as well as struggling with doctrinal issues. This is not to say that they are inferior, for in terms of their commitment and enthusiasm for the faith, they put many long established churches to shame. Recognizing that this kind of situation exists today means that the churches who have received so much also have a responsibility to share their wealth, experience and manpower. The ICRC creates a forum that can serve to facilitate such sharing and so promote good stewardship among the churches.

5. Recommendations

Your Committee recommends that the Canadian Reformed Churches continue to participate in the ICRC and that it report to the next General Synod, giving a report and evaluation of the Conference to the next General Synod.

Your Committee recommends that the Canadian Reformed Churches be represented at the next meeting of the Conference scheduled to take place in Zwolle, the Netherlands during the month of September 1993.

It recommends that the Revs. C. Stam and J. Visscher be sent as voting delegates and that Prof. Dr. N.H. Gootjes be appointed as advisor (Prof Dr. J. Faber will be there as Convener of the Committee on Theological Affirmation; Rev. M. van Beveren will be there as Secretary of the ICRC.)

XIII. RULES FOR ECCLESIASTICAL FELLOWSHIP

The Acts of previous Synods, as well as the past reports of this Committee, indicate that the matter of the Rules for Correspondence have been the subject of a long and extensive discussion. Many letters have been exchanged by the sister churches on this topic. The Convener of our Committee, Dr.J. Visscher, has introduced this subject twice at different meetings of the ICRC and considerable discussion followed. The members of our Committee who visited the Netherlands and Scotland in 1990 dealt with it in both places.

The result of all of this attention is that as Committee we have come to a certain conclusion on the matter. To explain this conclusion, it is necessary first to take note of our present rules. (They can be found on the opening pages of this Report.) It is also necessary to consider the latest rules adopted by the Synod of Leeuwarden of our Dutch sister churches.(They can be found in the appendix under the report of the visit with the Dutch deputies on Sept.20, 1990.)

One other factor comes into play in this matter and that has to do with the order and the character of our first rule. At the last meeting of the ICRC, a number of delegates and advisors from members churches criticized the negative character of our first rule. Prof. Dr.J. van Bruggen of the Netherlands in particular went on record as stating that this rule as presently stated is too one-sided and needed to be balanced out. The Deputies of the Free Church of Scotland agreed with

this criticism and informed us in their letter of March 11, 1992, commenting on our rules, that “the order of rules – the priority given to watching out for aberrations – suggests an inquisitorial and judgmental attitude. This may not be intended but it is, unfortunately, quite patent.” In their newly adopted rules they have made a concerted attempt to avoid such an approach.

Your Committee has taken these concerns into account and proposes a re-structuring of our first rule in such a way that the duty to watchfulness is augmented by the duty to render assistance.

We would propose that Synod adopt the following new rules for the exercise of our inter-church relations. On the whole they remain basically an adaptation of the Dutch rules. They read as follows:

1. The churches shall as much as possible assist each other in the maintenance, defence and promotion of the Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline, and liturgy.
2. The churches shall inform each other of the decisions taken by their broadest assemblies, if possible by sending each other their Acts or Minutes and otherwise, at least by sending the decisions relevant to the respective churches (if possible, in translation).
3. The churches shall inform each other when entering into relations with third parties.
4. The churches shall accept one another's attestations or certificates of good standing, which also means admitting members of the respective churches to the sacraments upon presentation of that attestation or certificate.
5. The churches shall in principle open their pulpits for each other's ministers in agreement with the rules adopted in the respective churches.

In exercising these relations, the churches shall strive to implement also the following:

6. When major changes or additions are being considered to the confessions, church government or liturgy, the churches shall be informed in order that as much consultation can take place as possible before a final decision is taken.
7. The churches shall receive each other's delegates at their broadest assemblies and invite them to participate as much as local regulations permit.

1. Comment:

- a. A comparison of our present Rules with these proposed Rules shows that no radical overhaul is being proposed. All of the main components of our present Rules have been retained. What has happened is that the proposed Rules represent a streamlined, more flexible and balanced approach, complete with additional qualifications.

As such we propose in Rule 1 to replace “deviate” with “assist...in the maintenance, defence and promotion” and to add the qualifier “as much as possible” seeing that it is not possible to have the same amount of understanding when it comes to all of the affairs of our different sister churches.

Rule 2 creates more flexibility, especially when it comes to sister churches who have a different language than ourselves.

Rule 3 is a revision of present Rule e. For some time already our Committee has noted that the words “to give account to each other” are both a poor translation of the original Dutch, as well as intrusive when it comes to the affairs of our sister churches. Who are we to call them to give account to us? Does that not give the impression that we are lording it over them? Hence we propose that this rule be changed to read as it does.

It should be understood that when either our churches in the past, or our

sister churches have entered into a relationship with a third party, it was never a matter of giving account, but rather a matter of mutual consultation. Rule 4 has been reworded in recognition of the fact that some sister churches issue certificates instead of attestations.

Rule 5 is a re-working of part of present Rule d and tries to make clear that all a synod can do is open the pulpits in principle and that the actual opening is a matter of an invitation by a local church. In addition, it takes into account that not all churches have the same policy when it comes to the pulpit.

Rule 6 is basically a revision of present Rule c. The present Rule c has quite a history behind it. For years our Committee and also various Synods too were convinced that we had never agreed to prior consultation when it came to proposed confessional, liturgical or polity changes but that we would only express a judgment on these changes once they had been made. However, Acts 1968, Art. 79, indicate that we committed ourselves to the principle of prior consultation. This fact is now expressed in this proposed Rule in a streamlined format.

Rule 7 re-states a part of present Rule b and adds the qualifier “to participate as much as local regulations permit.” Thereby it recognizes the fact that different sister churches have different regulations when it comes to dealing with delegates from sister churches.

- b. In connection with these proposed changes it might also be beneficial to draw your attention to the Acts 1980, Art. 154, D. 2 which concludes about the Rules for Correspondence that “these rules can be applied realistically according to the circumstances, like the lesser or greater degree of difference between the churches.”
- c. Seeing that our proposed Rules are largely derived from the Dutch churches but represent an adaptation of them, we have sent a copy of them to the Dutch deputies on March 4, 1991, and asked for a response. Thus far none has been received. In this connection it would be beneficial if all of our current sister churches would consider them and possibly adopt them. In that way unity of practice would prevail, as also our past Synods have requested.

2. Recommendations

Your Committee recommends that General Synod 1992 adopt the proposed Rules and officially call them “Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship.”

Furthermore, it recommends that these Rules be presented to the sister churches as the basis for our ongoing relationships, as well as offered to the Presbyterian Church in Korea and the Free Church of Scotland.

Finally, your Committee recommends that the next General Synod be informed of the reactions, if any, from the sister churches.

XIV. THE MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

1. Context

Your Committee has received numerous requests during the past three years from the Presbyterian Church in Korea, the Reformed Church in the United States, the Reformed Church in Zaire, the Reformed Churches in South Africa, National Association of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches (NAPARC), to commence contact with a view to possibly establishing relations with our churches. Your Committee has also received invitations to attend the Assemblies or Synod or Sessions of these churches and organization.

In every case we have had to refuse and state that we were compelled by our present mandate to ask the next Synod for advice and a new mandate to cover our contact with that particular church.

2. Considerations

- a. The Committee could not act upon a growing number of requests over the past years because of the absence of a specific mandate.
- b. The practice of referring these matters to Synod is only proper. The fact that General Synod meets once every three years, however, means that considerable delays are being encountered in pursuing our contacts with other churches.
- c. The ecumenical calling which our churches have, may better be carried out if the Committee receives a mandate to respond to the various requests received, as well as to the invitations extended, if feasible, and report its findings to the next General Synod.
- d. The mandate to respond to requests made to us by other churches is not nearly as far-ranging as that which our Dutch sister churches have given to their Committee, which is to charge the deputies to seek and initiate contact with other churches. Our aim is not to seek or to initiate contacts, but only to be able to respond to overtures.

3. Recommendations

Your Committee recommends that General Synod Lincoln 1992 give our Committee the mandate

- a. to investigate diligently all requests received for entering into a sister church relationship;
- b. to respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests made to attend Assemblies, Synods or meetings of other churches;
- c. to report on its findings, with suitable recommendations, to the next General Synod.

XV. OTHER REMAINING MATTERS

- a. It has come to our attention that General Synod 1989 decided not to renew the appointment of the brs. E.C. Baartman, A.C. Lengkeek and the Rev.M. van Beveren. We have no quarrel with that, seeing that all synodical appointees serve at the discretion of Synod. We wish to bring to your attention, however, that it appears to be a synodical practice not to inform those brothers of their release, nor to thank them for their efforts on behalf of General Synod in particular and the churches in general.
- b. We have been informed that the Reformed Evangelism Taskforce has put the finishing touches on a brochure introducing the Canadian Reformed Churches. We include some samples of it for your perusal, and request your permission to purchase a certain quantity and send them to our sister churches and to churches requesting more information about our churches.

Respectfully submitted by your Committee,
 February 14, 1992
 June 3, 1992

Elder. H.A. Berends
 Elder. A. Nap
 Rev. Cl. Stam
 Dr. J. Vanderstoep
 Rev. M. Vanderwel
 Dr. J. Visscher (convener-secretary)

APPENDIX I

REPORT OF THE VISITS WITH THE DEPUTIES AND MINISTERS OF THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND ON SEPTEMBER 14 AND 17, 1990 IN EDINBURGH AND GLASGOW

The Canadian Deputies, Dr. J. Visscher and Rev. Cl. Stam, met with some of the members of the Free Church of Scotland Committee on Assembly Arrangements and Ecumenical Relations, together with the ministers serving in the Glasgow and Edinburgh area.

On Friday, September 14, 1990, we met in Edinburgh at the premises of the Free Church College. Present for the FCS: Prof. A.C. Boyd, Rev. K.W.R. Cameron (past Moderator 1989-90), Rev. A. Gollan (Moderator 1990-91), Rev. D. Macleod, Elder A. MacDonald, Rev. John J. Murray.

On Monday, Sept. 17, 1990, we met in Glasgow at the premises of the St. Vincent Street Free Church. Present for the FCS: Rev. R.C. Christie (new Editor of *The Monthly Record*), Rev. J. Gillies, Rev. J.J. Harding, Rev. D. Macleod, Rev. R.J. McKay.

In both of these meetings the discussions dealt with the following matters:

Background

The Canadian Deputies were given the opportunity to say something about the history and background of the Canadian Reformed Churches (CRC). Mention was made of our roots in the Netherlands and the struggles that our churches had faced during the last centuries. In this regard special attention was paid to the Liberation of 1942-44 and to its repercussions. The immigration experience was also highlighted and certain aspects of our relatively brief history in North America were related.

With respect to the ecumenical relations of the Canadian Reformed Churches, the Deputies pointed out that until recently our churches had maintained relations only with churches in Australia, the Netherlands and South Africa. All of these churches share the same history, background, creedal standards and church government. They have a common mother and a common origin in terms of continental Europe.

These relationships, however, should not give the impression that the Canadian Reformed Churches have not been busy elsewhere. Mention was made of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) in the United States with whom we have a temporary relationship called "ecclesiastical contact" and with whom discussions are continuing in order to come, if possible, to sister church relations. Mention was also made of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) with whom we have had contact in the past which resulted in some progress but to whom we addressed several appeals when it became clear that they were not willing to sever ties with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN-Synodical) and their liberalizing influences. Finally, we reminded them that our membership in the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) also underlined our true ecumenical commitment.

Relations with the OPC

In light of the fact that the Canadian Reformed Churches have for some years already been busy with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and seeing that it is the only church of Presbyterian persuasion that we have had intense contact with, we decided as Canadian Deputies to bring the members of the FCS up to date on the nature and state of these discussions. In particular we dealt with what have become known as the "divergencies" between the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards, between the polity of Dordt and Westminster.

We fully realize that while there are similarities between the FCS and the OPC, there are also differences that need to be noted and respected. And while it can be argued that we did not have a mandate from Synod 1986 to 1989 to discuss these matters, we were of the opinion that failure to do so may well deprive the FCS of certain needed insights in terms of their evaluation of us and where we stand with respect to their confessions and church government.

They listened sympathetically and requested us to send them copies of the letter which our Contact Committee sent to the OPC. We promised to do so in due time.

It may be worthy of note that one of the Scottish brothers asked, "Why do you speak of us as Presbyterian and yourself as Reformed; whereas, we consider ourselves to be Reformed as well." We were a little taken aback by this question and explained that no offense was intended, but that it had become, rightly or wrongly, a way of speaking and easy identification in our circles. It became clear that the FCS considers itself to be Reformed in doctrine and Presbyterian in polity. (Can the same not be said of us?)

Rules for correspondence

From reading the Reports of the Deputies for Relations With Churches Abroad of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN-Liberated), as well as from their Acts of Synod, we were aware that certain difficulties had arisen around the Rules of Correspondence which the RCN has adopted. Our reading of the Principal ACTS of the 1989 General Assembly of the FCS confirmed this. It states there in the Report of the Committee on Assembly Arrangements and Ecumenical Relations, "It was agreed to inform the Dutch Committee that whilst the Free Church of Scotland were happy with the relationship presently subsisting between the two Churches and offered no objection in principle to most of the rules for sister-relations listed they were not convinced of the necessity or appropriateness of detailed regulations. Nor indeed did they appreciate the distinction between sisterly and brotherly relations which appears somewhat artificial. In general therefore the Free Church feel that the exchange of delegates who bring greetings and are given the courtesy of the floor for that purpose, meets the needs of the case." (R p.5)

As a result of the above, the Canadian Deputies noted that there were some misunderstandings that needed to be removed, as in the case of the distinction between brotherly and sisterly relations. Such a distinction does not exist. At the same time we pointed out there is obviously a difference in the way that certain "Reformed" churches and certain "Presbyterian" churches exercise inter-church relations. The former have adopted a more systematic and formal approach with clearly defined rules and procedures. The latter have taken a less comprehensive and more informal approach which includes very little in the way of set regulations.

We, for our part, read our rules and explained in detail and in practical terms how they function. We also asked them to study these rules and to relay to us their reactions. We added that certain parts are in need of streamlining and clarification and that our Committee would be making recommendations to the next General Synod of the CRC in 1992 along those lines. (This in consultation with our sister churches.)

In the ensuing discussion it became clear that the FCS is not opposed in principle to our rules. Their concerns are of a more practical nature in that they are not used to such an approach as ours and wonder how it really functions. At the same time some reservations have also been expressed in FCS circles about their approach to other churches. Their questions about the Dutch rules should also be viewed from the fact that no common language exists between the Netherlands and Scotland. Of course, it is true that English is a language which is taught in the Netherlands and thus accessible to many; however, the same can not be said of the Dutch language. Members of the FCS can not read Dutch books, periodicals or Acts. Should a sister church relationship come into being it would enable some Dutch ministers to preach in Scotland; however, it is doubtful whether any Scottish minister would be able to preach in the Netherlands. Language is thus an obstacle to a fully functioning relationship. Such a problem, however, does not exist between the CRC and the FCS.

As far as the current relationships which the FCS maintains, they have ties which vary. The Free Church congregations in North America are considered a part of the FCS. Close relations are maintained with "daughter churches" and "mission churches" in Australia, India, Ireland, Peru and South Africa, although without prescribed rules. Whenever a General Assembly meets greetings are sent to and received from various

churches. The following are mentioned in the ACTS of 1989 and 1990: the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk of the Netherlands, the Free Church in Southern Africa, the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands (Liberated), the Gereformeerde Kerk in South Africa, Nederduitse Church of Eastern Australia, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the Reformed Churches in New Zealand, the Reformed Church of Australia. For our part a lot can be read into the above list of churches; however, it appears that the FCS does not do so. In an informal way they recognize these churches as being faithful and see no problems in exchanging greetings with them. More than that is often not involved.

Free Church congregations in Canada

As part of our task, the Canadian Deputies also discussed with the FCS representatives the matter of the FCS congregations in North America. Up until recently there were the following congregations: Vancouver, B.C. (1), Toronto, ON (1), Prince Edward Island (9), Livonia, MI, U.S.A. (1) and a preaching station in Edmonton, AB. With the exception of the Toronto congregation we were informed that most of these churches were very small and their membership was quite elderly. (Since then the Vancouver congregation has dissolved) At present there are FCS ministers in P.E.I. (3) and in Toronto (1). We pointed out to the FCS that should we enter into a sister church relationship with them in the future that this would have a bearing on the relationship in Canada between our local churches and theirs. It was felt that then some form of mutual recognition and cooperation could be worked out and implemented. It was pointed out to the FCS that some in the CRC were of the opinion that a sister church relations calls for an immediate merger between their churches and ours; however, we informed them that this would be a matter for Synod to decide and that as Deputies we would be more in favour of a process whereby the bonds between our respective local churches would grow and mature. One must be realistic enough to realize that it is not an easy matter to bring together immigrant churches from two different cultures and with two different ecclesiastical traditions. This requires careful planning and sensitive implementation.

Preaching

Another matter that came up in our discussions had to do with preaching and access to the pulpit. As Canadian Deputies we pointed out to the FCS brethren that in our Reformed churches there has always been a tradition which says that access to the pulpit depends on the existence of a sister church relationship. The fact that FCS ministers were not invited the preach in the CRC during the time of the last meeting of the ICRC should not be interpreted as a negative verdict on the FCS. It is simply a matter of our abiding by the rules and procedures that we have always had.

The Rev. John Gillies, who was present and had also represented the FCS at the ICRC, stated that such a policy on the part of the CRC was perfectly understandable and should cause no offense. The fact that criticism was voiced about this in *The Monthly Record* should not be interpreted as being the sentiment of the FCS.

As far as the FCS is concerned, pulpit access does not always take place within the context of a formalized relationship. Naturally ministers of "daughter churches" in other parts of the world are readily accepted. As for ministers from other churches, that seems to be more a matter of personal recommendation and invitation. If the FCS comes into contact with a faithful Reformed church and has confidence in the orthodoxy of its ministers, they may well be invited to preach.

On occasion the FCS sessions will also invite ministers who may be serving in churches such as the liberal Church of Scotland or in a Reformed Baptist congregation. In each of those cases the minister will only be invited if he is known to be Reformed in his views, as well as sensitive to the distinctives of the FCS. (As Deputies we later asked a well-known FCS elder what would happen if a Reformed Baptist minister used an FCS

pulpit to attack infant baptism? His answer was a blunt, "He would never be asked again!")

Needless to say this all sounded strange to our ears; however, we were repeatedly assured that only Reformed preaching is tolerated on their pulpits.

The Lord's Supper

With respect to the celebration of the Lord's Supper, the Canadian Deputies were informed about FCS practices. In most local FCS congregations the Lord's Supper is celebrated at least twice a year. This is less frequent than in the CRC; however, it should be understood that when the Supper is celebrated it often involves members from the neighbouring FCS churches. The result is that many members may celebrate it at least six times a year.

The preparations for each local celebration are rather extensive. Preparatory services are often held Thursday, Friday and Saturday evening before the actual celebration which takes place on the Sunday. This is to insure as much as is humanely possible that the members do not eat and drink condemnation to themselves.

As far as admittance to the Lord Supper is concerned, a very strict procedure is followed in the FCS churches. In some places tokens are still being used. (As a matter of fact the custodian of the Free Church College showed us a whole cabinet filled with all sorts of different Lord's Supper tokens.) Every one who is a member of the church in good standing receives from the elders a token which admits him or her to the sacrament. In this way supervision can be carefully exercised.

As for guests at the Lord's table from other churches, that does not seem to happen very often. One must understand that in Scotland there is no large, mobile evangelical community visiting here and there. Most congregations do not see a large influx of visitors, and in terms of the general population the FCS is often mocked, derided and isolated. In short, there is no stipulated policy with respect to visitors, although all are subject to the fencing of the table by means of the series of preparatory services held before the Supper. The primary focus remains on the members of the local church who must show by their confession and walk of life that they can partake in a believing and conscientious manner.

In conclusion

As Canadian Deputies we may say that we were very warmly received by the FCS. At all times the brothers were frank and open in their conversations with us. We came away from the meetings with the impression that here is a Church which is faithful to the Lord and which seeks to serve Him in all things. That certain practices are different from what we are used to can not be doubted, but we are of the opinion that those differences do not hinder us from recognizing the FCS and from recommending to the CRCA as a whole that some of the points dealt with in our report be finalized in writing with the FCS in order that definite proposals can be presented to Synod in due time.

On behalf of the Deputies,
Cl. Stam
J. Visscher

APPENDIX II

REPORT OF THE VISIT WITH THE DUTCH DEPUTIES (BBK) ON SEPTEMBER 20, 1990, AT ZWOLLE, THE NETHERLANDS.

The Canadian Deputies, Dr. J. Visscher and Rev. Cl. Stam, met with the section III (ICRC and Anglo-Saxon countries) of the Dutch Deputies for contact with foreign churches (BBK). The Dutch were represented by Rev. A. de Jager (formerly of Neerlandia), Rev. J. de Gelder, Drs. H. van Veen, and br. D.J. van Wijnen.

The meeting was opened in a proper Christian fashion by the chairman, Rev. J. de Gelder. All members of the meeting were heartily welcomed. An agenda for the meeting was established.

Canadian concerns

The Canadian Deputies received the opportunity to present and explain the concerns raised by the General Synods of Smithville (1980), Cloverdale (1983), Burlington-West (1986) and Winnipeg (1989) concerning *consultation and coordination* with respect to contacts and relationships with "third parties." Emphasis was placed on the need to come to some mutually acceptable "common approach" (see Acts, Burlington-West, Art. 177, D).

The Canadian Deputies expressed disappointment that the Dutch churches had unilaterally proceeded with various relations and that a widening gap was developing between the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Gereformeerde Kerken (Liberated) in this respect. The Dutch Deputies showed understanding for the Canadian concerns. They emphasized that it is their striving to have prior consultation as much as possible, especially when it comes to contacts with English-speaking churches in the United Kingdom and in the United States. They always try to keep the Canadian churches duly informed and will continue to do so.

Independent federations

At the same time, however, the Dutch Deputies stressed that it is not always possible and feasible to come to a simultaneous coordination of these contacts and relations with others. The churches have their own responsibility in these matters as independent federations.

This was illustrated by two examples. The Dutch Deputies had informed the Canadian Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad well in advance of their intent to proceed with recognizing the Free Church of Scotland, but did not see it as necessary to wait for the Canadian Churches to take the same steps. The Free Church of Scotland was seen by the Dutch sister churches more as "an European affair." The Dutch Deputies admitted that it had somewhat been overlooked that there are also congregations of the Free Church of Scotland *in Canada*.

The Dutch sister churches at their Synod of Leeuwarden also felt compelled to enter into a sister church relationship with the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS) because of the great need to support this church in its mission work in Zaire, Africa. Time is of the essence for immediate help and support when it is urgently required. Therefore "coordination" of the contacts in this regard and the resulting sister church relationship was not possible. The developments with respect to the RCUS did indeed go quicker than initially expected.

The Dutch Deputies expressed their willingness to strive for coordination of contacts, but also urged the Canadian Reformed Churches to show diligence and resoluteness in these contacts. In the changing ecumenical climate, it was said, we cannot fall behind.

The Canadian Deputies feel that they have to the best of their ability presented the concerns as summarized by the Synod of Winnipeg (1989, *Acts*, page 74). We are grateful to report that the Dutch Deputies are well aware of our concerns and will strive all the more for coordination and consultation as much as possible. This will be facilitated if the churches adopt a common set of rules for "correspondence," as suggested by the recent Synod of Leeuwarden.

Rules for correspondence

Regarding the rules for correspondence, it was noted that the Synod of Leeuwarden, had decided to maintain only *one* ecclesiastical relationship with churches abroad (sister church relationship). This means that the “temporary contact relationship” is no longer in function. This is also in accordance with the desire of the Canadian Reformed Churches (*Acts*, Cloverdale, Art. 110, C and D).

The new Dutch rules were read and discussed. These rules are as follows:

RULES FOR ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING SISTER CHURCH RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHURCHES ABROAD.

(translation Cl. Stam)

1. Content of the sister church relationship

According to the Reformed confession, a sister church relationship with foreign churches exists in the mutual recognition of each other as true churches of the Lord Jesus Christ with a corresponding exercising of ecclesiastical fellowship.

2. The establishing of sister church relationships

The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands will enter into a sister church relationship with foreign churches only after it has been ascertained, particularly by means of Deputies, that such churches have not only officially recognized the Reformed confession of the Word of God but also actually maintain it in their ecclesiastical practice of doctrine, worship, church order and liturgy.

The following must be taken into account:

2.1. The Lord Jesus Christ gathers His Church from out of various nations, each of which are determined by their geographical location, history, and culture, so that foreign churches may not be judged with respect to differences in non-essential points in the manner of confession, liturgy, church order, and practice.

2.2. In case of relations with “third parties,” it must be carefully investigated what these relations involve for the church in question, in order to determine the value, the sense, and the best possible procedure of entering into a sister church relationship and/or the exercising of an ecclesiastical relationship with such a church.

2.3. It is possible that in certain countries more than one ecclesiastical federation may exist which ought to be recognized as true churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore the possibility of relations with more than one ecclesiastical federation in the same country cannot in itself be ruled out.

Because of Christ's command for unity, however, there may be no resignation towards such a situation of “dual relations,” and it ought to remain a topic of discussion.

3. Rules for the exercising of the sister church relationship.

The sister church relationship entered into with a church abroad shall be exercised according to the following rules, with the goal that as Reformed churches we together remain faithful to the confession of God's Word, that we assist one another, and that we encourage and exhort one another to bear witnesses in this world in word and deed of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To ensure this, the following rules shall apply as minimum:

3.1. The churches shall see to each other that they do not depart from the Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline, and liturgy.

3.2. The churches shall inform each other of the decisions taken by their broadest assemblies, if possible by sending each other their Acts or Minutes and, otherwise, at least by sending the decisions relevant to the respective churches (if possible, in translation).

- 3.3. The churches shall inform each other concerning the entering into relations with third parties.
- 3.4. The churches shall accept one another's attestations, which also means admitting the members of the respective churches to the sacraments upon presentation of that attestation.
- 3.5. The churches shall in principle open their pulpits for each other's ministers in agreement with the rules adopted in the respective churches.

In exercising these relations, the churches shall strive to implement also the following:

- 3.6. In case of changes or additions to the confession, church order or liturgical forms, which are of a material confessional nature, the sister churches shall be especially informed of this intent, so that as much consultation as possible can take place before a final decision is reached.
- 3.7. The churches shall receive each other's delegates at their broadest assemblies and invite them to sit as advisors, as much as this is possible.

Ground:

The nature of the sister church relationship requires that rules for inter-church relations be established and maintained.

The Canadian Deputies pass on the following information as well. Synod Leeuwarden instructed its Deputies "to send to the sister churches with whom a sister church relation already exists the newly formulated "Rules For Sister Church Relations" – where necessary in English translation – with the request that the sister churches agree to continue the sister church relationship on the basis of the newly formulated rules."

Some discussion followed on the proper English wording of the new Dutch rules. The Canadian Deputies offered their assistance. The Canadian Deputies will present these new rules for discussion to the Canadian Contact Committee and the forthcoming Synod Lincoln 1992.

Regarding the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)

The Dutch Deputies inquired about the document "Biblical Principles concerning the Unity of the Church" as published by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. They asked: what is the position of the Canadian Reformed Churches with respect to this document?

The Canadian Deputies responded that this document has been well-received in the Canadian churches and has been included as an Appendix to the Acts of Synod Winnipeg 1989. It will function further in the discussions with the OPC. The Deputies referred the Dutch Deputies on this point to the Committee for Contact with the OPC to give a more accurate update on the current situation.

The Orthodox Christian Reformed Church (OCRC)

The Dutch Deputies requested some information on the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church. The Canadian Deputies gave some information, mentioning that there are some local contacts with OCRC congregations, but none with the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad.

The Canadian Deputies suggested that the situation with the OCRC is still too uncertain to take concerted action. The Dutch Deputies expressed their interest in the developments and asked to be kept up to date in this matter.

Different mandate

At this point in the discussion it was noted that the Dutch Deputies have a different synodical mandate than the Canadian Deputies. The Dutch Deputies have been appointed to *seek and initiate* contact with other churches, while the Canadian Deputies must wait

with the making of any contacts until a *specific mandate* has been received from General Synod. This explains why the Dutch Deputies can proceed more independently and swiftly than their Canadian counterparts.

The advantages and drawbacks of these different mandates were briefly discussed. The Canadian Deputies expressed as their concern that the Dutch approach does not sufficiently recognize the fact that the *churches* and not *committees* are to determine the agenda of the major assemblies. Such an approach can easily lead to excess. The Dutch Deputies agreed that careful discretion is required in this matter.

Requests for financial support

The Dutch Deputies mentioned that the Dutch churches had received various requests support from individual Canadian churches for support to build churches or purchase parsonages. They wondered if such requests should not be accompanied by a classical recommendation and a letter from the (Canadian) Deputies for Contact with Churches Abroad stating that the request is *bona fide*.

The Canadian Deputies agreed with this and promise to present this matter in their report to the next General Synod.

International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC)

The Deputies briefly discussed a few matters concerning the ICRC. It was noted that the Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerk would most likely ask to be admitted to the ICRC. The question has been asked by the Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerk if the ICRC has a future of “cooperation” or “confrontation” between “Reformed” and “Presbyterian” churches.

The Canadian Deputies responded that the admission of churches to the ICRC is not so much a matter of the member churches individually but of the Conference itself. Each member church must determine later whether the admission of new churches was done properly on good grounds. The Dutch Deputies agreed with this approach.

Conclusion

The meeting was conducted in an open and brotherly manner. It appears that the Dutch and Canadian churches are aware of each other's concerns and that there is a great desire to work together in the matter of international ecclesiastical relations.

At the same time it became clear that each federation lives in a different situation and must respond to the needs and opportunities, as presented, in a responsible manner as best seems feasible and necessary. The Deputies pledge to continue close consultation in the hope that the coordination of contacts will become more and more a reality.

Rev. Cl. Stam led in closing the meeting with thanksgiving to the Lord.

On behalf of the Deputies,
Cl. Stam
J. Visscher

APPENDIX III

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN KOREA

I. HISTORY

The Presbyterian Church in Korea (“Kosin”) is a branch of the true church of Jesus Christ, founded on God’s Holy Word, and holds to the Reformed Faith. Since the coming of Protestant missionaries to Korea in 1884, the Korean church has had an astonishing development unparalleled in mission annals. The Presbyterian Theological Seminary was founded in 1901 in Pyongyang, and by 1912 a General Assembly was organized.

For about half a century from the first entry of the Gospel, the Korean church grew steadily. But under Japan’s imperialistic domination the church underwent many difficulties. In this period two kinds of problems afflicted the Korean church first, the infiltration of theological liberalism, and second, the Japanese Shinto shrine issue.

Finally, on September 10, 1938, the yet undivided Korean Presbyterian Church, at its 27th General Assembly meeting at the Pyongyang Outside Westgate Church, broke down under this repression, and approved shrine observance. Both before and after this shameful decision, ministers, elders, deacons, and ordinary believers who merely wished to live according to the Bible and so refused shrine worship, were arrested in large numbers, and eventually some fifty became martyrs to their faith under this terrible persecution.

In 1938, Pyongyang Seminary closed its doors because of its opposition to Shinto shrine observance. In 1940, in accommodation to the policy of the Japanese government, Chosun Seminary (now Hansin College) opened in Seoul, and in 1946 this school was recognized as the official seminary of the General Assembly.

On August 15, 1945, Japan was defeated, Korea was liberated, and on August 17, those who had been imprisoned for their opposition to Shinto shrine observance were released. Two among them, Rev. Joo Nam-sun and Rev. Han Sang-dong, founded Korea Theological Seminary a year later in Pusan on September 20, 1946, to train church leaders in order to reform the erring Korean church. By this action began anew the training of church leaders in the historic Presbyterian tradition.

However, the still undivided church’s General Assembly would not recognize Korea Theological Seminary, and the delegates from the Kyungnam Buptong (legal) Presbytery supporting Korea Theological Seminary, not being recognized, spent three years trying in vain to normalize their relationship with the General Assembly. But they were refused membership. Accordingly, on September 11, 1952, organizing its own General Assembly, the “Korea Pa (group)” or “Kosin” church was instituted. It is true that in December, 1960, the church united with the “Seungdong” group (later called “Hapdong”), but this did not work out, and in September, 1963, the church returned to its original form and continues until this day as the Presbyterian Church in Korea (“Kosin”).

II. THE CHURCH’S ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS

At the 26th (1976) General Assembly the church’s principles were recorded as follows: “we believe in, preach, and live by the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament and the original Presbyterian standards (The Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and the Shorter Catechisms, the Form of Government, the Manual of Discipline and the Directory of Worship) following Reformed theology.”

Our church’s doctrinal standards are the Westminster Confession of Faith, with the Larger Catechism and the Shorter Catechism. With the addition of the 1903 American Presbyterian chapters on “The Holy Spirit” and “The Mission of the Church” to the 17th century Westminster Confession of Faith, our confession numbers 35 chapters. Also, as administrative standards we have the Form of Government, the

Manual of Discipline, and the Directory of Worship. These standards have been published (in Korean) in a book entitled "The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in Korea."

III. CONSTITUENCY

Our church is now founded in every area of the country, with 21 presbyteries, 1,200 churches, and a total of 300,000 adherents. There are 1,000 ministers and 2,200 elders in the churches.

IV. INSTITUTIONS

1. Kosin University

Kosin University was started in 1954 with a 4 year preseminary course in Korea Theological Seminary and in 1970 was authorized by the Ministry of Education to become Korea Theological College. In 1981, with the opening of the medical college, the name of the college was changed from Korea Theological College to Kosin University. In 1985 the campus was moved from Songdo to Youngdo. Presently the University consists of the following departments: Theology, Christian Education, Religious Music. Children's Education, Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Nutrition, Home Economics, Health Education & Medicine. Now there are 150 Professors (including 100 at the medical school) and 2,100 students.

2. Kosin University Graduate School

With the purpose of giving continuity and deeper content to its education program, Kosin University Graduate School in February 15, 1978, received authorization from the Ministry of Education to establish the Graduate school and started with an enrollment of 20 students in its Master of Theology Program (Th. M.) and 16 students in its Master Program of Literature. Nov. 29, 1986 the Graduate School of Medicine was opened and the total number of Master Program students was 56. In Oct. 29, 1988 the doctorate course was opened and we received permission to enrol 27 students in the Doctorate of Medicine Program. Presently there are 56 students enrolled in the Master degree course and 27 students in the Doctorate course of medical sciences. We are also preparing for the opening of the master and doctorate programs in natural sciences. We have also applied to open a Ph. D. course in theology and Christian Education.

3. Korea Theological Seminary

Our Seminary which was founded in September 20, 1946, as a directly operated training institute of the Kosin Presbyterian for the formation of church workers. From its inception it was authorized by the Ministry of Education. After that, according to the government education policy, in March 1, 1981, the Korea Theological College became Kosin University and the establishment of the Seminary was authorized by the Government and the 3-year M. Div. program for graduate students was started. In the main Seminary campus there are 10 professors and 200 students while at the Seoul branch there are 100 non-regular students.

4. Kosin Medical Center

After its establishment in 1951 as the Gospel Hospital with the purpose of proclaiming the Gospel, developed itself into the Kosin Medical Center that comprises the medical school, the nursing school, Kimhae Gospel Hospital, the Cancer Research Center and many other kinds of medical research centers. Now the 900-bed Kosin Medical Center employs over 1000 employees and uses the most modern equipment such as MRI etc., becoming the most important medical treatment center in Pusan and the Kyung Nam area. Especially through the medi-

cal researches done at its various centers and laboratories it has become a leader in many medical fields. Afterward it will do its best to also train future medical missionaries and to work ever more at spreading the Gospel of Jesus-Christ.

V. HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONS

1. Home Missions

Our church began centered in Pusan, but now has many churches throughout the country. In 1976, the denomination's Development Study Committee's "Twenty-five Year Evangelistic Plan" was set in motion, and, under the General Assembly's urging, churches are exerting much effort in evangelism and church planting.

2. Chaplain Activities

With a military mission being called "the Golden Fisheries for Evangelism," 36 chaplains are active on several military bases. If a student of Kosin College passes the Ministry of Defense's chaplain candidate test and has finished both the four year college course and the three year course of theological seminary, he qualifies for entry. As of May 10, 1990, there are 43 candidates among our students.

3. Organizations Under the Care of the General Assembly

Churches, Presbyteries, and the General Assembly have each created organizations for the purpose of evangelism, education, and fellowship. Specifically, the Sunday School Association, the Students for Christ Movement (SFC), Christian Endeavor (CE), the Women's Missionary Society, the Men's Missionary Society, etc., are all active in the propagation of the Gospel.

4. Foreign Missions

The foreign missions of the KPC began in 1957 by sending Rev. Kim Young-Jin to Taiwan as a missionary. However, the churches have not been actively engaged in foreign missions until Rev. Yoo Hwan-Joon joined Rev. Kim in Taiwan in 1974. In 1979 the Mission Board wrote the mission's principles and regulations by which the churches can carry the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus Christ, and established the Mission Research Center. During the 1980s the KPC have emphasized the foreign missions and expanded the mission fields by sending 25 missionaries to Japan, Indonesia, Phillipines, Nepal, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Brazil. The Mission Board also set up the Missionary Training Institute (MTI) to train missionary candidates.

We have many "M1" missionaries ministering among Korean emigrants in the countries such as Japan, United States, Canada, Germany, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Spain and Australia.

VI. CHURCH EDUCATION

Our church has declared its educational purpose as follows:

"In cooperation with one another, we seek to teach the Bible in order to educate Christians in the tradition of the faith and train them in holy living, with three aspects of personal life in view:

1. The Person in worship – knowing, loving and serving the Triune God.
2. The Person in cooperation with others – understanding man as God's image-bearer, loving, helping others and preaching Christ to all men.
3. The Person in culture – being aware of the meaning of one's existence and special calling, being faithful to one's responsibilities."

From 1965 on, the denomination, active in church education, has prepared teaching materials, mainly for the use of Sunday schools.

VII. LITERATURE ACTIVITIES

From the beginning, our church has laid special emphasis on literature ministries. Beginning in 1955, *The Christian Reporter* (weekly, was for a while our denominational paper. Also, publications centering around Korea Theological Seminary appeared – *The Watchman*, *The Reformed View*, *Church Life*, and *The Reformed Faith*. Now, however, *The Herald of Christianity and Kosin Monthly* serves as the denominational magazine. Also, under the general denominational umbrella, Students for Christ, Christian Endeavor, the Sunday School Association, and other groups are zealously spreading the truth via various publications.

VIII. COOPERATION WITH OTHER CHURCH BODIES

Our church earnestly seeks to maintain close relationships with other churches and organizations taking a Reformed stance, for the sake of more fruitful ministries worldwide. We maintain a sister-relationship with The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated), The Free Reformed Churches in Australia, and The Reformed Churches in South Africa. We maintain a fraternal relationship with the following churches and organizations: The Orthodox Presbyterian Church (in America), The Overseas Missionary Fellowship, The Free Reformed Churches in South Africa, The Reformed Church in Japan, and The Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). We are a member of International Conference of the Reformed Churches (ICRC).

APPENDIX IV

LETTER FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN KOREA RE: RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CANRC (OCT. 10, 1990)



고신대학
KOSIN COLLEGE

149-1 Dongsam-Dong, Youngdo-Ku,
Pusan, Rok. (606-080)

T. 412- 8062~4

President: Ho Jin Jun

Fraternal Relations Committee

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN KOREA
P.O. Box 190
Pusan, 606-701, Republic of Korea

10th October, 1990

Dr. James Visscher
Convenor/Secretary,
The Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad
5734-191A Street
Surrey, B.C. V3S 4N9
CANADA.

Dear Brother,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thank you very much for your letter of 13th July and for your greetings to our General Assembly which was held in Taegu at Song San Church from 17th to 21st September. Among the important decisions made the General Assembly approved the recommendation of the Fraternal Relations Committee to establish brother & sister relations with the Canadian Reformed Churches. I note from your letter that your Synod is not scheduled to meet again until 1992 so we will look forward to the official response at that time. We would appreciate it if you could advise us of any action that we need to take, and we would like to suggest that you formulate an agreement in English that can be signed at the appropriate time.

As regards the next meeting of the ICRC to be held in Korea is concerned I note that you will be writing with information after the meeting of the Interim Committee in September, so will look forward to your letter in due course.

Sincerely in Christ,

Ho Jin Jun, Chairman
Fraternal Relations Committee

부산시 영도구 동삼동 149-1

APPENDIX V

LETTER FROM THE CHURCH AT CARMAN TO THE CRCA RE: RCUS (SEPT. 7, 1990)

Canadian Reformed Church

POST OFFICE BOX 164
CARMAN, MANITOBA, CANADA
R0G 0J0

September 7, 1990

The Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad
of the Canadian Reformed Churches
c/o Dr. J. Visscher
5734 - 191 A St.
Surrey, B.C.
V3S 4N9

Esteemed Brethren:

Thank you for your letter dated June 18, 1990. We sincerely appreciate that you informed us of the recommendation given by the committee on relations with churches abroad of our sister churches in the Netherlands to their Synod Leeuwarden. We understand that in the mean time this synod has adopted these proposals. We whole heartily agree with your reservations about this course of action and are thankful that this matter was addressed at Synod Leeuwarden through our deputies.

However, we cannot agree with your conclusion "to approach the next General Synod on this matter of the RCUS" and request a mandate to take up official contact" for the following reasons.

1. Although the committee has received a mandate concerning churches which participate in the ICRC, it has received no mandate concerning other churches and therefore the church orderly way would be that such a request comes from the churches and not from a committee appointed by a synod.
2. Because the RCUS is a federation within America where there are churches with which we are in federation, we cannot speak about the RCUS as a "church abroad". Rather than speaking about a sister church relationship we should be speaking about exercising full ecclesiastical unity. By analogy, the OPC has never been dealt with by the committee for correspondence abroad (now known as the committee on relations with churches abroad) for the same reason.
3. General Synod 1986 decided, Article 85 p. 32 that "The procedure for admitting other churches to the confederation has always been a matter of local churches with the judgment of Classis and the concurring advice of Deputies of Regional Synod." This is the procedure which we must follow.
4. As you must have learned from our reports, our discussions with the RCUS have been slow, but frank. Although communication with them, will, the Lord willing, be fruitful, and therefore we will continue local contact, there are serious doctrinal and church political difficulties which prevent us from making recommendations for ecclesiastical unity with the RCUS to major assemblies at this time.

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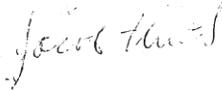
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May the Lord continue to bless you in the task you have been given and may He grant that all His children practice the unity of the true faith.

fraternal greetings
for the consistory



Rev. P.K.A. de Boer



Elder J. Kuik (corresponding clerk)

APPENDIX VI

LETTER TO THE CHURCH AT CARMAN FROM THE CRCA RE: RCUS (MARCH 1, 1991)

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

Dr. J. Visscher
5734-191A St.,
Surrey, B.C.
V3S 4N9 Canada

March 1, 1991

The Canadian Reformed Church
Box 164,
Carman, MB
ROG OJO

Esteemed Brothers,

Our Committee dealt with your letter of Sept. 7, 1990, at its meetings of Nov. 1, 1990 and Feb. 28, 1991. In response we would like to make the following comments about the points which you raise:

Regarding your **point one**, we would remind you that the mandate of our Committee is not limited by the ICRC or churches who participate in it. Before the creation of the ICRC our churches already maintained relations with sister churches abroad, and even after the emergence of the ICRC our churches continued to maintain a sister relationship with the Vrye Gereformeerde Kerken in South Africa which did not join the ICRC until 1989.

While agreeing with you that requests to enter into relations with other churches normally come from the churches, it is a fact that General Synod 1986 adopted the recommendation of our Committee to enter into discussions with the Free Church of Scotland.

Regarding **point two** our Committee would point out to you that we are a Committee appointed by the Synods of the Canadian Reformed Churches. The fact that we have a number of congregations in the United States does not change the fact that we are officially a Canadian federation. In that sense it is not out of order to regard the RCUS as a foreign church or as a church abroad.

Furthermore, if we assume, for the sake of argument, that your position of our being Canadian and American Reformed Churches is a correct one, we would still question the implication that this calls solely for "full ecclesiastical unity" with the RCUS. The impression which we receive from your letter is that it is either unity or no recognition at all. For our part we are of the opinion that a better course of action would be to recognize each other as sister churches (based on the necessary grounds) and within that framework come to know each other and so to have our churches (or those local churches of ours in the US) work toward full ecclesiastical unity with the RCUS.

As for the OPC not being a matter dealt with by our Committee because it is not a "church abroad", we are not aware that this same reasoning was applied when the original decision for contact with the OPC was taken. If we are mistaken, we stand to be corrected.

Proceeding on to **point three**, in light of the fact that we do not consider the RCUS to be a "local church", we are not convinced that this Article 85 of Synod 1986 applies.

Finally, it is on to **point four**, and here we observe that your discussions to date have been with several local congregations and ministers in the RCUS. While we commend you in this regard for your activity and dedication, we are of the opinion that it is not sufficient to keep discussions of such a nature as this confined to a few local churches. If the contacts are to be fruitful and to give a fair evaluation of the RCUS as a whole, then they will need to be on a broader basis.

As a result of the above, our Committee remains convinced that this is a matter for General Synod. We will therefore propose to General Synod 1992 that either our Committee or another Committee appointed by Synod take up official contact with the RCUS with a view to possibly establishing sister church relations with the Canadian Reformed Churches.

As ever, brothers, we are appreciative of your efforts for the unity of the body of Christ. May the Lord bless your efforts.

With brotherly greetings,

For the Committee,

J. Visscher, convener/secretary

APPENDIX VII

ARTICLE OF THE REV. P.K.A. DEBOER ON THE RCUS (*CLARION*, JAN. 4, 1991)

CONTACT WITH THE REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES (RCUS)

By P.K.A. de Boer

Recent issues of *Clarion* reported that the Synod Leeuwarden of the Gereformeerde Kerken (*vrijgemaakt*) entered into a sister church relationship with the RCUS. In his comment about this decision (*Clarion*, vol. 39, no. 18, p. 381) the Rev. W.W.J. VanOene writes that "If there is a church in our midst that is convinced that contact should be taken up with a specific federation or church in another country, this church has itself to do the investigation and come to the sister churches with well-documented proposals." Because the question of contact with the RCUS rightly arises in our midst now that our Dutch sister churches have made this decision, it might be good for all the sister churches to know that the Canadian Reformed Church at Carman has been doing exactly this. At the present, the consistory of the church at Carman is not ready to present proposals to the major assemblies for contacts with the RCUS, but local contact, with the sincere desire to come to such a point, will continue. In the meantime it may be wise to inform the sister churches about the work that has been done. A number of reports on the visits with them have been presented to the consistory and handed out locally to the members of the congregation. This article is written with the permission and encouragement of the consistory. However, the undersigned author assumes full responsibility for what is said and the evaluations which are made.

History of the RCUS

The roots of the RCUS are found in the reformation from the Roman Catholic Church which took place in Germany. Many, fleeing persecution and state-controlled churches, escaped to America. Concerning the RCUS as it is today, it is of special interest to note the wave of immigration of German people from Southern Russia during the years 1870 through 1902. They settled mostly in the Dakotas.

In America, and in particular in New Amsterdam, (present-day New York) contact was established with Dutch immigrants and through them with the churches in the Netherlands. They instituted their own churches, the German Reformed Church, but had close ties with the Reformed (Hervormde) Church of the Netherlands. Until 1793 these German Reformed Churches received ministers from classis Amsterdam of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands. Some difficulties arose between the Dutch and German churches concerning ordination of ministers and the state control of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. In order to ordain their own ministers and because of language differences, the two churches went their own ways.

An event which took place in Europe in 1817 had quite an impact on the German Reformed Churches in America. In that year the Lutheran and Reformed Churches of Prussia merged, forming the Evangelical Church of Germany. It put a lot of pressure on the German Reformed Churches in America to seek a similar kind of ecclesiastical unity. As a result a new constitution was adopted in 1819 and the Heidelberg Catechism was received as the exclusive confessional standard. It was also around this time that the name was changed from German Reformed Church to the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS).

The teaching at the seminary was influenced much by what was happening in Europe. This seminary was first located on the campus of Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA, from there it was moved to York, PA and finally to Mercersburg, PA. The seminary was influenced by the Barthian approach to speak about God's Word in distinction from the

Bible. The result was that the Bible was no longer considered to be God's Word and the reformational *sola scriptura* was no longer maintained. The teaching from this seminary became known as the Mercersburg theology.

Many, especially in the Dakotas, objected to the direction the men at the seminary had taken. It was especially in this area that objections were made to the Mercersburg theology because a new periodical, *Der Waechter (The Watchman)* edited by Rev. J. Stark and later by Rev. H. Triek, was well received here. This paper promoted the theology of Dr. H.F. Kohlbruegge. Dr. Kohlbruegge emphasized that salvation is a free gift, but he was weak when it came to covenantal obedience. Although he had contact with the churches in the Netherlands and even preached in the church where Dr. A. Kuyper was minister, it never came to an official recognition because of this weakness. However, till this day, especially among the older members, Dr. Kohlbruegge remains the champion who defended the truth against Barthian liberalism.

The whole matter came to a head when plans of union with various churches were made. It is not necessary to go into details as to which churches were all involved because some of them backed out. However, a union was agreed upon between the evangelical Synod and the RCUS. The result was that on June 26, 1934 the Evangelical and Reformed Church came into being.

All the classes of the RCUS had voted in favour of this union except the Eureka classis. Eureka is a town in South Dakota near the North Dakota state border. This classical region continued as the RCUS along with a few churches from other classical areas which joined them. Until 1986 they called themselves the RCUS Eureka Classis, but in that year they divided themselves into four classical regions and established a synod.

Presently (1988 statistics) the RCUS consists of thirty-two churches, 2,876 communicant members and 3,720 members in total. This works out to an average of a little less than 117 members per congregation. The largest congregation is at Manitowoc, PA, with 409 members and the smallest congregation is at Colorado Springs, CO, with 12 members. Most congregations are small, under 100 members and when visiting them one is struck by the fact that most members are quite old. There are very few youth among them.

Confessional standards

As already mentioned, the RCUS maintains the Heidelberg Catechism as their only confessional standard. Before the new constitution of 1819 was adopted they had also used the Belgic Confession and Canons of Dort as confessional standards. Although some investigation was done, nobody seems to know exactly why these confessional standards were dropped. Efforts have been made to re-adopt them. A vote held at classis May 2-8, 1984, although a majority was in favour, was insufficient. There seem to be two reasons for not re-adopting these confessions, namely, many do not see a need for more confessions besides the Heidelberg Catechism and secondly, many churches have an unchangeable article in their local constitutions to the effect that they only accept the Heidelberg Catechism as their confessional standard. The adoption of other confessions would constitutionally mean their demise.

In order to maintain their confessional standards the RCUS have their licentiates, (candidates) ministers of the Word, and teachers of theology sign a subscription form. In this subscription form they testify that they "honestly and truly accept the doctrine of the Heidelberg Catechism as in accordance with the teaching of the Holy Scriptures." Note that this wording is a little weak. It could mean, the system of doctrine as found in the Heidelberg Catechism, and thus leave room for criticism of what the catechism actually says. This weakness seems to be covered by another article of their constitution which states that "The Heidelberg Catechism is received as an authoritative expression of the truths in the Holy Scriptures, and is acknowledged to be the standard of doctrine in the Reformed Church in the United States."

Before entering the ministry or granting permission to proclaim God's Word, the candidates undergo a classical examination similar to what we are used to in our churches.

Unlike us, the students who intend to study for the ministry are examined by classis concerning their intentions and upon successful examination receive ecclesiastical and financial support. The constitution specifies that "A student for the ministry shall not be eligible to the pastoral office."

Moreover the RCUS constitution states (Articles 3,4,5,6) that the Word of God as confessed in the Heidelberg Catechism is to be taught in the worship services and to the youth of the church with the view to confirmation of their faith. Catechism classes are held for the youth.

The other office-bearers, elders and deacons, do not sign a subscription form.

Along with the Heidelberg Catechism, the Apostles' Creed is received as a confessional standard. No mention is made in the constitution or elsewhere of any other creed. Upon questioning, verbal assurance was given that the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds are also maintained.

The members of the congregations who make public confirmation or confession of their faith commit themselves to the Word of God as summarized in the Heidelberg Catechism. They make this distinction, "confirmation," referring to those who were baptized members, and "confession" for those who come from elsewhere. They do not seem to attach any further importance to this distinction.

The intention is certainly there to maintain the Word of God as confessed in the Heidelberg Catechism and there is some ecclesiastical policy in place to preserve it. However, as will be shown, there are a number of areas which need further attention and more discussion.

Theonomy

A little earlier it was said that Dr. H.F. Kohlbruegge has had a lot of influence through the periodical *Der Waechter* and that he emphasized salvation as a free gift but was weak when it came to covenantal obedience. The RCUS has suffered on account of this weakness. They themselves admit that in the past they have taken too much an attitude of either we are elected or not. Those elected are saved. Those who are not elected are condemned and therefore the way of life is not all that important. While expressing sincere concern about this kind of laxity, some ministers defended theonomy. Theonomy is the teaching that the law of God, as revealed in all of Scripture, continues to apply. It is combined with post-millennialism to speak about the establishment of God's kingdom on this earth. Thus, David Chilton, an extreme theonomist, teaches that the world is directed more and more toward submission to all of God's law until man, in its civil government, again has his rightful dominion over this creation. He himself refers to it as dominion theology. The ministers in the RCUS do not go to this extreme and are generally more careful. The most avid defender of theonomy among them suggests that the Belgic Confession before the seventeen words were removed from Article 36, was theonomic. These words state, as part of the duty of the civil government to maintain order that "all idolatry and false worship may be removed and prevented, the kingdom of the antichrist may be destroyed." Those who defend this teaching tend to stress the activity of the civil government for the establishing of God's kingdom and one is left with an impression of anabaptist leanings.

The RCUS has officially rejected theonomy. From the documentation it is very clear that they really struggled to come to a clear definition of theonomy. At their synod of March 30 - April 2, 1987 it was agreed that "2. It is the position of the RCUS that the Heidelberg Catechism teaches that the ceremonial and judicial laws instituted by Moses have been entirely abolished and done away with by the coming of Christ, as far as it relates to obligation and obedience on our part. The moral law, however, has not been abolished and it respects obedience, but only as it respects the curse and constraint." The synod decision did not go as far as the study committee proposed it, namely that "No one shall in the future be licensed in the (RCUS) ...who espouse theonomic views as outlined in the Report on Theonomy...."

The result is that even though theonomy is "officially" rejected, there are those who still hold this position within the RCUS. Moreover, there seems to be a real lack of a good

balance between confessing election to salvation and living in covenantal unity with the Lord. This is an area which certainly needs more attention.

Using pictures of the Lord Jesus

This a point which is really stressed by the RCUS and may be an obstacle for them should we seek closer contact. One of their translations of Lord's Day 35 Q.A. 98 is interesting. It reads: "But may not pictures be tolerated in churches as books for the people?" They argue that the use of pictures of the Lord Jesus in kindergarten and Sunday school is much like using books for the laity during the Middle Ages among the illiterate. Such a picture of the Lord Jesus, they insist, is only half a truth because the Lord Jesus was not just man but also God. Some more discussion on this matter should prove fruitful and perhaps we should re-examine our use of such pictures.

The doctrine of the church

It may seem that we stumble into this question time and again, but it certainly is important to remain faithful to the Lord in this respect. Perhaps this question keeps coming up because ever since the World Council of Churches was established there seems to have been pressure for ecumenical unity above ecclesiastical faithfulness. The RCUS suffers from a denominationalist or pluriformist thinking. It comes out in the RCUS constitution which speaks in article 4 about "other branches of the Christian church" and in article 5 where members who move away are urged to "unite with another congregation of the Reformed Church, or another Orthodox Protestant Church...."

This pluriform way of speaking about the church has many practical consequences. Thus a person who leaves the RCUS for another church (denomination) is admonished and warned, but given a certification of dismissal (attestation). During discussion it became clear that such transfer of membership is granted to members going, for example, to a Baptist church. Those who leave are admonished and warned, but in the sense of leaving a more faithful church for a less faithful one. The RCUS constitution makes provision for ministers to make such moves as well. Recently, the minister with whom we have had most of our contact and who was the chairman of their committee relation churches abroad as well as having been elected president of the RCUS synod, left for another church (i.e. another denomination). The details of the circumstances and reasons for this move do not have to be made public, but the point is that this pluriformist thinking about the church certainly has its practical consequences, such as moving from church to church, and, as will be shown in separate sections, also has a bearing on how the sacraments are used and discipline is exercised.

Some of their own ministers suggest that this easy transfer to other churches (denominations) is perhaps the main reason why the RCUS has remained so small and has few young members. Many have moved to "bigger" churches or to places where there is no RCUS and have given priority to better employment opportunities while being content with a somewhat less faithful church.

When visiting with office-bearers and members of the RCUS there are many who really show a desire to love the Lord according to His Word, but our concern is whether this is really maintained in their teaching and practice. The pluriform way of teaching about the church leads one to go to the church of one's own choice rather than where the Lord calls His people together. This makes the church into a human religious organization instead of confessing it to be the Lord who gathers His people by calling them to the assembly where His Name is proclaimed. This is certainly an area which needs much more discussion and attention.

Worship services

Worship services are held every Sunday in the RCUS. As a rule there is only one worship service per Sunday. These worship services are generally held in the morning. The preaching of God's Word is kept central in the worship services. The RCUS constitution states in

article 178 that the “essential parts of public worship are an invocation, singing, prayer, reading of the Word, preaching a sermon, giving offerings, and the benediction.”

No preaching of God’s Word as summarized in the catechism, the way we are used to it, is done. Some of their ministers think it may be a good idea to introduce a second worship service where God’s Word as summarized in the Heidelberg Catechism can be proclaimed. Generally there is too much resistance to this idea among the membership. This resistance seems to reflect a Kohlbrueggeian emphasis on election without covenantal obedience. The emphasis is that one is saved by God’s providence and therefore hearing and knowing God’s Word is considered to be less important.

The use of the sacraments

Baptism is administered to infants of believing parents and unbaptized adults upon confession of faith. From their side they were happy to hear that we believe baptism to be a sign and seal of God’s covenant promise and not of election.

The RCUS constitution, article 2, speaks about “full communion with the Church by confirmation, profession of faith...” which leads to the question whether baptized children are considered to be full members of the church. In conversation we received assurance that children are considered full members of the church, but are told that they do not receive all the blessings, such as participation at the Lord’s Supper.

Concerning the celebration of the Lord’s supper, baptized members who have confirmed or confessed their faith may attend. For confirmation or confession the candidate is examined concerning his faith in the presence of the whole congregation.

Concerning guests who are invited to attend the Lord’s Supper, they emphasize their position to be *restricted* opposed to *closed*. By *restricted* they mean that the local consistory supervises who may attend the Lord’s Supper. The RCUS constitution (article 189) says that “Members, in good standing, of other denominations holding the essential doctrines of the Gospel, should be invited to participate in the observance of this sacrament.” In discussion they admitted that “essential doctrines” is a vague expression. In practice, we are told, this means a member of the Baptist Church who is known by a member of the congregation and accepts Christ as Saviour and shows it by his life, is invited to attend without being questioned about his church affiliation. In discussion it was acknowledged that this way of inviting members from other denominations has everything to do with considering these denominations to be other branches of the church.

Church discipline

Church discipline receives attention in the RCUS constitution. Generally speaking the approach is more like a court of law speaking about trials, prosecutors, witness and judgments. The constitution only speaks about Matthew 18 in connection with “alleged personal injuries.” In conversation it became apparent that disciplinary action is taken very rarely.

Concerning ministers of the Word, the constitution in article 30 makes it possible for ministers to resign. When there are difficulties in the congregation this is a course of action that is usually followed. Such resignation must have classical approval. This article does not say anything about reconciliation by way of repentance on either the part of the minister or the congregation. It speaks about the “desire” of the pastor and the joint consistory. In practice it becomes an easy escape without due call to repentance.

The practice of “erasure” undermines much discipline in the RCUS and some of the ministers consider it to be a big problem. Erasure simply means to erase someone’s name from the membership list. In the Canadian Reformed Churches erasure is an exception. To the best of my knowledge it is only practiced when someone leaves without a request for an attestation and his location becomes unknown. Even then, his name is not quickly erased, but time is given in the hope of return and repentance. Such circumstances may eventually be considered silent withdrawal from the church.

The RCUS constitution speaks about erasure in several articles. Thus article 119 states that “If a member is negligent in partaking of the Holy Communion, or refuses to

contribute to the support of the Church, or continually absents himself from public worship, such conduct, in one or all of these requirements, shall be regarded as an offense against the Church, and he shall be admonished by the pastor and elders. If after admonition he continues in such negligence of duty, the Spiritual Council (i.e. minister and elders) shall notify him that he is no longer in good and regular standing. If after not less than six months and not more than one year of such suspension he continues in such neglect of duty, the Spiritual Council shall erase his name.” In article 33 we read: “If the minister against whom the charges are pending shall have abandoned the ministry or declared himself independent, his name shall be erased, or he shall be deposed or excommunicated, as the case may be.”

The ministers admit that erasure is used much more than discipline. The negligent members are admonished by the minister and elders, but do not receive the benefit of being called back through church discipline in the way in which the Lord has instituted it. May the Lord grant courage and strength to those minister among them who would like to correct this matter. It is not always easy to agree upon constitutional changes which will help in this respect.

Relations with other churches

At this time the RCUS is no member of any ecumenical organization. They have made inquiries about the ICRC and sent an observer to the last meeting held in Langley, B.C. The RCUS has fraternal relations with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), the Reformed and Presbyterian Church of North America (RPNA), and the Reformed Church in Zaire (RCZ). This means that they recognize each other as true churches, have pulp exchange, receive each other's attestations and send delegates to each other's ecclesiastical meetings.

There is no formal relationship with the Christian Reformed Churches, but there has been some informal contact. One of their ministers teaches at Mid American Reformed Seminary (MARS). For the time being, the theological students of the RCUS are directed to this seminary.

Church Order

Instead of a Church Order like we have, the RCUS has a constitution as a “denomination” as well as local constitutions. Generally speaking these constitutions seem to be a mixture of Reformed and Presbyterian church polity.

Instead of speaking about “ecclesiastical assemblies” they speak about judicatories and the whole system is set up much like a civil legal system. The consistory is the lower court and the synod is the higher court.

There are four judicatories in the RCUS. They are the consistory (pastors, elders and deacons), the spiritual council (pastor and elders), classis and synod.

The office of minister and elder is considered to be a life-time calling. Not ministers, but elders take periods of rest. During these periods they are referred to as “inactive elders.” Inactive elders can be called upon for advice and in emergency circumstances. They can also become active again.

It is the consistory's task to take care of the daily affairs of the congregation, including the calling of a minister, his support, keeping church property and records, taking care of the congregational finances, etc. Some of these things can only be done after consultation with and agreement from the congregation.

The task of the spiritual council is to “watch over the members of the congregation, to guard the doctrine of Christ, and to maintain wholesome discipline.” (article 72 of the constitution.) Classis is considered to be an ecclesiastical judicatory which is convened at intervals or when necessary. It continues from one meeting to the next as is clear from the wording in the constitution. In article 79 of the constitution we read about “the annual meeting of a Classis” and that “the ministers residing within a district designated by Synod” are its members along with “elders delegated by pastoral charges situated within these

limits.” Classis has its own executive consisting of a president and stated clerk who are assigned certain tasks while classis is not convened.

Synod is much like classis. The only difference is that to classis only ministers and delegated elders of a certain district are sent, while to synod all the ministers and an elder from each congregation are delegated. Synod meets in two ways, in “general convention” and in “delegated body.” In the latter form the delegates are there as representatives of their local congregations.

Like classis, synod has its own executive which continues to perform certain functions while synod is not convened. In article 101 of the constitution we are told that “The Synod shall diligently prosecute the work of Home Missions, of Foreign Missions, of Christian Education, and of Ministerial Relief by committees, which are to be elected and governed in their proceedings by rules established by Synod. At the annual meeting of the Synod each committee shall submit a report of its operations and a statement of its present condition.”

Although church polity is not necessarily a matter of faithfulness and unfaithfulness and we agree in our Church Order that on “minor points of Church Order and ecclesiastical practice churches abroad shall not be rejected.” We see here a need for further discussion.

Conclusion

The church at Carman will continue local contact with the RCUS with the stated objective of coming with a request to the federation to recognize the RCUS as true churches of Christ Jesus. We do not have to be hasty and may certainly reserve judgment for some time while discussions and attempts to convince each other continue. In this whole matter we may not overlook that our federation has churches in America, and the question of how these churches are to be united in a practical way, should they be recognized may not be overlooked either. It was for this reason that our deputies at Synod Leeuwarden have rightfully reminded our Dutch sister churches to first consult with the Canadian Reformed Churches before extending a sister church relationship to the RCUS. Now that Synod Leeuwarden has made this decision, it does not mean that we as Canadian Reformed Churches must feel pressured into making a hasty decision concerning this matter.

A note of disappointment must be added. In 1987 the consistory of Carman made the first contacts with the RCUS. We were received in a very hospitable way and words of welcome were expressed. They expressed much appreciation for having visited with them. We have made a number of visits and reports, but we have seen and heard very little initiative from them. Only one official return visit was made by one of their ministers. Perhaps they do not have the same resources, but we are often left with the impression that if we no longer make contact with them, we would not hear much from them. This is perhaps also related to their way of thinking about the church in a pluriform way. They seem to be content with being a denomination and see no urgency to strive for ecclesiastical unity.

One more thing must be added. The RCUS is very diverse within itself. Ministers have come from many different colleges and backgrounds and each brings with him his own opinions. It is difficult to make a fair evaluation. The opinions of the men we spoke to differ on certain points. In this article, the official papers were consulted as much as possible. However, the congregational life cannot be overlooked either. The average age of the membership is high. The ministers we spoke to expressed concern about finding suitable elders to serve in the churches. Those to whom we spoke appeared to be very faithful and dedicated and offered up much for their dedication to the Lord. To judge the hearts of men belongs to the Lord. It is our task – also in ecclesiastical contact – to examine whether we are and remain faithful to God's revealed Word. With Him in mind we will continue our work.

APPENDIX VIII

RESPONSE FROM THE REV. R. GROSSMAN OF THE RCUS (*CLARION*, MAY 10, 1990)

THE RCUS, A VIEW FROM THE INSIDE

The following article is in response to the article entitled "Contact with the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS)" by Rev. P.K.A. de Boer in the January 4, 1991 issue of the *Clarion*. This writer, along with many other members of the RCUS, welcomes the interest of our brothers and sisters in the Canadian Reformed Churches. We have in recent years become appreciative acquaintances of Rev. Kingma through his visits to several of our synod meetings. This writer has come to know Dr. Van Dam of your Seminary, and has been a subscriber to *Reformed Perspective* for a number of years. He has also had extended contacts with your sister churches, the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Vrijgemaakt), over the past six years.

We appreciate Rev. de Boer's article, including those somewhat critical areas. It shows a sincere interest in seeking to know those whom he believes to be brethren in the Lord, as well as a strong commitment to maintaining the truth according to the Word of God. We are going to point out some errors of fact, which no doubt are almost inevitable in attempting to introduce someone we ourselves do not know too well; and we are going to take issue with some of his conclusions. However, we do this in a brotherly manner as those who respect highly that which we have found among you, and as those who know that our RCUS is, like every other denomination or federation of churches, somewhat less than perfect.

It will be good if readers of this article have the January 4 issue of the *Clarion* at hand to better place in context the things we will refer to in Rev. de Boer's article. We will first mention a number of matters of factual inaccuracy which may have little impact on the matter of relations between our churches, but which are important from an historical point of view.

First of all, the idea expressed on page 5 of the *Clarion* article that the union of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches in Prussia in 1817 under one administration (it was not actually a merger) resulted in a new constitution being adopted by the North American German Reformed Synod in 1819 in which the Heidelberg Catechism was received as the exclusive confessional standard, is mistaken at several points. It was not a "constitution" that was adopted in 1819 but rather a "definition of the rights and activities of the Synod in its relations to the Classes" (H.M.J. Klein, *History of the Eastern Synod of the RCUS*, p. 106). Such material might rightly be seen as part of a "constitution," but it was by actual content and purpose a good bit less than a "new constitution."

Furthermore, there is no evidence whatsoever that the naming of the Heidelberg Catechism alone among the church's creeds in these articles was in any way related to the Prussian church union of 1817. First, there was not enough time between 1817 and 1819 for such pressure to arise, cross the ocean, and bear such fruit. Second, just one year later the 1820 German Reformed Synod rejected a plan for a union seminary with the Lutherans in North America, even though they had had discussions with the Lutherans about this idea before 1817. Third, the German Reformed continued discussions about merger with the Dutch Reformed in North America in the years following 1819, while at the same time they drifted farther from the Lutherans, with whom they had earlier agreed in rejecting the overtures of Count Zinzendorf for merger under the Moravian banner.

Real influence from the Prussian church union of 1817 came to the German Reformed Church in the U.S. in 1844 with the importation of the Rev. Philip Schaff of Germany to teach in the denominational seminary.

Even the statement that the Catechism was here received "as the exclusive confessional standard," needs some clarification. One of the 1819 articles states that Synod may

make rules “that conform to the Word of God and are not contrary to the Heidelberg Catechism and the Ordinances of the Synod.” While this indicates that the operating confession in view in 1819 was the Catechism, this is not the language of creedal adoption, excluding all others. This is particularly important in view of the fact that from 1748 to 1792 the annual minutes of the German Reformed Coetus speak often of the Catechism without mentioning the other creeds. This is so even though the Coetus until 1793 was under the direct control of the Classis Amsterdam and its own Constitution of 1748, both of which required subscription to “the Heidelberg Catechism, all the formulas of unity and the Synod of Dordt.” As noted above, what was adopted in 1819 was not an entire new constitution, but an addition to earlier regulations for synod, which some have argued would include the Constitution of 1748.

Another historical lapse is found on page 6 of this *Clarion* issue. The Mercersberg Theology, which arose from 1844-1850, was a kind of high-church liturgicalism, developed by Drs. Philip Schaff and John Nevin some 60 years before Barthian theology was known even to Karl Barth (who was born in 1886). Schaff and Nevin had rationalist tendencies but they were not the secret inventors of Neo-orthodoxy.

Again, the statement on this page that all the “classes of the RCUS had voted in favour” of the 1934 Evangelical and Reformed merger is mistaken. Four RCUS classes had voted to oppose the merger before the General Synod adopted it. But after the General Synod vote, the merger was accepted without vote by all of the classes as an accomplished fact, except for the Eureka Classis which alone decided to vote on and then to reject this merger. Also, the next sentence implying that the name “Eureka Classis” was borrowed from the name of the city of Eureka, South Dakota, is historically inaccurate. This name, “Eureka Classis,” was chosen from the Greek perfect form of the word *euriskoo* (meaning “I find”) to express satisfaction that the conservative Reformed party in the Dakotas had found in 1910 a constitutional way to maintain a conservative ecclesiastical life within a liberal denomination. This provision allowed a different language classis, Classis Eureka, to be formed on the ground of the already established Dakota Classis.

Important detail corrections to note are on page 6, that Manitowoc is in Wisconsin, not Pennsylvania, and on page 7, that the pastor who recently left the RCUS for another denomination has been elected president of his Classis, and not of the RCUS Synod.

Unfortunately the inaccuracy contained in this article does not end with matters of only historical interest. The contention, also on page 6, that the ministers and teachers of the RCUS make no further subscription to the creed than the one made by licentiates is in error. Ministers and teachers of the RCUS are required at ordination to make a considerably stronger subscription than this. The form for the ordination of a minister requires an oath binding him to “honestly and without reservation embrace the Heidelberg Catechism with the conviction that the same is an exact summary of the system of truth of Holy Scripture,” and to “promise to teach and defend the same in good faith and reject all doctrines conflicting therewith” (*Directory of Worship of the RCUS*). Not only is this a good bit stronger than the subscription of licentiates, our Church in recent years has deposed a minister for not agreeing to the words of Question 115 of the Catechism that God “so strictly enjoins the Ten Commandments” upon His people. This man held that the Fourth Commandment has been abrogated. We would reject the idea that this subscription is “weak,” or, for that matter, that our Church’s holding to the creed ought to be suspect.

Another mistaken impression is left by the point made about the subscription of elders and deacons. Indeed these office bearers do not “sign” a form of subscription, but they are required by verbal oath to take the same form of subscription as that taken by licentiates. Thus the impression given that no subscription is required is misleading.

On the issue of Theonomy, we would like to comment that it is difficult at this stage of the development of that school of thought to define “Theonomy” to everyone’s satisfaction. Thus it is difficult to discipline those who might call themselves “Theonomists.” Discipline should be applied for substantive denial of the creeds, not for the use of a label.

On the doctrine of the church we will doubtless have to carry on discussions. We have not come to the unique view of the use of the word "church" that is held among you. However, we do have much in common in our views of the marks of the church, etc. Your view also raises some questions. If those who hold to many biblical teachings but who are not entirely Reformed may not be called "church," what are they? Scripture uses the Greek word *ekklesia* to refer to an assembly of unbelievers in Acts 19:32, 39. We have no problem using the marks of the church to identify the true and the false churches, however we find it somewhat difficult to attempt to neatly pigeonhole every body containing Christians into either of those categories. What about other federations of churches with which you are in a sister church relation, do you know in detail the faithfulness of each congregation? We would say, for example, that your churches are evidently "less faithful" in obedience to the Second Commandment than are our churches. Does this mean we must reject you as "churches?"

We are surprised to find reference in Rev. de Boer's article to "easy transfer" to other denominations. There is more or less easy transfer to denominations we know to be conservatively Reformed, and with whom we have fraternal relations. On the other hand, the definition of an "orthodox Protestant church" is to our knowledge and practice not a wide open door to our Spiritual Councils for easy transfer to unfaithful "churches," but a recognition that an "orthodox Protestant church" might carry the name "Presbyterian," or omit the name "Reformed" or "Presbyterian" entirely, even while holding to biblical doctrine. Our Constitution and practice require that persons who join other denominations without approval be disciplined, not given certificates of dismissal. We believe that the conclusion that our teaching about the church "leads one to go to the church one's own choice rather than where the Lord calls His people together," is quite misleading. Our pastors preach and work against this very idea regularly.

Further in this line of thinking, the idea that "erasure" of name is part of an easy transfer picture is in our view mistaken. Erasure is clearly labeled in our Constitution as an act of discipline, never to be taken lightly, and never to be applied without a good deal of pastoral contact and care, even as the constitutional articles quoted in the *Clarion* article indicate. Erasure, like excommunication, does end one's position under the care of the Spiritual Council of the church. However, we do live in a world where sometimes pastoral care cannot in God's providence bring the straying sheep into obedience. We would be most interested to hear what your elders do with respect to a member excommunicated or reluctantly erased. Do you then proceed to other steps of pastoral care? Or do you also see that person as having left God's church and kingdom? We would argue that our Constitution does require the elders to call a person back through church discipline in the way which the Lord has instituted it, quite in contrast to Rev de Boer's statement on page 8. Indeed, his statement that Matthew 18 is mentioned only in an article of our Constitution dealing with "personal injuries" fails to note that this part of Scripture is also referred to in another article on the general discipline of members.

Again, the constitutional provision for the resignation of ministers and approval of such by their classis mentioned on page 8 of the *Clarion* is directed to the acceptance of calls, not to the handling of "difficulties in the congregation." Doubtless there have been times when ministers unfortunately have taken this "easy way out" when they have faced difficulties, and doubtless there are times when ministers ought to leave their present place of service. But we are at a loss to imagine where Rev. de Boer got information leading him to say, "When there are difficulties in the congregation this is a course of action that is usually followed." During the past thirty years we ourselves have encountered, and seen fellow pastors encounter, many difficulties in congregations which were handled by pastoral care and discipline without ever a thought of the pastor resigning. We can think of only one or two instances in which a pastor resigned because of such difficulties.

We must not prolong this response but a few additional observations need to be made. We find the statement on page 8 that "The emphasis is that one is saved by God's providence and therefore the hearing and knowing of God's Word is considered to be less important," to be inaccurate and somewhat insulting. We know of no RCUS minis-

ter who does not seek to make the accurate preaching of God's Word the heart of his ministry, and of no congregation that does not glory in good preaching. In practice, not every pastor is always entirely satisfied with the response of his congregation, nor are all congregations entirely satisfied that their pastors always employ the most effective methods. But to conclude that hearing and knowing God's Word is unimportant to either pastors or people is contradictory to our own lifelong knowledge of the churches. The further conclusion that our churches are filled with old people and very few young, is contradicted by the statistics from 1990 which show that more than one-fourth of our members are baptized children who have not yet made profession of faith (which is usually made between the ages of 14-16). We do have rural congregations where economic conditions and an at-times weakened ministry have left mostly older people. However, most of our congregations include many babies, children and young people. Furthermore over the years we have attracted substantial numbers of people to our churches who are not of our own background or not of Christian background at all. These are not signs of dying churches.

We might also note matters of terminology, such as our use of the word "judicatory" to refer to ruling assemblies as differences perhaps more of wording than of function. Other issues might be raised, but before closing we wish to note what we see as a tendency in this *Clarion* article to look at all things through the spectacles of the history, practices and terminology of the Canadian Reformed Churches. This is to some extent unavoidable. We all come from somewhere, but we do not believe that our unique situation should become a controlling interest in examining others. Rather we believe that a living adherence to the doctrines of Scripture, and to worship and fellowship based on those doctrines should be our major criteria. Acts 2:42 describes what we take to be the organic life of a true church.

Our hearty greetings to the readers of the *Clarion* and our best wishes to Rev. de Boer. We realize our brother did not mean to give a distorted view of the RCUS and that his sources of information within the RCUS were perhaps not as well-informed as they might be. We trust that this response may improve your knowledge of the RCUS. May God grant us a growing and unifying relationship as churches of Jesus Christ.

Rev. Robert Grossmann
Orange City, Iowa

RCUS, Response

I would like to thank Rev. R. Grossmann for his article and the corrections he gives. These kind of responses help to make us known to each other. Let me make a few small remarks.

1. I am thankful that Rev. Grossmann noticed that my look on things are "through the spectacles of the history, practices and terminology of the Canadian Reformed Churches." It reflects my conviction that the Lord has granted, with many weaknesses, the Canadian Reformed Churches to be faithful to His Word. If we are to find unity, and this is my desire, it must be on the foundation of God's Word.

2. I am also thankful that Rev. Grossmann found the sentence he mentions "somewhat insulting." It shows that he would not want this kind of tendency in the RCUS. Perhaps it was not phrased well enough, but it was not my intention to make this a kind of accusation. In the context, I expressed appreciation for RCUS ministers who see the need for and promote a second worship service. I was contemplating reasons why these attempts are resisted. Perhaps Rev. Grossmann could give his opinion on why a second worship service is resisted by members in the RCUS.

3. Concerning erasure, I would like to point out that there was a request at Northern Plains Classis to their synod recently held at Garner Iowa to change the constitution article(s) concerning this point. I understand the reason for this request was in line with what I had written. I feel disappointed that the synod did not think it necessary to look further into whether these changes should be made.

4. Concerning the subscription form, I am still not sure from Rev. Grossmann's article nor from the ministers I spoke to, whether its intention is, like that in the Presbyterian system to be bound to "the system of doctrine as found in the (confession)" or, like (continental) Reformed, to be "bound to the Word of God as confessed in the (confession)." I am not sure whether those asked really understood the difference. Perhaps Rev. Grossmann can inform us more clearly some day.

All this shows that much more discussion is still necessary on these and other points not mentioned. Again, a thank-you to Rev. Grossmann, and may the Lord grant the strength to continue these discussions in a brotherly way. We will not hide the differences but openly talk about them so that, the Lord willing, we together may stand on the one foundation which is laid, namely Christ and His work as revealed in Scripture.

Rev. P.K.A. de Boer

APPENDIX IX

LETTERS FROM THE RCUS – INTERCHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE
(JAN. 11, 1991; JULY 23, 1991; MARCH 16, 1992)

REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
Interchurch Relations Committee

January 11, 1991

Dr. J. Visscher
5734 - 191 A Street
Surrey, B.C.
Canada V3J4N9

Dear Dr. Visscher,

Greetings in the name of our blessed Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

You may have already noted that the Interchurch Relations Committee of the RCUS has a new chairman. Rev. George Syms is no longer serving in that capacity and "yours truly", Rev. Jonathan Merica, is filling that office. I look forward to working together in a blessed relationship with our beloved brethren of other denominations in the months to come.

I am writing this letter to inform you of our desire to invite you to our next Synod meeting, and also to express my desire to receive an invitation from you to attend your next meeting. You may also receive a letter from our stated clerk, but I am writing in advance to insure ample time for notification.

The Reformed Church in the U.S. cordially invites the Canadian Reformed Church to send an observer and to bring greetings at our 1991 Synod meeting.

This year our annual meeting will be held in Garner, Iowa. Our Synod will commence at 7:30 P.M., April 2, 1991 with a worship service and will adjourn April 5, 1991. Please have the observer contact Rev. Howard Hart at (515) 923-3060 regarding arrangements for pick up at the airport and lodging. Your observer will be provided with meals and lodging during his stay with us. He will also be given an opportunity to address Synod according to the agenda. You will receive an agenda when it is available. I have enclosed an accomodation request which is to be completed and mailed to the host church in Garner, Iowa at the address given on the request form.

We would appreciate receiving a letter authorizing your observer to represent your denomination. Please send the letter of authorization to:

Interchurch Relations Committee
Rev. Jonathan Merica, Chairman
245 E. Vine Street
Lodi, CA 95240 * (209) 367-0552

Thank you for your kind attention in this matter and may God bless our churches.

Peace be multiplied unto you,



Rev. Jonathan Merica, Chairman
RCUS Interchurch Relations

July 23, 1991

Canadian Reformed Churches
% Dr. J. Visscher
5734-191 A Street
Surrey, B.C.
Canada, V354N9

Dear Dr. Visscher,

As chairman of the Permanent Interchurch Relations Committee, I'm writing this letter to further implement the desire expressed by the RCUS Synod of 1991 to establish fraternal relations with the Canadian Reformed Churches. That desire was expressed at our Synod by moving and carrying recommendation #4 of the Standing RCUS Committee on Ecumenicity which is as follows:

"That the RCUS continue to investigate establishing fraternal relations with the Canadian Reformed Churches including sending an observer to their 1992 Synod in Lincoln, Ontario."

I have enclosed some materials that should be useful in your evaluation of the Reformed Church in the U.S. If other materials are needed please contact me at (209) 367-0552. My church address is:

Rev. Jonathan Merica
245 E. Vine Street
Lodi, CA 95240

We sincerely hope that establishing fraternal relations may become a reality that we may work together for the advancement of our Savior's Kingdom.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Jonathan Merica

Rev. Jonathan Merica, Chairman
Interchurch Relations Committee

REFORMED CHURCH IN THE U. S. Interchurch Relations Committee

March 16, 1992

Dr. J. Visscher
5734-191 A Street
Surrey, B.C.
V3S4N9 Canada

Dear Dr. Visscher,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who has shed His grace, mercy and peace upon us.

It is our prayer that our Lord will continue to give us His wisdom, guidance and blessing as we work toward establishing fraternal relations with the Canadian Reformed Churches. We are presently seeking membership status in the International Conference of Reformed Churches and are hoping by that to have a closer working relationship with conservative Reformed Churches worldwide.

The purpose of this letter is first to encourage the Canadian Reformed Churches to have an observer present at our 246th Annual Synodical meeting which shall convene on the evening of April 20, 1992 and shall adjourn April 23, 1992.

The other reason for writing this letter is to inquire about the possibilities of the RCUS receiving from the Canadian Reformed Churches a letter of recommendation to join the International Conference of Reformed Churches. We need two recommendations from two member churches. We requested a recommendation from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and, if possible, we would appreciate one from your church as well.

We will be keeping in contact with you regarding the progress of establishing fraternal relations with the Canadian Reformed Churches. If there is any further questions or clarifications please call me at (209) 367-0552 or write to 245 E. Vine Street, Lodi, CA 95240.

May God bless our churches.

Sincerely in Christ,



Rev. Jonathan Merica, Chairman
RCUS Interchurch Relations

APPENDIX X

LETTER FROM THE REFORMED CHURCH IN ZAIRE RE: RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CANRC (JUNE 27, 1991)



EGLISE REFORMEE AU ZAIRE

Reformed Church in Zaire

SIEGE DU SYNODE GENERAL BP 5011

LUBUMBA SHI. SHABA

REPUBLIQUE DU ZAIRE

REV. KAZADI LUKONDA NGUBE-NGUBE

Modérateur et Représentant Légal

Compte bancaire n° 430-0653033-01
BCZ.-Lubumbashi.

Viré:

Date JUNE 27, 1991

Niré:

Concerné : PARTNERSHIP OF OUR 2 CHURCHES

The Canadian Reformed churches
c/o Dr. J. VISSCHER
5734 - 191 A Street
Surrey, B.C.
CANADA V3C 4M9

Dear Brothers in Christ,

We have a great pleasure to write you this letter in order to ask you the relationship of our two sister churches.

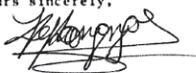
We are a young Reformed Church in Zaire (ERZA) based on the Doctrine of:

- 1.- Belgica Confession of Ginepro de Brès (1561)
- 2.- Catechism of Heidelberg (1563) and
- 3.- Canons of Dort (1618-1619) to which is added the Ecumenical Creeds.

The "ERZA" is established on the fourth large national territory of Zaire and has a total of 70 parishes/congregations in town and countryside or rural presbyteries.

If we have written you this letter, it's simply because we want you to accept our request to maintain our spiritual and moral relationships with your church. Our wish would be also to consider us among your church partners. JOHN 10:16 ; 13:35. God bless you for his glory!

Yours sincerely,


Rev. KAZADI LUKONDA NGUBE - NGUBE
Moderator & Legal Representative



Encls.: Project of the Church's development for assist. us

APPENDIX XI

LETTER FROM THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, MAY 27, 1992, DEALING WITH "FRATERNAL RELATIONS BETWEEN CHURCHES."

At Edinburgh and within the Free Assembly Hall there on Tuesday 19th day of May 1992 which day the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland being met and constituted.

Inter Alia

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Select Committee on Assembly Arrangements and Ecumenical Relations (B) Ecumenical Relations.

It was moved, seconded and agreed that:

4. The General Assembly approve and adopt the following statement regarding Inter-Church Relations:

FRATERNAL RELATIONS BETWEEN CHURCHES

There should be one simple rule to the following effect.

Fraternal Relations should exist between Churches that openly and practically profess the true faith of Christ as summarised in one or more of the classical Reformed symbols - ie the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgian Confession, the Canons of the Synod of Dort.

Certain duties and courtesies devolve upon Churches sustaining fraternal relations.

1. There should be a spirit of cordial love and trust as becomes brothers in the faith.
2. There should be an attitude of mutual helpfulness. Each should be willing to share problems and difficulties with the others. By the same token each should be allowed to exhort to more exact obedience any who appeared to relax faithfulness to their avowed confession. This should not invite inquisitorial interference but to strengthening one another in love for Christ.
3. There should be willingness to accept certificates of communicant membership, normally without personal examination.
4. There should be in the highest courts of the Churches a cordial welcome to visiting delegates from other Churches recognised as in fraternal relationship. This need not amount to according membership in the court to the visiting delegate.
5. There should be willingness to allow ministers of one Church access to the pulpits of fraternal Churches as a matter of courtesy.
6. Churches should exchange copies of the Acts and Proceedings of their highest courts or at least inform one another of major decisions.

Extracted from the Records of the
General Assembly by

Gannet Baker
Clerk of Assembly

APPENDIX XII

COMMITTEE ON RELATIONS WITH CHURCHES ABROAD OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD LINCOLN 1992

Esteemed Brethren,

In light of the additional correspondence received since we submitted our Report to you, it was decided that Synod would be best served if we published a Supplement which would serve to bring you up to date on the latest developments.

I. THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA (FRCA)

1. Correspondence

- a. We received a letter dated Sept. 9, 1992, in which the Deputies informed us about those decisions of Synod Bedfordale which have a direct bearing on us.
- b. We received another letter dated Oct. 12, 1992, in which the Deputies appointed for the ICRC asked us to as yet respond to a previous letter dealing with their concerns with respect to the ICRC. We replied that a letter had been sent to them on March 4, 1991, in which we expressed our reluctance to comment on this matter because it appeared to be an internal matter for the Australian sister churches to deal with. In addition, we referred them to what our Report to Synod Lincoln 1992 say about the ICRC.

2. Acts of Synod Bedfordale 1992

Synod Bedfordale 1992 met from May 18 - June 8, 1992. Some of the following highlights have been gleaned from the Acts:

- a. Synod decided to adopt a four-fold distinction of delegates from other churches, namely, delegates from sister churches, from churches with which Temporary Ecclesiastical Contact (TEC) has been established, delegates with which there is official contact, delegates from churches seeking contact with the FRCA.
- b. With respect to the Training for the Ministry, Synod decided to continue to support the Theological College of the CanRC in Hamilton and to request the churches to forward \$37.50 per communicant member annually for this cause, starting July 1, 1992. The churches were also encouraged to hold regular collections for the Theological Seminary in Pusan, Korea. Correspondence will also continue with the Theological University in Kampen, the Netherlands, in order to maintain contact and obtain information.
- c. Concerning the matter of the *Book of Praise* and the Creeds, Synod decided not to adopt a proposed revised melody and text for Hymn 1. The proposed texts for the Ecumenical Creeds will be studied and a report sent to the next Synod. The new translation of the Canons of Dort was accepted, as were the minor linguistic changes made to the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism.
- d. New deputies were appointed to review the provisionally adopted Church Order and to advise the next Synod on further improvements. The sister churches will be consulted in this matter.
- e. Regarding Bible translation, Synod 1992 decided to recommend to the churches that the New King James Version (NKJV) be used for study, instruction and family purposes but to withhold final endorsement for use in

the worship services, until the churches have become more familiar with it and more study has been made of the NKJV in comparison to the New International Version (NIV). Synod also decided to communicate this decision to the Canadian Reformed Churches “urging the brotherhood in Canada to reach a similar decision.”

- f. Synod adopted new rules for sister relations, as recommended by the deputies. These Rules for Exercising Sister Relations are:

- “1. Sister relations shall be used mutually to assist, encourage and exhort one another to live as churches of God in this world.
2. The churches shall mutually care for each other that they do not depart from the Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline and liturgy.
3. The churches shall inform each other of the decisions taken by their broadest assemblies, if possible by sending each other their Acts or their Minutes and, otherwise by sending the decisions relevant to the respective churches (if possible in translation).
4. The churches shall give account to each other concerning the establishment of relations with third parties.
5. The churches shall accept one another’s attestations, which also means admitting the members of the respective churches to the sacraments upon presentation of these attestations.
6. The churches shall in principle open their pulpits to each other’s ministers in agreement with the rules adopted by the respective church federations. Also the churches agree in principle to the possibility of calling each other’s ministers, while the churches reserve for themselves the right to maintain their own rules in connection with the extension and approval of calls.
7. In cases of substantial changes or additions to the confession, church order or liturgical forms this intention shall be brought to the special attention of the sister churches, so that as much consultation as possible can take place before a final decision is reached.
8. The churches shall receive each other’s delegates at their broadest assemblies and invite them to sit as advisers, as much as possible” (ACTS 1992, Art.95).

Synod also decided “to request the Dutch sister churches to accept and adopt these rules as common rules for our church relations; and to do the same for our other sister churches” (ACTS 1992, Art.95).

- g. A considerable amount of time was spent by this Synod dealing with relations with various churches throughout the world. With respect to these churches, we mention the following (in the order that they appear in the Acts):
- i. The Canadian Reformed Churches – it was decided to continue sister relations and deputies were urged to give more content to the contact, especially with respect to the rules for sister relations.
 - ii. The Presbyterian Church in Korea – it was decided to continue sister relations. Synod noted that there had been an improvement in communication.
 - iii. The Free Reformed Churches in South Africa – it was decided to continue sister relations.
 - iv. The Reformed Churches in Sumba Timor Savu, Indonesia – it was decided to continue sister relations.

- v. The Gereja Masehi Musyafir Churches in Timor, Indonesia – it was decided to continue contact with these churches and to gather more information about them.
 - vi. The Lembaga Reformed Injili Churches, Indonesia – deputies were instructed to gather information about these churches.
 - vii. The Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia – it was decided to work towards mutual recognition of each other as true churches and to continue to study and discuss remaining areas of concern.
 - viii. The Reformed Churches of Australia – it was decided to appoint new deputies.
 - ix. The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands – Synod decided to continue the sister relationship.
 - x. The Reformed Churches of New Zealand – it was decided to maintain the contact and to work towards resolving outstanding issues.
 - xi. The Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore – it was decided to continue the contact with this church. Synod also apologized for the printing of a report which contained information not edifying to the ERCS.
 - xii. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia – it was decided not to appoint new deputies with these small churches but to leave contacts to the local churches.
 - xiii. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland – it was decided to appoint new deputies with the mandate to use the existing Temporary Ecclesiastical Contact to improve the quantity of discussion and exchange of information so that the two churches will get to know each other better.
 - xiv. The Reformed Church in Zaire – it was decided not to accede to their request to establish relations with this church. Synod cited as a consideration the fact that their small bond of churches might become overburdened with contacts.
 - xv. The Free Reformed Churches of the Philippines received the same answer as the Reformed Church in Zaire.
 - xvi. The Free Church of Scotland – it was decided to appoint new deputies and to instruct them to ascertain whether the FCS had ever accepted the offer of Temporary Ecclesiastical Contact made by the FRCA. Deputies were told to use the rules for TEC to improve their contacts and to use them to work towards eventual sister relations.
 - xvii. The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland – it was decided to appoint new deputies but to maintain contact with this church at a low level until such time as an investigation of the RPCA has been concluded.
- h. With regard to the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC), Synod decided to continue the membership until a study of their concerns has been completed and the consultation with the sister churches has been finalized. It was also decided to send two delegates to the 1993 meeting of the ICRC in Zwolle, the Netherlands, as well as to convene a meeting of the sister churches prior or coinciding with this meeting.

3. Considerations

- a. The FRCA are to be commended for the generous financial support which they give to our Theological College in Hamilton.

- b. It is evident that the FRCA have come to a provisional decision on the matter of Bible translation and that they request the Canadian Reformed Churches to come to a similar decision. When Synod Lincoln 1992 deals with the matter of Bible translation, it should take into consideration the decision of our Australian sister churches.
- c. It is also evident that the FRCA has adopted new rules for sister relations and that they desire the CanRC to adopt their rules as “common rules” for all sister churches. While we laud the aim of the FRCA, we do have certain reservations about the rules that they propose.

In the first place, we find that some of them are excessively wordy (compare their rule 1 and 2 to our proposed 1, their rule 6 to our proposed 5). We are of the opinion that new rules should be as concise as possible, in keeping with our present rules.

In the second place, we question the need for rules 1 and 2 as separate rules and are of the opinion that the positive and negative should be combined, as we have attempted to do.

In the third place, we do not believe that the expression “to give account” in their rule 4 and our present rule “e” is a fitting one, seeing that it gives an impression of lording it over another church federation. Neither the FRCA nor the RCN ever “gave account” to the CanRC when they entered into sister relations with the Presbyterian Church in Korea. The CanRC never “gave account” to the sister churches when we established Ecclesiastical Contact with the OPC. No sister church need justify its actions in this regard; however, it does need to inform the sister churches about its actions.

When Synod Lincoln 1992 deals with “rules for ecclesiastical fellowship,” it should take into account the request of the FRCA and mandate deputies to respond to it.

- d. Seeing that the FRCA request a special meeting of sister churches prior to or coinciding with the ICRC meeting in 1993 to discuss their concerns about the ICRC, your Committee proposes that the CanRC delegates be mandated to attend.

4. Conclusion

From the correspondence and the Acts of Synod 1992, the Committee may gratefully conclude that the Free Reformed Churches of Australia desire to be faithful to the Word of God, the Reformed Confessions and the Church Order.

5. Recommendations

Your Committee recommends to Synod 1992 that we continue to maintain a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia in accordance with the adopted rules.

II. THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Your Committee wishes to inform you of a fact that may not have received sufficient attention in our Report. This relates to the confessional basis of the Free Church of Scotland. The FC has, in addition to the Westminster Standards, also adopted the Scottish Confession of Faith of 1560 (see: ACTS 1986, p.194, 3, c).

This Confession further clarifies their position on a number of important issues. For example, on the church Chapter 16 says,

“As we believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, so we believe that from the beginning there has been, now is, and to the end of the world shall be, one Kirk, that is to say, one company and multitude of men chosen by God,

who rightly worship and embrace Him by true faith in Christ Jesus, who is the only Head of the Kirk, even as it is the body and spouse of Christ Jesus.”

On the marks (or notes) of the church, Chapter 18 says,

“The notes of the true Kirk, therefore, we believe, confess, and avow to be: first, the true preaching of the Word of God, in which God has revealed Himself to us, as the writings of the prophets and apostles declare; secondly, the right administration of the sacraments of Christ Jesus, with which must be associated the Word and promise of God to seal and confirm them in our hearts; and lastly, ecclesiastical discipline uprightly ministered, as God’s Word prescribes, whereby vice is repressed and virtue nourished.”

On the admission to the sacraments, Chapter 23 says,

“But we hold that the Supper of the Lord is only for those who are of the household of faith and can try and examine themselves both in their faith and their duty to their neighbours. Those who eat and drink at that holy table without faith, or without peace and goodwill to their brethren, eat unworthily. This is the reason why ministers in our Kirk make public and individual examination of those who are to be admitted to the table of the Lord Jesus.”

III. THE REFORMED CHURCH IN ZAIRE (RCZ)

Your Committee has recently been informed that the Reformed Church in Zaire is not the same church that has a sister church relationship with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. Apparently the official name of this sister church is the Eglise Reformee Confessante au Zaire (ERCZ).

In spite of this misunderstanding, the official and repeated request of the RCZ for sister church relations still stands. Should Synod 1992 decide to mandate the Committee to investigate the RCZ, it should also include the ERCZ and instruct the Committee to investigate what the differences are between these two churches. If this investigation is to be fruitful, it will require the Committee to take up contact with both the RCN and the RCUS seeing that both have sister church relations with the ERCZ.

IV. THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES (ICRC)

1. Correspondence

- a. The Secretary of the ICRC, the Rev. M. van Beveren, has informed us that the following churches have requested membership in the ICRC:

the Free Reformed Church of North America,
the Orthodox Presbyterian Church,
the Reformed Church in the U.S.

Although the agenda has not been finalized, the following topics and speakers have been decided on:

Rev.A.M. Fraser, Redemptive-Historical Preaching.
Dr.N.H. Gootjes, Catechism Preaching.
Rev.C.J. Haak, Reformed Mission.
Prof.J. Kamphuis, Tolerance.
Prof.A.I. Macleod, Christology and Mission.
Prof.W.N.S. Wilson, Prophecy Today.

One more topic and speaker remains to be assigned.

- b. On Aug.28, 1992, the Secretary sent us two reports that will be dealt with at the ICRC in Zwolle 1993. The first report deals with missions and gives an overview of the missionary activities of the member churches. The second report deals with theological affirmation. In it the Committee states that

“it is not necessary to develop . . . a statement” on what is a true church. Furthermore, the Committee states that it “was struck by the apparent similarity between the several sets of rules regarding ecclesiastical fellowship that were accessible to us.” It also concludes “that there exists a consensus between the Reformed Confessions concerning the marks of the true church. Recognizing one another as true churches has consequences with respect to admission to the pulpit, admission to the celebration of the Lord’s Supper and acceptance of attestations or certificates of consistories or sessions.”

Copies of both reports have been appended to this Supplementary Report.

2. Considerations

Although the Reports on Missions and Theological Affirmation have not been evaluated yet in detail by your Committee, it appears that the latter takes away any fears that there may have been about the ICRC attempting to come to a new statement about the church.

3. Conclusion

Your Committee continues to maintain its Recommendations as stated on page 23 of our Report. In addition, the Committee recommends that Dr. J. Faber be appointed an advisor to the CanRC delegation to the ICRC 1993. Under our original recommendation he would be present at the meeting, but only in his capacity as Convener of the Committee on Theological Affirmation. Should he be designated an official advisor on behalf of our churches, he can be involved in all of the pertinent discussions of the Conference.

Respectfully submitted by your Committee
October 28, 1992

Mr. H.A. Berends
Mr. A. Nap
Rev. Cl. Stam
Dr. J. Vanderstoep
Rev. M. Vanderwel
Dr. J. Visscher (convener-secretary)

APPENDIX II

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR CONTACT WITH THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH TO GENERAL SYNOD 1992 OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

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1. MANDATE — COMMITTEE — OVERVIEW

1.1 Mandate from Synod 1989

General Synod 1989 decided to continue the committee for Contact with the OPC, with the specific mandate as recorded in the Acts, Article 94:

- a. to maintain the contact with the OPC, taking into account the rules for Ecclesiastical Contact, with the understanding that the temporary relationship of "ecclesiastical contact" is designed to come to a full sister church relationship in the unity of the true faith and is not intended to continue indefinitely, or become a relationship of permanent status.
- b. to include in the "continued discussions" on "issues of mutual concern" (Synod 1977, Acts, p.42) the statement on Biblical Principles of Church Unity.
- c. to be diligent to continue the discussion on and the evaluation of the divergencies such as the doctrine of the covenant, visible and invisible church, the assurance of faith, the observance of the law, the fencing of the Lord's Table, confessional membership, church-political differences, and the contact with the CRC.
- d. to coordinate the discussion of the divergencies with the discussion concerning the Biblical principles on the unity of the church.
- e. to serve the following General Synod with a report to be sent to the churches at least 6 months before the beginning of this Synod.

- f. to keep the churches informed concerning its activities by means of interim reports and press releases.

1.2 Membership of the Committee

- a. Synod 1989 appointed the following brothers to the committee: Revs. R. Aasman, J. Mulder (convener), D.G.J. Agema; brs. G.J. Nordeman and T.M.P. VanderVen.
- b. Dr. N.H. Gootjes was invited to join the committee in the place of Rev. R. Aasman after the latter moved to Edmonton. Rev. P.G. Feenstra was invited to join the committee in the place of Rev. J. Mulder who was forced to retire due to ill health. The Revs. Aasman and Mulder must be thanked for their labours as members of the committee.

1.3 Overview of the Committee's Activities

Since Synod 1989, the committee has met 26 times; three combined meetings were held with the OPC's Committee for Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations (CEIR); one meeting was held with the Ad Hoc committee appointed by Classis Ontario-South of September 1991. All minutes of the meetings of our committee, outgoing and incoming correspondence, and reports are on file in the archives of our committee and are available to Synod.

Regarding Mandate a:

The committee has maintained contact with the OPC by means of correspondence and visits to two General Assemblies (see section 2.1), and during three meetings with the OPC's CEIR (see section 2.2).

Regarding Mandate b:

The committee did not directly include in the discussions the OPC's statement on Biblical Principles of Church Unity (see section 3.3.a).

Regarding Mandate c:

The committee dealt extensively with the fencing of the Lord's Table and confessional membership (see section 3.1). These discussions related directly to the respective understanding of the doctrine of the church, as well as to church-political differences. Also the contact with the CRC was discussed with the CEIR (see section 3.2.a)

Regarding Mandate d:

In our contact with the CEIR we were unable to coordinate the discussion of the divergencies with the statement concerning Biblical Principles of Church Unity (see section 3.3.a).

Regarding Mandate e:

The present report was submitted to the churches during June 1992.

Regarding Mandate f:

Various reports and press releases were published in Clarion (see section 2.4).

1.4 Definitions

In this report the following acronyms are used:

CanRC	Canadian Reformed Churches
CEIR	Committee for Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations
CRC	Christian Reformed Church
ICRC	International Conference of Reformed Churches
NAPARC	North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council
OPC	Orthodox Presbyterian Church
PCA	Presbyterian Church of America

REC	Reformed Ecumenical Council (was RES: Reformed Ecumenical Synod)
RPCNA	Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America
WCF	Westminster Confession of Faith

2. ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNICATIONS SINCE 1989

2.1 General Assemblies of the OPC

- a. Rev. D.J.G. Agema and br. T.M.P. VanderVen visited the 56th General Assembly of the OPC at Beaverfalls in June 1989. The brothers could bring greetings to the OPC, and speak of the mandate of our committee given by Synod 1989. A report of this visit was published in *Clarion* (Vol. 39, No. 3, 1990).
- b. In 1990, the General Assembly of the OPC was held in California. We were unable to send delegates, but conveyed our Christian greetings by letter.
- c. In June 1991, the brs. Rev. P.G. Feenstra and G.J. Nordeman attended the 58th General Assembly at Beaverfalls. Topics of interest included the ICRC, adding the Three Forms of Unity to the OPC's standards, and the fencing of the Lord's Supper. A report was published in *Clarion* (Vol. 40 No. 19, 1991).
- d. An invitation was received for the 59th General Assembly which was held in June 1992 at Beaver Falls, PA. We were unable to send delegates, but conveyed our Christian greetings by letter.

2.2 Meetings with CEIR

The CEIR consists of nine members, and is charged by the OPC's General Assemblies to maintain worldwide ecumenical contacts on its behalf. Contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches is only a part of CEIR's mandate, while the CanRC have one committee for contact with the OPC and another committee for relation with churches abroad. In order to facilitate matters, CEIR has established a number of subcommittees, although all its members have access to and are involved in all matters before the full committee. Further, the members of the CEIR are drawn from across North America; consequently, it is our understanding that they meet as a full committee only twice every year. Considering these limitations, we are pleased to report that we were able to arrange two full-day meetings and one half-day meeting since Synod 1989.

a. *Burlington, ON: February 1990*

On the agenda of this meeting were the topics (a) the Fencing of the Lord's Supper, and (b) The OPC's relationship with the Christian Reformed Church. Our committee had prepared study papers on these topics. The CEIR had requested further explanations about our comments on their statement of Biblical Principles of Church Unity.

Based on this meeting, it was decided to publish a *Progress Report on Relations Between the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Canadian Reformed Churches* drawn up mutually by the two committees. This report was published in *Clarion* (Vol. 40, No. 15/16, 1991).

b. *Pittsburgh, PA: November 1991*

Originally, this meeting was scheduled for March, 1991, but due to the changes in our committee (Rev. Aasman's departure and Rev. Mulder's retirement) we requested a later meeting, which was eventually scheduled for November 1991 in the Pittsburgh area.

We prepared two papers for this meeting: (a) Regarding the Fencing of the Lord's Table (a continuation of the previous discussion), and (b) Regarding Confessional Membership.

The CEIR raised concerns about recent developments with the American Reformed Church in Denver. They wondered whether the CanRC were interfering in local OPC matters. We requested pertinent information from the OPC about this matter, and recommended that this complaint be put to us in writing in order for us to deal with it properly.

c. *Philadelphia, PA: March, 1992*

This full-day meeting was a continuation of the Pittsburgh meeting. The OPC responded in writing to our discussion papers.

Also the Denver matter was discussed, and we received the following request (Letter March 21, 1992), signed by CEIR's chairman, Rev. J.P. Galbraith:

I am writing to you, as you suggested that we might, concerning procedures to deal with the question of your receiving congregations and ministers that have been or are members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In our meeting, you will recall, we discussed the question of your policy in such matters concerning our church. . . . You are aware that the situation that caused us to raise this with you anew was the recent incident in Denver, CO, which in turn brought to mind the earlier Blue Bell problem. We hope that such problems can be avoided in the future and that we can come to agreement on it as brothers in the Lord.

2.3 Communications

a. *Contact with classes.*

We received several reports from Classis Alberta-Manitoba regarding their contact with Presbytery of the Dakotas. These reports provided us with some insight in the contact between our churches at this level.

b. *Denver.*

The American Reformed Church at Denver, CO, left the PCA, but could not in good conscience join the OPC, and therefore pursued affiliation with the federation of Canadian Reformed Churches. Classis Ontario-South of September 1991 informed our committee about this matter and asked for our input. We received a copy of the report of the classical committee, and met with this committee in January, 1992. Eventually Denver's request was referred to Classis Alberta-Manitoba of March 1992, and we also received a copy of the pertinent decision of this classis. Further communication was received from the consistory of the Church at Coaldale and from the American Reformed Church at Denver, CO.

2.4 Press Releases and Reports

Various reports have been published as mandated by Synod:

- (a) General press release (*Clarion* Vol. 40, No. 15/16, 1991);
- (b) Combined report of the 1990 Burlington meeting (*Clarion* Vol. 40, No. 15/16, 1991);
- (c) Reports of the Fifty-Sixth General Assembly (*Clarion* Vol. 39, No. 3, 1990), and the Fifty-Eighth General Assembly (*Clarion* Vol. 40, No. 19, 1991).

3. ISSUES: CONTACT MAINTAINED — DISCUSSIONS CONTINUED

The contact between the CEIR and our committee has been brotherly and frank. The brothers of the OPC expressed their appreciation for the contact with our churches because in all discussions it was evident that together we wished to submit ourselves in all things to the Scriptures as the final authority; we could, indeed, meet over an open Bible. There was willingness to listen to each other

and understand each other's position and background. The use of discussion papers helped both sides to focus more directly on the issues involved, allowing us to concentrate on the core of some of the differences.

3.1 Divergencies

In our discussions at Burlington, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia, we limited ourselves to the issues of the supervision of the Lord's Supper and confessional membership. These issues were chosen because they came out of the difficulties at Blue Bell and Laurel.

a. *Supervision of the Lord's Supper — Fencing the Table*

Our committee prepared a discussion paper on *The Task of the Elders with Respect to the Supervision of the Lord's Supper*. We outlined the task of the elders to keep the table of the Lord holy. They must do this not only verbally, but also by means of discipline, if necessary by not permitting someone to partake. Supervision is exercised over members as well as guests. This task of the elders does not take away or contradict the calling of each member to examine herself or himself (1 Cor.11). We asked some questions from the CEIR arising from the report that served at the 50th General Assembly which dealt with the appeal of Rev. Barry Hofford cum suis. A key point raised was: May we risk abuse of the Lord's Supper, in order not to deny the Supper to those who are joined to Christ and to His church visible? (See Synod 1986, Acts, p.165 for the context of this question.)

In answer, the CEIR referred to pertinent materials in their subordinate standards which indicate that the Table needs to be supervised. They maintained that the difference is not whether we supervise the Table, but how we do this. They wrote,

Notably, our standards do not stipulate a set procedure to be followed by the session. It seems fair to say that, so far as good order and spiritual welfare are concerned, the Supper is adequately fenced by using the form [found in the Directory of Worship, 4, C-2], or an equivalent. That the Supper is to be fenced is mandatory. How that is to take place is, in large part, an adiaphoron; not even the form provided need be used verbatim.

The point of the discussion is the OPC's practice of admitting guests on the basis of a verbal warning. In answer to the question what the wider implications of this practice are for the doctrine of the church, we received this answer,

It is the conviction of the OPC that there are other churches, including non-Reformed churches, that are true churches, and that members in good standing in such churches do, however defectively, make a credible profession of faith in Christ and so ought to be welcomed to his Table in the OPC congregations. There is, after all, only one Christian church (1 Cor.1:13; Eph.4:4), and to that one church, by implication, comes the command to partake of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor.11:26). A controlling conviction of the OPC is that while the Supper must be rigorously exclusive so far as the world is concerned, for the church – subject to the provisions already noted – it must be as inclusive as possible.

We questioned whether the distinction between members and guests does not leave the Table unprotected from unworthy participation. The OPC brothers asked us: Can we deny the Lord's Supper to one who belongs to the covenant people of God?

In the Fall of 1991, we continued the discussion and focused on the extent of the authority of the elders, the supervision of the table by the consistory and individual responsibility, the fencing of the Table in relation to the doctrine of the church, the administration of the sacrament in the local congregation, and the fact that the same standard ought to be used for members as well as for guests. We pointed out that their practice to admit guests only on the basis of a verbal warning is not in agreement with the requirements of the Westminster Confession:

Although ignorant and wicked men receive the outward elements in this sacrament, yet they receive not the thing signified thereby; but by their unworthy coming thereunto are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord to their own damnation. Wherefore all ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with him, so are they unworthy of the Lord's Table, and can not without great sin against Christ, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto (emphasis ours) (WCF XXIX.8).

For the better attaining of these ends, the officers of the Church are to proceed by admonition, suspension from the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper for a season, and by excommunication from the Church, according to the nature of the crime and demerit of the person (WCF XXX.4; emphasis ours).

The discussion centred on two elements. First, the differences between the OPC and the CanRC regarding the supervision of the Lord's Table are said to arise from differences in ecclesiology: the anomaly in the particular treatment of members and guests results from the OPC's desire to acknowledge the larger unity of the visible church. Second, the importance of the verbal warning was emphasized. The OPC suggested that by emphasizing so strongly the tasks of the elders there may seem to be a depreciation of the power of the Word on the part of the CanRC. We stressed that the consistory has the responsibility to fence the table and in executing its mandate must go by observable data. The practice of using attestations was explained in this context. We also pointed out that profaning the Table will affect the whole congregation (HC LD 30, Q&A 82).

In Philadelphia (March 1992), the CEIR gave a written response to our discussion papers. The OPC does not deny the obligation of the elders to discipline by suspending from the Lord's Supper those who are unworthy. According to the OPC, the issue that divides us is not restricted communion, as if the CanRC protect and restrict the Table, while the OPC does not do so; rather the focal issue is the status and treatment of visitors. They wrote,

You point to what you consider to be an anomaly in our practice, because in coming to the Table in OP churches, members of the local congregation are subject to much more stringent supervision and discipline by that local session than visitors. We feel the weight of your observation; visitors and members are treated differently, so far as the oversight of the session is concerned. But our concern is for what we consider a true anomaly: that the visitors for whom Christ died and who belong to his church (visible as well as invisible) be kept from this gathering of the church around the one Table of the Lord. We believe that the exclusion of one of Christ's flock is at least as serious as the unworthy intrusion of goats who ignore clearly given admonition and warnings.

And,

It could be said that in this matter the CanRC are concerned for the purity of the church, the OPC for its unity. We believe that you would

join with us in rejecting the false polarity in such a statement. The unity and purity of the church are inseparable; they are functions of each other. We continue to believe, in the existing ecclesiastical realities of our time, that the range of practice in the OPC is a defensible, though not the only, way to preserve to the honor of Christ the Head and for the maintenance of God's covenant the bond between the purity and unity of the church.

We showed that both quotations bring out a false dilemma. Their reasoning seems to be that it is a lesser sin to profane the Table than to exclude a child of the Lord from the Table. We objected to this reasoning since it is contrary to the Three Forms of Unity, and also to the Westminster Standards. Similarly, although the OPC rightly warns against a false polarity, their position could lead to sacrificing the purity of the Church for the sake of a perceived unity of the Church. We may not play off the one against the other.

b. *Confessional Membership*

This matter was first discussed during our meeting at Pittsburgh (November 1991), where our committee presented a discussion paper on the topic. We compared the Form for the Public Profession of Faith as published in our *Book of Praise* with that published in the OPC's *Directory of Worship*. We asked questions about some of the differences in formulation and pointed out some of the problems associated with a qualified subscription to the confessions. We stressed that we are bound to our confessions because they are a summary of God's Word. The Reformed faith is not one kind among several equally acceptable faiths, but it is the true and complete doctrine of salvation.

In the discussion, the brothers of the CEIR pointed out that those who make public profession in OPC congregations often come from the outside, whereas usually those who make profession of faith in the CanRC are born in Reformed families and brought up in the Reformed faith from early childhood. In the view of the OPC brothers, someone who desires to become a member yet has problems with parts of the confession should be admitted as a member if he is willing to be instructed.

In Philadelphia (March 1992), we could discuss the OPC's written response. First, the differences in wording between the two Forms were explained as a difference in formulation only and not in substance. The expression "the doctrine of the Word of God" as used by the CanRC is not to be considered different from the OPC's "its [the Bible] doctrine of salvation." Second, the liberty given to ministers to adapt some of the questions, we were assured, did not allow a change in substance of the questions, but permits consideration of circumstances. Third, in the OPC's understanding, the phrase "the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures" does not refer to a system hidden somewhere in the Standards, but is identical to or coextensive with them in their entirety.

The difference in practice is that the CanRC ask explicitly for a profession of the Reformed faith, while the OPC requires a credible profession of faith. The brothers of the OPC formulated this difference as follows: *The CanRC are only for one sort of believers, Reformed believers. The OPC is for all believers who are willing to submit to the Reformed teaching and discipline.* Our committee objected to such a dilemma. We maintained that believers who are willing to submit to the Reformed teaching and discipline are Reformed believers, despite differences in the level of understanding.

In our discussion paper we stated that because we confess our faith with the church of all ages we should bind our members to the confessions. The CEIR stated their position in this way:

Precisely because "when we profess our faith we do so in communion with the confessions of the church of all ages and places" [Ecumenical, Lutheran, and perhaps others, as well as Reformed confessions], "the personal and communal aspects of one's profession of faith" do not lead to an unqualified subscription to the confessions of the church (emphasis original).

The following quotation clearly focuses the difference between the CanRC and the OPC. They wrote,

We affirm what you reject – that the church is competent to determine as valid and credible a confession of the Christian faith for communicant membership that is not also in full accord with the church's confession.

The examples used in the discussion were that of those who refused to accept infant baptism or were Arminian in their thinking. Our committee maintained that though we may vary in depth of understanding, we cannot accept variations in the breadth of what we believe. All communicant members are bound to the confession of the church without qualification.

3.2 Third-Party Relationships

a. *Christian Reformed Church*

During the Burlington meeting (March 1990) we pointed out that in the judgment of Synod 1986 the relationship of the OPC with the CRC remains a stumbling block towards reaching full correspondence. In addition, we mentioned that although the OPC was critical concerning the CRC in their discussions with us this criticism did not always reach the CRC itself. We also warned that pulpit exchange with the CRC leaves the OPC pulpits open for the wrong teachings of the CRC.

The brothers of the OPC admitted that they had not always addressed the CRC as they should have. They explained that due to the intense attention given to the REC (RES) and the PCA, this matter had moved somewhat to the background. They promised to take our points to heart.

We are thankful to be able to report that at the 1991 General Synod of the CRC, the delegate of the OPC was quite critical of the course of the CRC which endangered its Reformed heritage. The CEIR reported to the 58th General Assembly that they initiated within NAPARC a proposal calling upon the CRC to reverse its decision regarding women in office. Yet the OPC and the CRC continue to receive each other's delegates at their assemblies or synods, pulpit exchange continues to take place by local option, and there are voices within the OPC which oppose severing ties with the CRC.

b. *Reformed Presbyterian Church of North-America*

The 56th General Assembly of the OPC decided in principle to work towards organic union with the RPCNA. They have concurring synods/assemblies and joint sessions. There are still discussions about the distinctives of the RPCNA, and some points regarding the OPC which prevent union at this time.

c. *Relationship OPC and PCA*

Although the OPC continues to discuss the procedure of uniting with the Presbyterian Church of America, the interest in organic union has

decreased in recent years. In the meantime, a number of OPC sessions and ministers, feeling more comfortable with the practices and “vision” of the PCA, left the former to realign themselves with the latter.

The PCA continues to insist that union must come about by a process of joining and receiving. The PCA was willing to make some accommodations to this procedure and therefore asked CEIR to prepare a statement of stipulations or conditions that would help unite the two churches. CEIR has informed the ministers, sessions and presbyteries of the PCA's action and has asked for their suggestions.

d. *New Relationships of Ecclesiastical Fellowship*

The 58th General Assembly accepted the CEIR's recommendation to cordially invite the Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken), the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland, the Free Church of Scotland, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland to enter into a relationship with the OPC.

e. *International Conference of Reformed Churches*

The 58th General Assembly decided to decline the invitation to send an observer to the REC in Greece (1992). Instead, it decided to send observers to the 1993 meeting of the ICRC at Zwolle, the Netherlands. These observers will serve as delegates if and when the OPC is received as a member church.

f. *NAPARC*

The OPC is a member of NAPARC. We refer to this because the OPC's rules for fraternal relationship are the rules adopted in the NAPARC. Churches that enter into ecclesiastical fellowship implement where possible and desirable the following:

- a. exchange of fraternal delegates at major assemblies;
- b. occasional pulpit fellowship (by local option);
- c. intercommunion (regulated by each session);
- d. joint action in areas of common responsibility;
- e. communication on issues of joint concern;
- f. the exercise of mutual concern and admonition with a view to promoting the fundamentals of Christian unity.

3.3 Issues from the General Assemblies

a. *Biblical Principles of the Unity of the Church*

Synod 1989 mandated our committee to incorporate this statement of the OPC in our discussions. We found this difficult to do, though the doctrine of the Church was an important part of our discussions.

The statement *Biblical Principles of the Unity of the Church* was prepared by the OPC with a view to their contact with the PCA. The OPC asked for further input, and this was given in the January 1989 meeting in Burlington, and the OPC took note of our comments. Since the prospect of joining and receiving of these two churches is at this moment not very likely, this statement is not as much in the foreground as before. Its value is found in the fact that it summarizes the principles which guide the OPC also in its contact with us. The OPC sees as ultimate goal of all ecclesiastical contact the coming together in one worldwide Reformed/Presbyterian church.

b. *Committees Appointed*

The 58th General Assembly appointed two committees which are of importance for our contact. A committee was appointed to examine the method

of admission of guests to the Lord's Supper; this committee will report to the 60th General Assembly (1993). A second committee was appointed to study the desirability and the feasibility of the OPC adding the Three Forms of Unity to its present confessional standards and of establishing a common Presbyterian and Reformed church order so as to provide a basis for unity into one church body of all those who are committed to one faith.

4. EVALUATION

Thankfully we can conclude that, as a whole, work in this committee has been rewarding. From both sides we want to be faithful to the Scriptures in obedience to the Head of the Church. Both sides want to defend the Reformed heritage, and there is a mutual desire to continue working towards a closer relationship in recognition of the command of our LORD.

This is not to say that the relationship was always smooth. First, there are the geographic distances which hamper easy communication and quick answers to questions. Second, the OPC's approach to the contact differs markedly from that of the CanRC. In our opinion, the OPC seeks to maintain fraternal relations between our churches, and uses the contact to discuss matters of common interest. Our mandate charges us with the continued discussion of issues of mutual concern in the hope of resolving the divergencies which prevent a closer relationship between our churches. Third, the confusion, even contradiction, within our own churches regarding our relationship with the OPC caused tension at our joint meetings with the CEIR.

4.1 Progress of Relationship

Synod 1989 added to the mandate of our committee the following stipulation:

with the understanding that the temporary relationship of "ecclesiastical contact" is designed to come to full sister church relationship in the unity of the true faith and is not intended to continue indefinitely, or become a relationship of permanent status (Synod 1989, Acts, Article 94, a).

The committee has tried to fulfil this part of the mandate in two ways. First, we have conveyed this sentiment to the OPC at the General Assembly level. Second, we have tried to keep this in mind in our discussions. We asked for written answers in the hope that this will bring the mutual discussions further.

a. Doctrinal Divergencies

In the matters discussed – the Fencing of the Lord's Supper and Confessional Membership – some misunderstandings have been taken away, some points have been clarified, but differences remain. Whether these divergencies stem from ecclesiological and/or historical differences continues to be a part of the discussion. Both the CEIR and our committee wish to pursue this.

In terms of the committee's mandate, little progress has been made towards resolving these issues. The OPC remains firm in allowing the practice of admitting guests from non sister churches to partake in the Supper on the basis of an oral warning. They maintain that a credible profession need not be a confession of the Reformed faith. In view of the above, we are, therefore, confronted with the question: Is it our task to continue to explain our position on these points and leave it at that? Does the OPC have to change its position in order to allow us to continue, or should we be satisfied with the progress made? It seems to us, that these are questions which Synod will have to address.

We have not dealt with some of the other divergencies: the doctrine of the covenant, visible and invisible church, the assurance of faith, the obser-

vance of the law, as well as church-political differences. One of the reasons was the lack of time to deal adequately with all these issues included in the committee's mandate. Further, we decided to concentrate on the major issues arising from the Blue Bell and Laurel cases.

b. *Third-Party Relationships*

It can be noted with thankfulness that the OPC was willing to consider our questions regarding their contact with the CRC. We are grateful for their warnings directed towards the CRC voiced by their delegate to the CRC's General Synod 1991. Yet the fact remains that locally pulpits are open to CRC ministers. This has to do with the OPC's involvement in NAPARC. In the committee's opinion, the relationship between the OPC and CRC remains a cause for concern.

With regard to the RPCNA, the OPC is in principle committed to organic union. We understand that the discussions between the OPC and the RPCNA are not in the final stages as yet because there remain major differences. It is this committee's opinion that the relationship between the CanRC and the OPC is not automatically transferrable to the RPCNA (see also Synod 1986, Acts, Article 126, D.1.b).

The relationship with the PCA has changed considerably. Some congregations have left for the PCA. This took some of the impetus out of the OPC's desire to join with the PCA, even though the OPC and the PCA continue to exchange fraternal delegates. We recommend that this receive continued attention.

c. *Practice of Church Life*

With regard to the practices at a local level, our committee offers the following observations. There remains a variety of opinions and practices within the OPC in the manner in which local congregations apply certain principles. For instance, the practice of admitting guests to the Lord's Table varies from congregation to congregation to the point that there is strong disagreement among the members of the OPC themselves. This is evident in our discussions with the CEIR. Some of their members expressed agreement with our concerns.

We have limited knowledge of what really happens in the local congregations. In our discussions, points related to difference in background and milieu are often brought forward by the brothers of CEIR. Local practices may be more varied than comes out in the discussions between our committees.

Finally, we wonder in how far local OPC congregations are aware of the issues discussed. The CEIR reports, included in the Minutes of their General Assemblies, are not as "public" as our reports to Synod. Certainly there is no public debate within the OPC about its relationship with the CanRC.

4.2 Developments

Previous General Synods have dealt with the situations at Blue Bell and Laurel. These two congregations left the OPC because of doctrinal differences and were eventually accepted into our federation. In the past year, a new development has arisen at Denver, when the Christ American Reformed Church requested admission into our federation. Classis Ontario-South of January 1992 referred the Denver request to Classis Alberta-Manitoba. Classis Alberta-Manitoba of March 1992 denied this request.

It will be clear that these developments have significant consequences for our current relationship with the OPC. We have declared each other to be true

churches of our Lord Jesus Christ, but as yet we have been unable to come to pulpit exchange and intercommunion. Synod 1989 considered that certain divergencies are not impediments to recognize each other as true churches, yet they can be impediments to come to a full sister church relationship (Synod 1989, Acts, Article 94, IV, 2). The two lines in this reasoning can lead to a varying appreciation by ecclesiastical assemblies of the relation of the CanRC with the OPC. This is exemplified by the recent decisions of Classis Ontario-South of January 1992 and Classis Alberta-Manitoba of March 1992 in relation to the Denver request for affiliation.

Further, the mandate of our committee as given by Synod 1989 includes a broad array of issues. Within the context of the recent developments, this has led the CEIR to ask our committee whether we still consider the OPC to be a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. We responded to this question on the basis of the decision of Synod 1977 to recognize the OPC as a true church of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Article 29 of the Belgic Confession. Yet at the same time we are mandated to question the OPC on very important matters such as the fencing of the Lord's Table and confessional membership. These are key issues which to date prevent a closer relationship between our churches. It is this committee's understanding that these discussions have as purpose to come to full correspondence (Synod 1977, Acts, Article 91, 3, c).

In the meantime, the CEIR lodged a formal complaint with us during the Pittsburgh meeting (November 1991) because of perceived Canadian Reformed interference in internal OPC matters. This resulted in CEIR's request to discuss procedures to deal with the question of receiving congregations and ministers that have been or are members of the OPC (see section 2.2.c).

It will be clear that these developments also make the work of our committee, representing our churches, rather difficult. Therefore we place the following questions before Synod:

- a. How shall the CEIR's request regarding procedures to deal with receiving congregations and ministers that have been or are members of the OPC be answered?
- b. What is our committee's role in situations such as these? In this connection we refer to Synod 1986, Acts, Article 137, in which Synod requested a close cooperation between our committee and Classis Ontario-South with respect to the "Hofford" case. This decision seems to imply a role for our committee in cases where churches seek affiliation with our federation, but it is not clear how our committee can legitimately become involved.
- c. At a more general level, how can we continue to speak about and aim for a sister church relationship with the OPC while we accept churches into our federation which used to be part of the OPC? We ask Synod for clarification, since this has a direct bearing on our relationship, and on the nature of the contact which we have with the OPC.

4.3 The Committee's Mandate

In preparation of our report the committee reviewed the mandates given by previous Synods. We noted that originally the contact resulted in a request to the OPC to recognize our churches as true churches of our Lord Jesus Christ (Synod 1965). The OPC acknowledged us as such (Synod 1968). At Synod 1977, at the request of the OPC, the CanRC recognized the OPC as a true church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

From the very first, our churches engaged in a discussion of various divergencies with the OPC. Over time, these divergencies received increased emphasis as a condition for continued efforts towards full correspondence (Synod 1986).

Throughout the contact with the OPC, two elements have been at play: (a) the mutual recognition of each other as true churches, and (b) the discussion of the divergencies which hinder full ecclesiastical correspondence. The changes in emphasis on either one or the other element seem to have led, in our view, to a lack of clarity in the formulation of the mandate given by the various Synods.

We like to make the following observations:

- a. Synod decisions do not always clearly reflect the recommendations of the reports submitted. On a number of occasions, the Acts do not contain a clear judgement on these reports, while the recommendations of Synods are often different from those proposed by the committee. This leaves it unclear whether in these instances the committee dealt appropriately with that particular part of the mandate. Two examples: what is the status of the work done in the report submitted to Synod 1968, (Acts, Supplement V); and what is the status of the report *Evaluation of Divergencies* which was received by Synod 1986 (Acts, Article 126)?
- b. Mandates have been provided which differ in specificity. It is not clear, therefore, whether certain items that are not included in the committee's mandate by a following Synod are to be considered as having been dealt with sufficiently. Some examples: the matter of *He descended into hell* has not been pursued since Synod 1971 for no stated reasons, while items such as *the assurance of faith* and *the observance of the law* resurfaced at Synod 1989, also without reasons given. These items were not included in Synod 1986's mandate which charged this committee in a general manner to *continue the discussion on divergencies, which are an issue of mutual concern*.

We ask Synod for a focused mandate to make it possible to clearly determine whether progress has been made in the discussions of the divergencies and issues of mutual concern.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee recommends that General Synod 1992 of the Canadian Reformed Churches decide:

- a. to gratefully acknowledge the commitment of the OPC to be faithful to the Scriptures and defend the Reformed heritage, and to note with gratitude its warnings against the course taken by the Christian Reformed Church.
- b. to encourage the OPC to remain faithful to the Scriptures in their examination of the method of admission of guests to the Lord's Supper, and in their study of the desirability and feasibility of adding the Three Forms of Unity to its present doctrinal standards (see section 3.3.b).
- c. to respond to the question raised by the CEIR with regard to the problem of receiving congregations and ministers that have been or are members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church while maintaining official contact (see section 2.2.c).
- d. to acknowledge that the issues of the fencing of the Lord's Supper and confessional membership have been addressed, and that these discussions have led to clarification and better understanding, but also to a more focused articulation of the differences, preventing at this moment a closer relationship.
- e. to acknowledge that there is a need for patience in our efforts to seek true unity in obedience to Christ's command.
- f. to continue the committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with the following mandate:
 1. to maintain the contact with the OPC, according to the rules for "Ecclesiastical Contact" as determined by Synod 1977.

2. to continue the discussion of divergencies by focusing on the differences in ecclesiology (see 4.1.a).
3. to continue to discuss and evaluate the current third-party relationships of the OPC, and to urge the OPC to break contact with the Christian Reformed Church (see 4.1.b).
4. to serve the churches with regular reports of the work of the committee.
5. to serve General Synod 1995 with a report, to be sent to the churches at least six months prior to the beginning of Synod.

We wish the General Synod God's blessing and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in its deliberations. It is our prayer that the contact of the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church may lead to unity in full obedience to God's Word and to the greater glory of the Head of the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. D. G. J. Agema, convener
Rev. P. G. Feenstra
Rev. Dr. N. H. Gootjes
Br. G. J. Nordeman
Br. T. M. P. VanderVen

June 15, 1992

APPENDIX III

STANDING COMMITTEE FOR THE PUBLICATION OF THE BOOK OF PRAISE

REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD LINCOLN 1992

Esteemed brothers,

The Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* is pleased to submit a report on the activities in which it has been engaged in fulfilling the mandate received from the General Synod of Winnipeg 1989.

Before reporting on the way the committee has functioned, we wish to take this opportunity to honour the memory of one of our fellow members, brother John G. Van Huisstede, whom the Lord unexpectedly took to Himself on April 23, 1990. Having been appointed by the General Synods held in 1980, 1983, 1986, and 1989, brother Van Huisstede served on the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* for almost a decade. Always deeply interested in any effort to improve congregational singing in our midst, he for many years used his musical talents for the benefit of the churches. We thank the Lord for the contribution which brother Van Huisstede was enabled to make.

1. PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION

Since the number of copies printed in 1987 has almost been depleted, Premier Printing Ltd. has been asked to begin preparations for a third printing. In spite of the possible short-term inconvenience, the committee decided that in the present circumstances it would be best to postpone this printing until immediately after Synod 1992. Any changes adopted by Synod can then be included without delay in what is likely to be the long-awaited complete and definitive edition.

2. RENEWAL OF CONTRACT

In keeping with the regulations adopted by Synod Cloverdale 1983, the committee's contract with Premier Printing Ltd. was renewed in 1990 for another five-year period, i.e., until February 1995.

3. CORPORATE STATUS

As instructed by Synod, the committee has maintained its status as a corporation (516455 Ontario Ltd.) in order to be able to protect the interests of the Canadian Reformed Churches in all matters pertaining to the *Book of Praise*.

4. PUBLICITY

The committee continues to respond to the frequent inquiries it receives concerning the *Book of Praise* and to deal with requests for the use of copyright material.

5. HARMONIZATIONS

In connection with the committee's mandate to stimulate interest in the possible publication of a book of harmonizations intended to facilitate the use of the *Book of Praise* in the English-speaking world, it can be reported that some initial indications of such interest have been received from a party potentially able to undertake such a venture.

6. SCRIPTURE REFERENCES TO THE BELGIC CONFESSION

Synod 1989 charged the committee with the task of completing the addition of Scriptural references to the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort, and the Liturgical Forms (see Art. 60; cf. p. 190). Such references already appear in the margin of the Canons of Dort (as adopted by the same Synod) and of the Liturgical Forms (as adopted previously). The committee has now fulfilled its man-

date by adding Scripture references in footnote form at the end of each article of the Belgic Confession. The use of footnotes is necessary since the references are too numerous to be placed in the margin. The *Gereformeerd Kerkboek* of our sister churches in the Netherlands served as our general model. (See Appendix A.)

We further propose that in the preface to the final edition of the *Book of Praise* as a whole it be pointed out that the added Scripture references do not form an integral part of the Confessions.

7. NICENE CREED

A linguistic revision of the Nicene Creed has now been completed. In this connection the committee wishes to acknowledge the advice and assistance of Dr. N.H. Gootjes. The proposed version is hereby presented to Synod for its consideration. (See Appendix B.)

8. PREFACE TO CREEDS

In accordance with what Synod 1989 specified in Art. 60 (cf. p. 190), the prefaces to the Creeds and Confessions have been reviewed and, where necessary, updated and improved. (See Appendix C.)

9. MATERIAL ADOPTED BY SYNOD 1989

The committee was instructed to insert into the *Book of Praise* the final versions of the Creeds, Confessions, and the Church Order, as adopted by Synod 1989. Since the next printing of the *Book of Praise* is scheduled to appear right after Synod 1992 (see point 1, above), this material has not been inserted as yet. It can therefore be included in the new printing along with any final changes to be adopted by Synod 1992.

10. ALTERNATE MELODY FOR HYMN 1A

Synod 1989 instructed the committee "to make the new melody with the 'new text' [of the Apostles' Creed] by br. D. Zwart available to the churches and evaluate any response from the churches" (Art. 145.D.2.j). This new melody, along with a harmonization also prepared by Mr. Zwart, was mailed out in December 1989. (As a matter of courtesy, a copy was also sent to the Deputies for the Church Book of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia for their information.) August 31, 1991, was set as the deadline for reactions from the churches.

We hereby report to Synod that all the churches which have submitted a response are unanimous in their view that the Zwart melody should not be inserted in the *Book of Praise*. It may further be concluded from the comments received that the churches also see no need for any other alternate tune. (The above-mentioned Australian deputies as well as the Australian churches which reported to them expressed the same opinions.)

Those persons who submitted other or revised melodies for Hymn 1A were informed that the mandate given to the committee by Synod 1989 in this respect was limited to making the Zwart melody available and evaluating the response of the churches.

11. FUTURE REVISION

If a linguistically revised Nicene Creed is adopted and the other proposals affecting the contents of the *Book of Praise* are also accepted, it can be expected that the edition to be printed after Synod 1992 will be the definitive version for some time to come. Whereas it is recognized that perfection has not been reached and that proposals for change and requests for improvement will therefore continue to be submitted, the committee recommends that a policy be established in this regard, namely, that synods distinguish between (a) changes, additions, or corrections which must be inserted as soon as possible or can be inserted without caus-

ing any inconvenience for those using the *Book of Praise* and (b) changes or additions which are to be collected until such time when a synod will decide to replace the present *Book of Praise* with a completely new or thoroughly revised edition.

Since, in keeping with synod decisions, the music printed in the *Book of Praise* is not subject to alteration until that time, it should be mentioned that in the present situation a three-person committee can adequately deal with the mandate proposed below and that the additional appointment of a musical expert is therefore not required at this stage.

12. FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to any recommendations made above, we propose to Synod

- a. that the Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise be continued and that the size of the committee be kept at three members;
- b. that this committee be given the mandate
 - i. to function according to the arrangements for publishing and distribution accepted by General Synod Cloverdale 1983 (see 1983 Acts, pp. 297-99);
 - ii. to maintain its corporate status in order to be able to protect the interests of the Canadian Reformed Churches in all matters concerning the *Book of Praise*;
 - iii. to implement all synod decisions regarding the contents of the *Book of Praise*;
 - iv. to foster an increased awareness of the existence of the *Book of Praise* among others and to promote the availability of a book of harmonizations facilitating the use of the *Book of Praise* in the English-speaking world;
 - v. to serve as the address to which any correspondence regarding the *Book of Praise* can be directed

Respectively submitted,

J. DeJong
W. Helder (convener/reporter)
M. Kampen

April, 1992

APPENDIX B

THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of the Father before all ages,
God of God, Light of Light,
true God of true God,
begotten, not made,
of one substance with the Father,
Through Him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation,
He came down from heaven;
by the Holy Spirit
He became incarnate of the virgin Mary and was made man.
He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered and was buried.
On the third days He rose again,
according to the Scriptures;
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and Giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
He with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the prophets.

And we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look forward to the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

APPENDIX C

REVISED PREFACES TO THE ECUMENICAL CREEDS

THE APOSTLES' CREED

This creed is called the Apostles' Creed, not because it was written by the apostles themselves, but because it contains a brief summary of their teachings. It sets forth their doctrine, as has been said, "in sublime simplicity, in unsurpassable brevity, in beautiful order, and with liturgical solemnity." The Apostles' Creed is based on the creed used in Rome around 400 A.D., which in turn goes back another two hundred years. It is typical of the creeds used in the western part of the Roman empire.

THE NICENE CREED

The Nicene Creed, also called the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed, is a statement of the orthodox faith of the early Christian Church, in opposition to certain heresies, especially Arianism. These heresies concerned the doctrine of the Trinity and of the person of Christ and were refuted at the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.). Yet it was not this council but the Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.) which adopted the Nicene Creed. This Council incorporated into its creed various formulations from the decisions of Nicea and expanded the confessions concerning the Holy Spirit. The Nicene Creed is typical of the creeds used in the eastern part of the Roman empire. Both the Eastern and Western church held it in honour, although with one important difference. The Western church included the phrase "and the Son" (known as the *Filioque*) in the article on the procession of the Holy Spirit, a phrase which to this day is repudiated by the Eastern church.

THE ATHANASIAN CREED

This creed is named after Athanasius (293-373 A.D.), the champion of orthodoxy over against Arian attacks on the doctrine of the Trinity. Although Athanasius did not write this creed and it is improperly called after him, the name persists because until the seventeenth century it was commonly ascribed to him. It is also called the *Quicumque*, this being its opening word in the Latin original. Apart from the opening and closing sentences, it consists of two sections, the first setting forth the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity (3-28), and the second dealing with the doctrine of Christ, especially concerning the two natures (29-43). The teachings of Augustine (354-430 A.D.) in particular form the background to the Christological section. The creed itself appears for the first time in the first half of the sixth century, but the author is unknown. It is of Western origin, and is not recognized by the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

APPENDIX IV

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES TO THE GENERAL SYNOD OF LINCOLN, 1992

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

Reverend M. VanderWel, Secretary, 3837 Karen Drive, Cultus Lake, BC, V0X 1H0.
Telephone: (604) 858 1955

Reverend and Esteemed Brothers,

The Board of Governors of the Theological College hereby submits to your assembly its report over the academic years 1989-1990, 1990-1991, and 1991-1992.

GENERAL

The board is pleased to report that during the past three years the work at our College could continue without interruption. Each semester the lectures have been visited by the Governors and they could report to the Board with thankfulness that the instruction at our College is given in accordance with the Word of God and in harmony with the Reformed Confessions. At these visits they also had a pleasant communication with the members of the Faculty as well as with the students. They received the impression that the atmosphere within the College community is good.

Once in a while the regular Series Lectionum was changed somewhat in order to make room for a guest lecture, or to allow one of the professors to attend a conference or to visit the Churches, of which changes the Board was always duly notified. In the second semester of the past academic year Prof. C. Van Dam has started again, on an extra hour, to give an elective course for the Senior year in Old Testament Aramaic.

During the past three years five students have graduated from our College. Two of them have accepted a call to one of our Churches. In September five new students (four from our Churches and one from a sister Church in Australia) have been admitted, which means that at present fifteen students are enrolled at our College. Besides this, inquiries regarding future admission have been made by nine other brothers, of which two are from Australia. This shows that under the blessing of the Lord our College continues to meet its purpose. In November 1990 a new *Handbook* concerning our College was published for the years 1990-1993, which contains all the necessary information for those who are interested in our College and its courses. The Registrar's Reports of the past years give evidence that there is a growing interest in our Theological Studies, not only with other colleges in Canada, but also with persons from various places all over the world.

FACULTY

With respect to the Faculty the following can be reported. The academic year 1989-1990 was marked by a time of transition. On December 7, 1989 Dr. J. Faber officially terminated his twenty-one years of service at our Theological College. In appreciation for the work which Dr. Faber has done for our College a Festschrift composed by colleagues and others has been presented to him. During the period of August 27 until November 13, 1990, Dr. J. Faber, accompanied by his wife, has made the trip to Australia which was offered to them by General Synod Winnipeg 1989. In the last two weeks of this period they also visited New Zealand, be it on a personal basis. The Board received from the hand of Dr. Faber an extensive report on this trip. His visit has certainly strengthened the bond between the Australian Churches and the College of our Churches. Dr. Faber's faithful and stimulating labour for our College will be thankfully remembered.

Dr. N.H. Gootjes began his work as professor of Dogmatics in January 1990. On May 1, 1990 Dr. J. De Jong entered the service of the College as professor of Ecclesiology and Diaconology. After a summer of preparation he started his lectures in the Fall of 1990. On May 4, 1990 Dr. K. Deddens delivered his final lecture. His contribution to the College for six years will be gratefully remembered. With great appreciation the Board likes to mention that on May 13, 1991 Prof. J. Geertsema saw his studies in Toronto crowned with a Master of Theology degree from Wycliffe College and the University of Toronto. When Prof. J. Geertsema was appointed by Gen. Synod 1986 as a professor at our College, he received the honorarium equivalent to that of a professor-with-tenure, but not the actual status of a professor-with-tenure. We recommend that your assembly direct the Board of Governors to give to Prof. Geertsema as yet tenure. As is evident from the Reports of the Principal, during the last three years several of our Professors have visited our Churches in different parts of Canada, while they also have contributed to important extra-curricular events with their knowledge and expertise.

The salaries of the members of the Faculty have been reviewed and increases have been set to be effective January 1, 1993, based on the prescribed formula.

Although Prof. L. Selles is not a member of the Faculty any longer, we do like to mention under this heading the fact that our emeritus Professor of New Testament on April 20, 1991 was allowed to celebrate his fiftieth anniversary as Minister of the Divine Word. To this may be added that during the past academic year Dr. and Mrs. J. Faber and Dr. and Mrs. K. Deddens could celebrate their fortieth anniversaries of both their marriages as well as of their respective office of Minister of the Word. Noteworthy is also that, when Dr. J. De Jong attended the Latin American mission conference in Brazil in October 1991, the Rev. G. Van Dooren (at the age of 81!) was willing and able to conduct two sermon sessions at our College.

In its meeting of September 10, 1992 the Board has re-appointed Dr. J. Faber and Prof. L. Selles as members of the Senate for a period of three years.

PRINCIPALSHIP

In accordance with the appointments made by General Synod 1989 as of January 1, 1990, a Rotating Principalship is now in place at our College. Since Dr. C. Van Dam was appointed as the first one to serve as a Principal in this system, we now propose that your assembly appoint Prof. J. Geertsema as Principal for the period of September 1, 1993 to August 31, 1996, and that it designate Dr. N.H. Gootjes Principal for the period of September 1, 1996 to August 31, 1999, the LORD willing. We also like to bring to your knowledge that after consultation with the Senate, the Board, in its meeting of September 10, 1992, has adopted a proposal to grant to our Professors "Sabbaticals," which are preferably to be taken two years after the Professor has completed service as Principal. Proper stipulations for such research leaves have been drawn up, of which a copy is added to this report. The Board requests Synod to give its approval to this decision.

STAFF AND FACILITIES

The College continues to highly value the dedicated labours of the Administrative Assistant and Assistant Librarian, Miss Catherine Mechelse and of its Associate Librarian, Ms. Marian Van Til. Their salaries were recently reviewed and increases were allowed. In this framework we also like to mention with great appreciation the volunteer work which through the past years has been done by Mrs. Marsha Ostermeier and Mrs. Allison Schutten. On November 15, 1989, Mrs. Ostermeier's husband was taken to the LORD. When she, at the beginning of this year was not able to continue, Mr. U. Krikke has offered his time and services. Without the help of these volunteer workers the Library could not function properly. From the latest Report of the Librarian it appears that the College Library presently contains approximately 20,000 volumes while it subscribes to 140 periodicals and journals. Thanks to the

ongoing and generous support of the Women's Savings Action, new works could be purchased and the computerization of the Library upgraded. As the Women's Savings Action has made available an interest free loan, also the offices of the professors could be equipped with a computer. Needless to say, our College community is very appreciative for the support of our women. We remember with gratitude the labours of Mrs. C. Lindhout who, along with her husband has meant so much for the Women's Savings Action during its first years. In the past year she was called home by the LORD.

As the Reports of the Finance and Property Committee can tell, the College Building has been well maintained and the Committee is still diligent in looking after its upkeep.

RETIREMENT AND APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNORS

After General Synod 1989 the Board of Governors as well as the Academic Committee had their regular annual meetings. The Finance and Property Committee met more often in order to look after the administration of finances and current matters concerning the property. The Principal, Dr. C. Van Dam showed himself thereby to be an important liaison between the Committee and the College community. The Annual Reports of this Committee, which are added as appendices to this Report, can give you some more detailed information about its activities.

Due to the retirement of the appointed Auditor of the books of the College, Robinson, Lott & Brohman, the Finance and Property Committee has asked Mrs. Aafke Spithoff, C.A. of Burlington, ON to do the auditing for the year ended at May 31, 1991 as well as for the year ended May 31, 1992. Both her reports have been accepted by the Board. As according to the Act of the College, point 6.-(1), no. 4, the auditor needs to be appointed by General Synod, we ask your assembly to ratify this interim appointment of Mrs. A. Spithoff as Auditor of the books of the College.

In accordance with the regulations of the College Act, several members of the Board of Governors, and especially of the Academic Committee, are to retire. The vice-chairman of the Board, Rev. P. Kingma, the secretary, Rev. M. VanderWel as well as Rev. J. Van Rietschoten have all retired from active service in the ministry. Rev. Cl. Stam, chairman of the Board, and br. A.L. VanderHout, chairman of the Finance and Property committee, have both served for nine consecutive years which is the maximum allowed. The Board hereby expresses its thankfulness for all the work they have done in their respective capacities. We also like to remember the deep sorrow which Rev. and Mrs. Cl. Stam experienced when on May 10, 1992 two of their children were involved in a serious accident, in which the LORD took their son, Edward Martin unto Himself and in which their son Richard was seriously injured. May the Lord continue to uphold and strengthen Rev. and Mrs. Stam and their family with the comfort of His Word and Spirit. To be mentioned is also that in the beginning of this year Rev. P. Kingma and Mrs. Kingma have been seriously ill. We are thankful that the LORD has kept them together.

In its meeting of September 10, 1992 the Board dealt with the position of those members of the Board who, during their term, retired from active service in the Ministry. The discussion of this matter resulted in the adoption of By-Law Number 12, a copy of which is added to this report for your approval.

From the foregoing it is clear that in the appointments which are to be made by your assembly for the Board of Governors, five brothers are not eligible for re-appointment.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Board is thankful for the spiritual and financial support which our College continues to receive from the Canadian and American Reformed Churches and from the Free Reformed Churches in Australia. The attendance of our annual College Evenings as well as the personal donations and gifts are all tokens of the special place which our College has in the hearts of our Church members.

With respect to the position of the Women's Savings Action Committee, which ongoing support has been indispensable through the years, the Board, in its meeting of September 5, 1991, declared by way of motion: "To assist the W.S.A.C. in resuming its original independence and to do this to the mutual satisfaction of both parties."

In its meeting of September 6, 1990 the Board adopted two By-Laws. By-Law Number 10 pertained to the establishment of a Publication Foundation, which aim it is to publish scholarly work on a periodical basis. According to its latest Report preparations are under way for a first volume on the work of Dr. K. Schilder. The generous financial support from within the Churches for this purpose is much appreciated. By-Law Number 11 concerned the establishment of the Faber-Holwerda Bursary Fund and of a Committee for this Fund. Meanwhile, this Fund has begun to function and thankful use has been made of it already. Another Bursary for the support of needy students who are preparing themselves for the ministry of the Word has been offered to us by the Christian Disciple Fund. The Board has gratefully accepted this offer. Both By-Laws, Number 10 and Number 11 are added to this report for your approval.

On the basis of the above report we respectfully submit to your assembly the following recommendations:

1. To receive this report and all its appendices
2. To accept the resignation of the ministers P. Kingma, Cl. Stam, M. VanderWel and J. Van Rietschoten and of br. A.L. VanderHout as Governors with grateful acknowledgement of their labours, and pursuant to Section 5(2) of the Act and Section 3.04 of By-Law Number 1 (as amended);
 - a. to appoint, elect or re-appoint or re-elect six active ministers [in accordance with section 3.04(a) of By-Law Number 1 (as amended) to hold office until the next General Synod and to appoint at least three substitutes from each Regional Synod area;
 - b. to re-appoint the brs. H. Buist, and C.G. Heeringa as Governors for a term from the date of their re-appointment until the first General Synod held after the date of their re-appointment;
 - c. to re-appoint the brs. K.J. Veldkamp and A. Van Egmond as Governors for a term from the date of their re-appointment until the second General Synod after the date of their re-appointment;
 - d. to appoint br. H.J. Sloots of Burlington, ON as a Governor for a term from the date of his appointment until the third General Synod after the date of his appointment (with as alternate: br. H.F. Stoffels of Stoney Creek, ON); a "curriculum vitae" of these brothers will be available at Synod.
3. To direct the Board to give to Prof.J. Geertsema the status of a Professor-with-tenure.
4. To appoint Prof. J. Geertsema as Principal for the period of September 1, 1993 to August 31, 1996, and to designate Dr. N.H. Gootjes Principal for the period of September 1, 1996 to August 31, 1999, the LORD willing.
5. To consider the audited financial statements and the report of the Auditors for the previous fiscal periods.
6. To ratify the interim appointment of Mrs. A. Spithoff C.A. as Auditor until the next General Synod.
7. To ratify and confirm the acts of the Board of Governors and of its committees for the years 1989, 1990, 1991, and 1992 until the day of this report.
8. To give your approval of the By-Law Number 10, Number 11, and Number 12, as submitted to your assembly.

Submitted at Hamilton, ON, this 1st day of October 1992, by the Board of Governors
of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Rev. C.I. Stam, chairman
Rev. P. Kingma, vice-chairman
Rev. M. VanderWel, secretary
Mr. C.G. Heeringa, treasurer
Rev. B.J. Berends
Mr. H. Buist
Mr. A.L. VanderHout
Rev. J. Van Rietschoten
Rev. C. Van Spronsen
Mr. K.J. Veldkamp

BY-LAW NUMBER 9

BEING A BY-LAW TO AMEND BY-LAW NUMBER 1

BE IT ENACTED as a by-law of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches as follows:

1. To delete Section 3.02 of By-law Number 1 and substitute therefore the following:

“3.02 – *Qualifications* – In addition to the qualifications set out in the Act, no person shall be qualified for election or appointment as a Governor if he is an undischarged bankrupt, if he is mentally incompetent or incapable of managing his affairs, if he has not attained 21 years of age, or is over 70 years of age. At least six (6) Governors shall be active ministers of the Word. If a minister ceases to be an active minister at any time during his term of appointment, provided that he otherwise continues to be qualified to serve as a Governor in accordance with By-law Number 1, he shall continue to be qualified to serve as a Governor until the next Synod of the Churches. No person shall be a Governor unless he is a confessing member, in good standing, of one of the Churches.”

BY-LAW NO. 10

**BEING A BY-LAW RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
A PUBLICATION COMMITTEE**

BE IT ENACTED as a by-law of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches as follows:

1. *Composition* – The Publication Committee shall consist of:
 - (a) the Faculty; and
 - (b) one (1) representative of the Finance and Property Committee designated by the Finance and Property Committee from time to time.
2. *Objectives – Purpose* – The purpose of the Publication Committee shall be:
 - (a) the publication and dissemination of scholarly writings of the Faculty and other Reformed scholars, at the discretion of the Publication Committee; and
 - (b) the establishment of a periodical publication containing such scholarly work; all of which shall be consistent with the basis of the College as described in section 4 of the Canadian Reformed Theological College Act, 1981.
3. *Meetings – Records* – The Publication Committee shall meet as often as is necessary, as determined by the Publication Committee and shall keep proper records of its meetings and maintain all records pertaining to its duties.
4. *Funding* – The Publication Committee shall, as much as is possible, seek all of its funding through private sources. Any funds received by the College designated as being for the purposes of the Publication Committee shall be held by the Treasurer of the Finance and Property Committee in a separate account, to be dealt with as directed by the Publication Committee. The Publication Committee shall operate on a non-profit basis. Any profits earned on any project shall be applied to future projects.
5. *Publication Content* – The Publication Committee shall determine in its sole discretion whether any manuscript submitted is worthy of publication. Such manuscripts shall be accompanied, without limitation, by the recommendation of a scholar in the field of study to which the manuscript relates or by the recommendation of a member of the Senate.
6. *Annual Report* – At least once annually the Publication Committee shall report in writing to the Senate as to its activities which report shall include, without limitation, the nature of the writings published, the current work and the financial status of the Publication Committee.
7. *Offices* – The Publication Committee shall determine as to whether offices within the Committee are to be designated, and if so designated, the Publication Committee shall determine the nature of the offices and who shall hold same, all of which shall be within its sole and absolute discretion.

Duly confirmed in writing by all of the members of the Board of Governors as of the 6th day of September, 1990.

*

Rev. B.J. Berends

Rev. P. Kingma

Rev. Cl. Stam

Rev. M. Vanderwel

Rev. J. Van Rietschoten

Rev. C. Van Spronsen

H. Buist

C.G. Heeringa

A. Van Egmond

A.L. Vanderhout

K.J. Veldkamp

* W.S. B.J. Berends, P. Kingma, Cl. Stam, M. Vanderwel, J. Van Rietschoten, C. Van Spronsen, H. Buist, C.G. Heeringa, A. Van Egmond, A.L. Vanderhout, K.J. Veldkamp

BY-LAW NO. 11

**BEING A BY-LAW RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE
FABER-HOLWERDA BURSARY FUND AND THE
FABER-HOLWERDA BURSARY COMMITTEE**

WHEREAS the College has received from Dr. J. Faber the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) for the purposes of establishing a bursary fund (hereinafter the "Faber-Holwerda Bursary Fund");

AND WHEREAS it is in the best interests of the College to establish a Faber-Holwerda Bursary Committee for the purposes of administrating the Faber-Holwerda Bursary Fund;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ENACTED as a by-law of the College as follows:

1. *Faber-Holwerda Bursary Committee* – The Faber-Holwerda Bursary Committee (the "Committee") shall consist of:
 - (a) one (1) member of the Faculty to be chosen from time to time by the Faculty;
 - (b) a representative of the Finance and Property Committee who shall be, unless unusual circumstances exist as determined by the Finance and Property Committee, the Treasurer of the Finance and Property Committee; and
 - (c) a representative of the Faber family chosen by the Faber family in such manner as they deem appropriate, that is, the family of Dr. J. Faber.
2. *Purpose* – The purpose and responsibility of the Committee shall be the administration of the Faber-Holwerda Bursary Fund, being the fund established upon the payment of the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) (the "Initial Contribution") by Dr. J. Faber to the College, together with such additional funds as may accrue on account of interest from time to time or any additional amounts received by the College designated to be and form part of the Faber-Holwerda Bursary Fund (such additional funds are hereinafter referred to as "Additional Capital Contributions" with the total capital held from time to time, referred to as the "Fund").
3. *Meetings* – The Committee shall meet at least once yearly to review and consider any applications received for the disbursement of monies from the Fund.
4. *Quorum – Votes* – Two (2) members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and questions arising at any meeting of the Committee shall be decided by a majority of votes and in the case of an equality of votes, the question shall be deemed to be defeated. Unless circumstances otherwise dictate, the annual meeting of the Committee shall be in the month of November in each calendar year. In addition, any Committee member has the right to call additional meetings provided that fifteen days' written notice of such meeting is delivered to each Committee member, together with a written notice of the matters to be dealt with at such meeting.
5. *Committee Status* – The Fund shall at all times be dealt with administratively by the Treasurer of the Finance and Property Committee. Notwithstanding, the disbursement of the funds and the investment of same shall be determined by the Committee as set out below.
6. *Annual Report* – The Committee shall report to the Board of Governors of the College on an annual basis, as to its operations for the prior twelve (12) month period, including without limitation, all financial matters.
7. *Administration of the Fund* – The administration of the Fund shall be left to the discretion of the Committee. It shall be in the discretion of the Committee to establish and determine the appropriate application form and to establish and finalize all notices relating to same whether for the solicitation of further funds or the solicitation of applications.

8. *Limitation of Funding* – Notwithstanding the discretion granted to the Committee as stated above, the following limitations shall apply with respect to the disbursement of funds from or within the Fund:

- (a) the Fund is not intended to replace governmental or ecclesiastical funding but is to be available to students of the College over and above funds already received;
- (b) the amount of funds available for disbursement shall be no greater than eighty percent (80%) of the interest earned on the capital amount held by the Fund from time to time. The “capital amount” held from time to time shall include the Initial Contribution, all Additional Capital Contributions together with all accrued interest either unavailable for distribution, or available for distribution but not distributed;
- (c) any excess interest, that is, the twenty percent (20%) not available for distribution, shall be added to the Initial Contribution and any Additional Capital Contributions;
- (d) in years subsequent to the calendar year 1990, the amount of funding available for distribution shall be equal to:
 - (i) eighty percent (80%) of the interest earned on the Initial Contribution and any Additional Capital Contributions; plus
 - (ii) eighty percent (80%) of the interest earned on any excess interest not available for distribution and added to the Initial Contribution and any Additional Capital Contributions; and
- (e) all moneys held by the Fund from time to time shall be invested in such investment certificates or otherwise as is determined in the sole discretion of the Committee.

Duly confirmed in writing by all of the members of the Board of Governors as of the 6th day of September, 1990.

*

Rev. B.J. Berends

Rev. P. Kingma

Rev. Cl. Stam

Rev. M. Vanderwel

Rev. J. Van Rietschoten

Rev. C. Van Spronsen

H. Buist

C.G. Heeringa

A. Van Egmond

A.L. Vanderhout

K.J. Veldkamp

* W.S. B.J. Berends, P. Kingma, Cl. Stam, M. Vanderwel, J. Van Rietschoten, C. Van Spronsen, H. Buist, C.G. Heeringa, A. Van Egmond, A.L. Vanderhout, K.J. Veldkamp

**PROPOSAL TO SYNOD LINCOLN 1992 RESPECTING
SABBATICAL POLICY OF THE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE
OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES**

Whereas in accordance with Bylaw No. 1, Section 3.15 (d) the Board has the power: "for good and sufficient reasons to grant a professor or lecturer a leave of absence for such period or periods and upon such terms and conditions as may seem proper";

And whereas the Board has determined that it is in the best interests of the Theological College, the College community and the students of the College that a Sabbatical Policy be developed;

The Board of Governors of the Theological College presents the following proposal concerning sabbaticals for adoption by Synod:

I Description of Program

The College supports a paid research leave program which will enable faculty to engage in creative, scholarly, or professional activity. Research leaves are granted to faculty members when there is demonstrable benefit to the individual and the College.

If at all possible Sabbatical leaves should be taken in the three year period after a principalship has been completed. Preferably a sabbatical will be taken two years after one has completed service as principal.¹ Given the probable difficulty of finding suitable replacement teachers, the above is only the most desirable scenario and maximum flexibility should be allowed in arranging the timing of sabbaticals.

Research leaves are for a period of up to twelve months but can be for shorter periods of time.

II Eligibility

1. As a rule, a professor will be eligible for a sabbatical after serving as Principal, that is once every twelve years.
2. A research leave will be granted on the basis of an evaluation of the appropriateness of the planned scholarly activity for the professional development of the faculty member, for the academic program of the College, and for the furtherance of knowledge in general. In order to be eligible for a research leave, a faculty member must give evidence of having done preliminary research or creative activity related to the proposed project.

III Conditions Pertaining to the Research Leave

1. The granting of a research leave is conditional on the College's finding a suitable replacement (in consultation and cooperation with the Senate) to ensure the continuity of the academic program. Temporary replacements shall be appointed by the Board of Governors.
2. Compensation received from external sources (not designated for special sabbatical expenses) in excess of regular salary will be subtracted from salary paid by the College.
3. The College shall budget each year one third of the amount needed to grant a sabbatical and provide a replacement.²
4. A faculty member on research leave shall not teach regular courses on a full- or part-time basis at another institution.
5. The faculty member, upon completion of a research leave, is expected to return to his position at the College for at least two years.

6. Upon completion of the research leave, the faculty member will provide the Senate, through the Academic Dean with a written report describing the progress and the results of the scholarly activity during the leave.

IV Application for Research Leave

1. Application for research leave must be made before August 1 of the year preceding the academic year during which the research leave is to take place.
2. Application must be made to the Academic Dean who will discuss the matter with the Vice-Principal before bringing it to a full Senate meeting for approval.

The application must include a description of the project, its benefit for the faculty member, College, and the academic community, a description of the work done in preparation of the research leave, a time schedule and, if necessary, a financial budget. Furthermore, the applicant should, if possible, give a proposal for his replacement.

3. A decision to grant, or not to grant, the research leave will be made on the annual meeting of the Board of Governors prior a year prior to the requested Sabbatical. Any decision to grant a research leave is conditional on suitable arrangements being effected to continue the academic program in the absence of the faculty member on leave.

Respectfully submitted
on behalf of the Board of Governors

*

Karl J. Veldkamp, secretary
of the Finance and Property Committee
of the Theological College of the
Canadian Reformed Churches

* W.S. K.J. Veldkamp

¹The rationale for this preference is twofold:

- a. It would appear that after a three year Principalship there is inadequate preparation time for a sabbatical. However, after two years lecturing without any additional responsibilities, a sabbatical could crown these two years of preparatory work to either finish a project or bring it closer to completion.
- b. For the short run it would provide two years of lead time to work any financial implications into a budget.

²One sabbatical after every three year principalship means one sabbatical every three years on average. For the practical consequences in terms of costs, see "Senate Report re Possibilities For Sabbatical" attached to this proposal as Appendix I for information.

APPENDIX I

SENATE REPORT RE POSSIBILITIES FOR SABBATICAL

submitted to the Board of Governors, 10 January 1992

I MANDATE

In their September meeting, 1991, the Board of Governors decided to ask the Senate of the Theological College for input respecting the feasibility of offering every retiring principal a sabbatical.

II MAIN ISSUES

Two issues need to be addressed.

In the first place, there must be a replacement for the faculty member on sabbatical. We have no choice here considering our system of teaching. The courses must continue to be given.

In the second place there is the matter of finances. We will attempt to give an educated guess at what we are probably looking at.

III STAFFING NEEDS

general observations

1. It is impossible to know what possibilities there are for future replacements for sabbaticals. It would, however, be realistic to consider that we may run into difficulties in always providing for ideal replacements.
2. All professors, however, should be treated alike. Every professor that decides to take advantage of a sabbatical provision should be able to do so. This should normally be done at some time within three years after being principal.
3. Different situations may arise. A professor who is due for a sabbatical may be replaced by
 - i. a Canadian or Dutch colleague who has retired, or by
 - ii. a Canadian Reformed minister with special gifts in the field, or by
 - iii. a combination of Canadian Reformed ministers with special credentials, (and/or by a capable graduate student).

Adopting a schedule for sabbaticals would thus imply endorsement of any of the above possible scenarios. Since sabbaticals would be given every three years, some flexibility of sabbatical dates within one or two years is possible, but no greater range of flexibility than that.

IV FINANCES

an overseas replacement

If one were to imagine a scenario in which a replacement from the Netherlands could be found, the following can be noted.

1. Regarding finances, a rough calculation in today's dollar terms yields the following possibility:

housing for nine months	\$ 9000
salary (@ \$ 1500 to 2000 per month and taking pension into account)	13500 - 18000
trip (for both the replacement and spouse)	1500
TOTAL	\$ ca. 30,000

If the time period were a half a year the respective costs would be approximately \$ 5,000 (for housing), \$ 7,500 to 10,000 (for salary), plus 1500 (for trip) to a TOTAL of ca. \$ 16,500.

2. These totals are a very rough estimate and do not include very many unforeseen expenses such as health insurance etc. and should probably be seen as a bare minimum.
3. Since a principal retires every three years, at least \$ 10,000 should be placed on the budget each year for future sabbaticals. With 6,500 communicant members, this total works out to about \$1.50 per communicant member per annum. Of course if a sabbatical were taken for half a year (e.g. Semester IIA and B), the picture would change.

V OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The above considerations are the main ones respecting feasibility. If the Board of Governors goes ahead with this and the proposal materializes, other issues will need to be looked at closely; e.g., guidelines for the terms of a sabbatical leave (including project proposal and approval etc.). It is also conceivable that a professor would rather not take a sabbatical because he has no specific research project or goal that he would like to work on full time.

On behalf of the Senate

*

C. Van Dam, Academic Dean

* W.S. C. Van Dam

APPENDIX V

SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT

(for the period June 1988 to May 1989)

by THE FINANCE AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE
to THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS of the THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE
OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
August, 1989

August 31, 1989.

The Board of Governors of the Theological College
of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Esteemed Brothers:

The Finance and Property Committee is pleased to submit the Seventh Annual Report for the period June 1988 to May 1989.

1. ACTIVITIES GENERALLY

During this past year the committee met three times at the College building under the capable chairmanship of br. C.M. Loopstra until his retirement as Governor and member of the Finance and Property Committee. As his successor br. A.L. Vanderhout was elected and appointed as chairman. Much appreciation is expressed for the large amount of organizational work that was done by br. Loopstra and for the many years he served as Trustee and later as Governor. As well our Treasurer, br. Kampen completed his term of Governor and as such as Treasurer of the College. Also this brother dedicated much time to the financial affairs of the College and did so in a very professional manner. We thank him for his many varied services. Under his supervision the transition to a computerized system was completed. To fill the vacancy the committee elected and appointed br. C. Heeringa as Treasurer.

Synod Winnipeg 1989 appointed the brs. A. Van Egmond (Smithville) and K.J. Veldkamp L.L.B (Toronto) as Governors (serving on the Finance and Property Committee). Br. K. J. Veldkamp was elected and appointed as Secretary. All appointments are subject to the approval of the Board of Governors.

Br. H. Buist has as special function the supervision of all building and property maintenance and is our vice-chairman. Br. C.G. Heeringa continues as our delegate to the meetings of the Library committee. We may report that all the committee meetings were attended by all the members. Prof. Dr. J. Faber was present at our meetings as Principal of the College in an advisory capacity. Our meetings were also attended by Miss C. Mechelse our Administrative Assistant. Due to the passing on of Sr. G. Selles we had no meeting with the Women's Savings Action as was planned earlier this year. Minutes of all our meetings were sent to the Board of Governors as well as to the Deputies for the Training for the Ministry of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia.

2. PROPERTY

For four years now we have occupied the present College facilities and it serves our purposes very well.

General repairs and maintenance receive our full attention. When funds are available some major repairs will be completed. The library is now air-conditioned which is appreciated by faculty members, staff and students.

3. FACULTY AND STAFF

As per Synod decision (Burlington West 1986) the salaries of the Professors are reviewed yearly. One Professor receives retirement benefits, which were adjusted this past year due to the passing of his spouse.

Discussions have been held with Dr. Gootjes regarding his move from Korea via Holland to Canada. It would appear that satisfactory arrangements have been made. It is doubtful however, that he will be in Canada by September 1, 1989.

Miss C. Mechelse and Miss M. Van Til are our regular administrative and library staff: their salaries were reviewed also and increases allowed. Miss Joanne Bartels and Miss Hilda Bruinsma served us on a part-time basis.

4. FINANCES

By and large the churches support the College faithfully. We submit the May 31, 1989 year end financial statement and may report that "all appears well" with the College finances. The College remains in good standing with our National Department of Revenue and is recognized as a non-profit and charitable institution.

You will again note an increase in our net equity and a healthy balance in the fund administered by the Women's Savings Action. This committee increased the book allowance from the fund to \$15,000 yearly. We especially remember the tremendous amount of work and love for the College that our late sister Geraldine Selles had, whom the Lord called home soon after last year's convocation evening.

Mrs. E. Mulder (Burlington West) was added as committee member earlier already and has now become the convener. Mrs. Lorraine Lindhout, the Treasurer of the Women's Savings Action expressed her intention to retire from her function. In this vacancy Mrs. C. Zietsma (Hamilton) was appointed, while Mrs. J. Van Dam (Burlington East) was appointed as Secretary. These appointments are all subject to the approval of the Board of Governors.

The general insurance coverages of the College assets and our liability insurance were reviewed and adjusted where necessary.

The tuition fees are established one year in advance.

For the 1989 - 1990 course the amounts are as follows:

Canadian Reformed full-time	\$1325.00
Non-Canadian Reformed full-time	\$4000.00
Canadian Reformed part-time	\$ 20.00 per unit
Non-Canadian Reformed part-time	\$ 45.00 per unit
Canadian Reformed auditors	\$ 15.00 per unit
Non-Canadian Reformed auditors	\$ 25.00 per unit

The Committee is to submit its recommendations for tuition fees for the 1990 - 1991 course to the meeting of the Board of Governors in September 1989.

5. BUDGET

Subject to approval by the Board of Governors the 1990 budget requires a substantial increase in contributions by the church members: an increase of \$8.00 to \$53.00 per communicant member.

This increase is primarily due to the appointment of two new professors and related expenses. The churches will receive the new budget well in advance of their own local preparations of the 1990 church budget. College assessments are on a calendar year basis, even though the College's fiscal year has a different date.

6. CONCLUSION

All honour and glory is rendered to the Head of the Church who again enabled the entire College community to work for the benefit of His churches in Canada, the

United States, Australia and abroad at the mission fields.

The foregoing report represents fairly the major activities of the committee for the year 1988 - 1989.

All of which is respectfully submitted this 31st day of August 1989 A.D.

With brotherly greetings,
Yours in Christ,

The Finance and Property Committee of the
Board of Governors of the Theological College
of the Canadian Reformed Churches

*

A.L. Vanderhout, Chairman

K.J. Veldkamp, Secretary

C.G. Heeringa, Treasurer

H. Buist

A. Van Egmond

*Original signed and placed in archives.

EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT

(for the period commencing June 1, 1989 to and including May 31, 1990)

by THE FINANCE AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE
to THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS of the THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE
OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
September, 1990

September 6, 1990

The Board of Governors of the Theological
College of the Canadian Reformed Churches

Esteemed Brothers:

The Finance and Property Committee (the "Committee") is pleased to submit the Eighth Annual Report for the period commencing June 1, 1989, to and including May 31, 1990.

1. GENERAL ACTIVITIES

The Committee is pleased to report that the Lord enabled its members to meet six (6) times over the last year under the very capable chairmanship of A.L. Vanderhout. C.G. Heeringa acts as the Committee's Treasurer and K.J. Veldkamp, LL.B. as the Committee's Secretary. H. Buist serves as our Vice-Chairman and supervises all building and property maintenance. A. Van Egmond completes our Committee.

With rare exception, we are pleased to report that all meetings were attended by all the Committee members.

Consistent with our authorizing Act, Dr. J. Faber attended all Committee meetings to and including our meeting of December, 14. 1989, in his capacity as the Principal. Commencing with our meeting held on January 19, 1990, Dr. C. Van Dam as the new Principal assumed this task and now attends all our meetings, acting as a very important liaison with the College community.

Our meetings are also attended by the College's administrative assistant, Catherine Mechelse.

Minutes of all our meetings have been circulated to all Members of the Board of Governors as well as to the Deputies for the Training for the Ministry of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia.

2. PHYSICAL PROPERTY – MAINTENANCE

The College continues to serve us well, although we expect that the Library, because of its ever expanding size, may require our attention in the not too distant future.

At present there are no immediate concerns. General upkeep and maintenance has continued as in prior years. Special mention should be made of the upgrading of the computer facilities of the College with the assistance of the Women's Savings Action Committee. Each professor will now have his own dedicated terminal, there will be a separate dedicated terminal for the Library cataloguing and the office terminal will be utilized strictly for administration. We expect that this upgrading will serve the College extremely well.

3. FINANCES RELATING TO FACULTY AND STAFF

Consistent with Synod direction, the salaries of all Professors are reviewed periodically. The next increase is scheduled for January 1, 1991, based on the pre-

scribed formula. With the retirement of Dr. J. Faber there are now two professors who receive retirement benefits. Miss C. Mechelse and Miss M. Van Til continue to serve us in their capacities as administrative assistant and library assistant respectively. Their salaries were reviewed and increases allowed.

The arrival of Dr. J. De Jong and Dr. N.H. Gootjes, the retirement of Dr. J. Faber and the retirement and moving of Dr. K. Deddens resulted in substantial effort by the Committee. To summarize;

- a) the retirement of Dr. J. Faber proceeded orderly effective Jan. 1, 1990;
- b) Dr. N.H. Gootjes arrived in early September of 1989, thankfully in time for convocation, 1989. His duties commenced effective September 1, 1989;
- c) Dr. J. De Jong has taken up his position effective May 1, 1990 and
- d) Dr. K. Deddens retired effective June 30, 1990.

All moving allowances have been allocated and the relocation allowance have been paid. The special requests and consideration that Dr. Deddens has requested have been dealt with. It is expected that the Board will review this matter in further detail.

4. FINANCES

We may thankfully report that the churches continue to support the College faithfully, including continued healthy contributions from our sister churches in Australia.

Together with this report you will have received the audited financial statements for the year ending May 31, 1990, and the proposed budget for the year June 1, 1990 to May 31, 1991. The College remains in good standing with Revenue Canada and maintains its status as a charitable and non-profit institution.

5. TUITION FEES

It is our recommendation that the tuition fees for the 1991-1992 school year remain at the same level as that for 1990-1991. The particulars of the fees charged can be found elsewhere.

6. WOMEN'S SAVINGS ACTION COMMITTEE ("WSAC")

Mrs. E. Mulder (Chairman), Mrs. J. Van Dam (Secretary) and Mrs. C. Zietsma (Treasurer) continue as members of the WSAC. The Committee met with the WSAC representatives in April of 1990 to consider and review a draft by-law intended to govern the continued operation of the WSAC. This meeting went very well and you will note that a draft by-law is to be considered by the Board. Special note should be made of the continued substantial financial support that the WSAC provides to the College. In addition, the WSAC has recently agreed to provide an additional \$7,500.00 for the computerization of the Library, with an additional \$13,000.00 (approximate) available as a loan on an interest free basis, repayable within four years. Truly an extraordinary gift.

7. BUDGET

Subject to the approval of the Board of Governors, the 1990-1991 budget requires an increase in contributions by communicant members of \$ 1.00 to \$54.00 per communicant member commencing January 1, 1991. See the comments of our Treasurer found elsewhere regarding this matter.

8. BY-LAWS

As stated previously, a draft by-law relating to the WSAC is to be reviewed by the Board. There also will be draft by-laws relating to the Faber-Holwerda Bursary Fund and the Publication Committee. These draft by-laws have been considered informally to date.

9. CONCLUSION

All honour and glory is rendered to the Head of the Church who again enabled the entire College community to work for the benefit of His churches in Canada, the United States, Australia and abroad at the mission fields.

The foregoing report represents fairly the major activities of the Committee fro the year 1989-1990.

All of which is respectfully submitted this 6th day of September, 1990 A.D.

With brotherly greetings,
Yours in Christ,

The Finance and Property Committee of the
Board of Governors of the Theological
College of the Canadian Reformed Churches

*

A.L. Vanderhout, Chairman

K.J. Veldkamp, Secretary

C.G. Heeringa, Treasurer

H. Buist, Vice-Chairman

A. Van Egmond

*Original signed and placed in archives.

NINTH ANNUAL REPORT

(for the period commencing June 1, 1990 to and including May 31, 1991)

by THE FINANCE AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE
to THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS of the THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE
OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
September, 1991

September 5, 1991

The Board of Governors of the Theological
College of the Canadian Reformed Churches

Esteemed Brothers:

The Finance and Property Committee (the "Committee") is pleased to submit the Ninth Annual Report for the period commencing June 1, 1990, to and including May 31, 1991.

1. GENERAL ACTIVITIES

The Committee is pleased to report that the Lord enabled its members to meet three (3) times over the last year under the very capable chairmanship of A.L. Vanderhout. C. Heeringa acts as the Committee's Treasurer and K. Veldkamp, LL.B. acts as the Committee's Secretary. H. Buist serves as our Vice-Chairman and supervises all building and property maintenance. A. Van Egmond completes our Committee.

With rare exception, we are pleased to report that all meetings were attended by all Committee members.

Consistent with our authorizing Act, Dr. C. Van Dam attended all of the Committee meetings in his capacity as Principal. He acts as a very important liaison with the College community.

Our meetings are also attended by the College's administration assistant, Catherine Mechelse.

Minutes of all of our meetings have been circulated to all Members of the Board of Governors as well as to the Deputies for the Training for the Ministry of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia.

2. PHYSICAL PROPERTY – MAINTENANCE

The College continues to serve us well, although as stated previously, we expect that the Library, because of its ever expanding size, may soon require our attention.

There are two items that late in the year required special attention, specifically:

- (a) Buckling and warping of the roof membrane was detected. There was some potential for moisture damage. A temporary solution has been the installation of "insulation breathers," but the situation will require continual monitoring and may in future be a cause of substantial concern; and
- (b) It was determined that the College required a new boiler. This was a sudden and unexpected expense.

At present there are no immediate concerns. General upkeep and maintenance has continued as in prior years. The upgrading of the computer facilities has been completed.

3. FINANCES RELATING TO FACULTY AND STAFF

Consistent with Synod direction, the salaries of all Professors were reviewed and increased effective January 1, 1991, based on the prescribed formula. Two professors receive retirement benefits. Miss C. Mechelse and Miss M. Van Til continue to serve us in their capacities as administrative assistant and library assistant respectively. Their salaries were reviewed and increases allowed.

The new professors have settled in and there are no changes in terms of the Faculty to make note of.

Effective April 1, 1991, an employee benefit plan was instituted. The professors of the College are participating in a benefit plan with seven (7) congregations within our federation of churches.

4. FINANCES

We may thankfully report that the churches continue to support the College faithfully, including continued healthy contributions from our sister churches in Australia. Together with this report you will have received the audited financial statements for the year ending May 31, 1991, and the proposed budget for the year June 1, 1991, to May 31, 1992. The College remains in good standing with Revenue Canada and maintains its status as a charitable and non-profit institution.

5. TUITION FEES

It is our recommendation that the tuition fees for the 1992-1993 school year remain at the same level as that for 1991-1992. The particulars of the fees charged can be found in the College handbook.

6. WOMEN'S SAVINGS ACTION COMMITTEE ("WSAC")

Mrs. E. Mulder (Chairman), Mrs. J. Van Dam (Secretary) and Mrs. C. Zietsma (Treasurer) continue as members of the WSAC. A draft by-law (No. 9) relating to the WSAC is to be submitted to the Board at its September, 1991 meeting. We have received the comments of the present members of the WSAC which will be conveyed. As always, the College benefits greatly from the generous and continued support of the WSAC.

7. BUDGET

Subject to the approval of the Board of Governors, the 1991-1992 budget requires an increase in contributions by communicant members of \$1.00 to \$55.00 per communicant member commencing January 1, 1992. The Treasurer will provide comments directly.

8. BY-LAWS

By-Law No. 10 (Publication Committee) and By-Law No. 11 (Faber-Holwerda Bursary) have been finalized and are being circulated for execution purposes. They will be placed in the College's minute book. Draft By-Law No. 9 is commented on above.

9. CONCLUSION

All honour and glory is rendered to the Head of the Church who again enabled the entire College community to work for the benefit of His churches in Canada, the United States, Australia and abroad at the mission fields.

The foregoing report represents fairly the major activities of the Committee for the year 1990-1991.

All of which is respectfully submitted this 5th day of September, 1991, A.D.

With brotherly greetings,
Yours in Christ,

The Finance and Property Committee of the
Board of Governors of the Theological
College of the Canadian Reformed Churches

*

A.L. Vanderhout, Chairman

K.J. Veldkamp, Secretary

C.G. Heeringa, Treasurer

H. Buist, Vice-Chairman

A. Van Egmond

* Original signed and placed in archives

TENTH ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE FINANCE AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE
PRESENTED TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE
THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

HAMILTON, ONTARIO, CANADA
SEPTEMBER, 1992

September 10, 1992

The Board of Governors of the Theological
College of the Canadian Reformed Churches

Esteemed Brothers:

The Finance and Property Committee (the "Committee") is pleased to submit the Tenth Annual Report for the period commencing June 1, 1991, to and including May 31, 1992.

1. GENERAL ACTIVITIES

The Committee is pleased to report that the Lord enabled its members to meet three (3) times over the last year. The Committee consists of A.L. Vanderhout, H. Buist, C. Heeringa, A Van Egmond and K. Veldkamp. A. L. Vanderhout is the Chairman, C. Heeringa acts as the Committee's Treasurer and K. Veldkamp acts as the Committee's Secretary. H. Buist supervises all building and property maintenance.

With rare exception, we are pleased to report that all meetings were attended by all Committee members.

Consistent with our authorizing Act, Dr. C. Van Dam attended all of the Committee meetings in his capacity as Principal. He acts as a very important liaison with the College community.

Our meetings are also attended by the College's administration assistant, Catharine Mechelse.

Minutes of all of our meetings have been circulated to all Members of the Board of Governors as well as to the Deputies for the Training for the Ministry of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia.

2. PHYSICAL PROPERTY – MAINTENANCE

The College continues to serve us well. Notwithstanding, the regular maintenance continues and we continue with our expectation that the Library, because of its ever expanding size, will soon require our attention.

The most substantial repair required was the replacement of the roof. It was necessary for the entire roof to be replaced at a cost in excess of \$17,000.00.

At present there are no immediate concerns. General upkeep and maintenance has continued as in prior years.

3. FINANCES RELATING TO FACULTY AND STAFF

Consistent with Synod direction, the salaries of all Professors have been reviewed and increases have been set to be effective January 1, 1993, based on the prescribed formula. Two professors continue to receive retirement benefits. Miss C. Mechelse and Miss M. Van Til continue to serve us in their capacities as administrative assistant and library assistant respectively. Their salaries were reviewed and increases allowed.

There have been no changes to the Faculty.

4. FINANCES

We may thankfully report that the churches continue to support the College faithfully, including continued healthy contributions from our sister churches in Australia. You will have received separately the audited financial statements for the year ending May 31, 1992, and the proposed budget for the year June 1, 1992, to May 31, 1993. The College remains in good standing with Revenue Canada and maintains its status as a charitable and non-profit institution.

5. TUITION FEES

It is our recommendation that the tuition fees for the years 1993-1996 school years be increased. The particulars of the increase in fees to be charged are found with the Treasurer's Report.

6. SABBATICALS

A draft proposal with respect to Sabbaticals for the professors has been prepared and submitted. Careful consideration, from professional, academic and financial perspectives, will be required.

7. BUDGET

Subject to the approval of the Board of Governors, the 1992-1993 budget requires an increase in contributions by communicant members of \$6.00. The assessment will increase from \$55.00 to \$61.00 per communicant member commencing January 1, 1993. The Treasurer will provide comments and explanation directly.

8. CONCLUSION

All honour and glory is rendered to the Head of the Church who again enabled the entire College community to work for the benefit of His churches in Canada, the United States, Australia and abroad at the mission fields.

The foregoing report represents fairly the major activities of the Committee for the fiscal year 1991-1992.

All of which is respectfully submitted this 10th day of September, 1992, A.D.

With brotherly greetings,
Yours in Christ,

The Finance and Property Committee of the
Board of Governors of the Theological
College of the Canadian Reformed Churches

A.L. Vanderhout, Chairman

K.J. Veldkamp, Secretary

C.G. Heeringa, Treasurer

H. Buist, Vice-Chairman

A. Van Egmond

**THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE
OF THE
CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1989**

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AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Board of Governors

Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches
Hamilton, Ontario

We have examined the balance sheet of Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches as at May 31, 1989 and the statements of equity and revenue and expenditure for the year then ended. Our examination was made in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, and accordingly included such tests and procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances, except as referred to in the following paragraph.

Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches derives part of its income from gifts and collections which are not susceptible to complete audit examination. Accordingly, our verification of this revenue was limited to accounting for the amounts recorded in the books. The College does not record depreciation on the real estate or library books as disclosed in note 1.

In our opinion, except for the effect of adjustments, if any, which we might have determined to be necessary had we been able to verify income referred to in the preceding paragraph, these financial statements present fairly the financial position of the College as at May 31, 1989 and the results of its operations for the year then ended in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

Fergus, Ontario
August 8, 1989

Chartered Accountants.

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES
(Incorporated under the laws of Ontario)

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT MAY 1, 1989

	ASSETS	1989	1988
CURRENT			
Cash		\$ 9,687	\$ 35,872
Allotments receivable		17,300	8,348
Miscellaneous accounts receivable		263	323
Prepaid expenses		4,180	4,827
		31,430	49,370
 INVESTMENTS			
Savings accounts and term deposits re Womens's Savings Action – note 2		56,147	51,535
 FIXED			
	COST	ACCUMULATED DEPRECIATION	
Equipment, furniture and fixtures	84,039	46,423	37,616
Real estate	518,476	0	518,476
Library books	125,371	0	117,897
	727,886	46,423	681,463
TOTAL ASSETS		\$ 767,040	\$ 781,823
 LIABILITIES			
CURRENT			
Note payable		0	45,000
Accounts payable		107	116
Employees' payroll deductions payable		5,967	0
Allotments received in advance		20,369	20,182
TOTAL LIABILITIES		26,443	65,298
 EQUITY			
DESIGNATED			
Moving fund		12,000	6,000
Women's Savings Action		56,147	51,535
		68,147	57,535
 GENERAL			
.....		674,450	658,990
TOTAL EQUITY		742,597	716,525
 TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY			
		\$ 769,040	\$ 781,823

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

EQUITY

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1989

	DESIGNATED EQUITY	1989	1988
LIBRARY			
Balance at beginning of year		\$ 0	\$ 0
Add – Appropriation from budget		9,306	7,712
		<u>9,306</u>	<u>7,712</u>
Deduct – transfer to general equity to cover cost of books and subscriptions		(9,306)	(7,712)
Balance at end of year		<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>
 MOVING FUND			
Balance at beginning of year		6,000	0
Add – Appropriation from budget		6,000	6,000
Balance at end of year		<u>\$ 12,000</u>	<u>\$ 6,000</u>
 WOMEN'S SAVING ACTION			
Balance at beginning of year		51,535	38,247
Add – Contributions received.....		17,057	18,154
– Interest earned		4,450	3,460
		<u>17,057</u>	<u>18,154</u>
Deduct – Gifts to College – cash		(14,120)	(8,298)
– Video equipment.....		(2,690)	(0)
– Administration		(85)	(28)
		<u>(14,120)</u>	<u>(8,298)</u>
Balance at end of year		<u>\$ 56,147</u>	<u>\$ 51,535</u>

GENERAL EQUITY

BALANCE , at beginning of year.....	658,990	650,942
ADD – Transfer from Library Fund	9,306	7,712
– Loan reduction in budget	12,000	5,000
	<u>680,296</u>	<u>663,654</u>
DEDUCT – Excess of expenditures over revenue	(5,846)	(4,664)
BALANCE , at end of year	<u>\$ 674,450</u>	<u>\$ 658,990</u>

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1989

	1989	1989	1988
	BUDGET	ACTUAL	ACTUAL
REVENUE			
Allotments from churches.....	\$ 274,432	\$ 274,451	\$ 260,110
Gifts and collections	2,568	2,572	7,729
Gifts from Australian sister churches	32,300	29,401	4,463
Student fees	12,000	10,200	15,615
Women's Savings Action.....	16,700	14,120	8,298
Investment income	1,000	1,677	1,521
	<u>339,000</u>	<u>332,421</u>	<u>297,736</u>
 EXPENDITURE			
Faculty.....	219,605	221,554	207,399
Property.....	39,500	41,160	31,711
Administration	30,200	31,266	27,963
Library	15,150	16,981	13,826
Appropriations	33,000	27,306	18,712
Unforeseen	1,545	0	2,789
	<u>339,000</u>	<u>338,267</u>	<u>302,400</u>
 EXCESS OF EXPENDITURE OVER REVENUE	 \$ 0	 (\$ 5,846)	 (\$ 4,664)

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

EXPENDITURE DETAIL

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1989

	1989	1989	1988
	BUDGET	ACTUAL	ACTUAL
FACULTY			
Pension – professor – net (note 3).....	\$ 6,775	\$ 9,946	\$ 6,212
Salaries – professors	185,000	184,983	175,350
Superannuation	15,830	15,485	15,325
Social insurance	6,000	5,719	5,672
Other personal insurances	5,000	4,828	4,840
Scholarly conferences	1,000	593	0
	<u>219,605</u>	<u>221,554</u>	<u>207,399</u>
PROPERTY			
Repairs and maintenance	6,000	4,310	3,431
Caretaking and grounds maintenance	9,000	8,931	7,393
Hydro and water	2,550	2,410	2,392
Fuel	3,750	3,463	3,461
Insurance	3,200	3,164	3,132
Interest on loan	4,000	3,860	4,921
Provision for building improvements	11,000	8,092	0
Depreciation of equipment	0	6,930	6,981
	<u>39,500</u>	<u>41,160</u>	<u>31,711</u>
ADMINISTRATION			
Travelling and meetings – Board of Governors and committees	4,000	3,622	3,176
Administration and office supplies.....	5,000	5,341	5,052
Salary – administrator	17,000	17,073	16,194
Social insurances – administrator	850	884	816
Other personnel insurances – administrator ...	750	693	720
Legal and audit.....	600	950	600
Telephone.....	1,200	1,604	1,097
General	800	1,099	308
	<u>30,200</u>	<u>31,266</u>	<u>27,963</u>
LIBRARY			
Supplies	1,000	1,931	614
Wages including social insurances	12,350	13,217	11,595
Subscriptions	1,800	1,833	1,617
	<u>15,150</u>	<u>16,981</u>	<u>13,826</u>
APPROPRIATIONS			
Loan reductions.....	12,000	12,000	5,000
Moving fund.....	6,000	6,000	6,000
Library fund	15,000	9,306	7,712
	<u>33,000</u>	<u>27,306</u>	<u>18,712</u>
UNFORESEEN			
Computer components replacement	0	0	2,789
Other	1,545	0	0
	<u>1,545</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	<u>\$ 339,000</u>	<u>\$ 338,267</u>	<u>\$ 302,400</u>

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1989

1. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICES

FIXED ASSETS

The College does not record depreciation on the building, parking lot, landscaping and library books as these assets are considered not to physically depreciate.

Depreciation is recorded on the equipment, furniture and fixtures on the straight line basis over their estimated life expectancy of ten years.

2. INVESTMENTS – WOMEN’S SAVINGS ACTION

The breakdown of the funds held is as follows:

	1989	1988
Cash in bank.....	\$21,455	\$16,969
Term deposit.....	33,000	33,000
Accrued interest	1,692	1,566
	<u>\$56,147</u>	<u>\$51,535</u>

3. PENSION – PROFESSOR

The detail is as follows:

	1989	1988
Pension paid to retired professor.....	20,789	17,913
Less– Payments received from superannuation fund	(10,843)	(11,701)
	<u>\$ 9,946</u>	<u>\$ 6,212</u>

**THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE
OF THE
CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES
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To the Board of Governors

Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches
Hamilton, Ontario

We have examined the balance sheet of Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches as at May 31, 1990 and the statements of equity and revenue and expenditure for the year then ended. Our examination was made in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, and accordingly included such tests and procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances, except as referred to in the following paragraph.

Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches derives part of its income from gifts and collections which are not susceptible to complete audit examination. Accordingly, our verification of this revenue was limited to accounting for the amounts recorded in the books. The College does not record depreciation on the real estate or library books as disclosed in note 1.

In our opinion, except for the effect of adjustments, if any, which we might have determined to be necessary had we been able to verify income referred to in the preceding paragraph, these financial statements present fairly the financial position of the College as at May 31, 1990 and the results of its operations for the year then ended in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

Fergus, Ontario
August 7, 1990

Chartered Accountants.

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES
(Incorporated under the laws of Ontario)

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT MAY 31, 1990

	ASSETS		1990	1989
CURRENT				
Cash			\$ 31,901	\$ 9,687
Allotments receivable			15,945	17,300
Miscellaneous accounts receivable			7,347	263
Prepaid expenses.....			0	4,180
			55,193	31,430
 INVESTMENTS				
Savings accounts and term deposits re Womens's Savings Action – note 2			36,163	61,147
 FIXED				
	COST	ACCUMULATED DEPRECIATION		
Equipment, furniture and fixtures	105,533	55,485	50,048	37,616
Real estate	524,728	0	524,728	518,476
Library books	137,706	0	137,706	125,371
	767,967	55,485	712,482	681,463
 TOTAL ASSETS			\$ 820,838	\$ 769,040
 LIABILITIES				
CURRENT				
Loan payable –DUCA Community credit Union Ltd. – note 3			40,000	0
Due to Women's Savings Action re computer – note 4..			9,527	0
Accounts payable			0	107
Employees' payroll deductions payable			0	5967
Allotments received in advance			28,031	20,369
			77,558	26,443
 EQUITY				
DESIGNATED				
Moving fund.....			0	12,000
Women's Savings Action.....			53,163	56,147
			53,163	68,147
 GENERAL				
.....			690,117	674,450
TOTAL EQUITY.....			743,280	742,597
 TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY			\$ 820,838	\$ 769,040

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

EQUITY

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1990

	DESIGNATED EQUITY	1990	1989
LIBRARY			
Balance at beginning of year		\$ 0	\$ 0
Add – Appropriation from budget		13,000	9,306
		13,000	9,306
Deduct – transfer to general equity to cover cost of books and subscriptions		(13,000)	(9,306)
Balance at end of year		\$ 0	\$ 0
MOVING FUND			
Balance at beginning of year		12,000	6,000
Add – Appropriation from budget		0	6,000
		12,000	12,000
Deduct – transfer to general equity		(12,000)	(0)
Balance at end of year		\$ 0	\$ 12,000
WOMEN'S SAVING ACTION			
Balance at beginning of year		56,147	51,535
Add – Contributions received		18,429	17,057
– Interest earned		5,693	4,450
		80,260	73,042
Deduct – Gifts to College – cash		(26,939)	(14,120)
– Equipment		(0)	(2,690)
– Administration		(158)	(85)
Balance at end of year		\$ 53,163	\$ 56,147
GENERAL EQUITY			
BALANCE , at beginning of year		658,990	658,990
ADD – Transfer from Library Fund		13,000	9,306
– Transfer from moving fund		12,000	0
– Loan reduction in budget		7,200	12,000
– Value of building improvement included in budget...		6,252	0
		712,902	680,296
DEDUCT – Excess of expenditures over revenue		(22,785)	(5,846)
BALANCE , at end of year		\$ 690,117	\$ 674,450

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1990

	1990	1990	1989
	BUDGET	ACTUAL	ACTUAL
REVENUE			
Allotments from churches.....	\$ 301,443	\$ 303,952	\$ 274,451
Gifts and collections	2,500	5,200	2,572
Gifts from Australian sister churches	31,000	30,760	29,401
Student fees	12,000	20,125	10,200
Women's Savings Action.....	15,000	26,939	14,120
Investment income	1,000	806	1,677
	<u>362,943</u>	<u>387,782</u>	<u>332,421</u>
EXPENDITURE			
Faculty.....	287,750	291,656	221,554
Property.....	42,400	44,767	41,160
Administration	34,860	35,128	31,266
Library	16,900	12,026	16,981
Appropriations	20,200	20,200	27,306
Unforeseen	890	6,790	0
	<u>403,000</u>	<u>410,567</u>	<u>338,267</u>
EXCESS OF EXPENDITURE OVER REVENUE	\$ 40,057	(\$22,785)	(5,846)

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

EXPENDITURE DETAIL

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1990

	1990	1990	1989
	BUDGET	ACTUAL	ACTUAL
FACULTY			
Pension – professor – net (note 3).....	\$ 16,100	\$ 16,516	\$ 9,946
Salaries – professors	216,000	217,077	184,983
Superannuation	16,900	21,071	15,485
Social insurance	5,050	5,732	5,719
Other personal insurances	5,700	3,625	4,828
Scholarly conferences	1,000	938	593
Moving Cost and Relocation	27,000	26,697	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	287,750	291,656	221,554
PROPERTY			
Repairs and maintenance	6,000	4,367	4,310
Caretaking and grounds maintenance	9,200	9,538	8,931
Hydro and water	2,550	2,790	2,410
Fuel	3,600	3,337	3,463
Insurance	3,700	4,051	3,164
Interest on loan	6,350	5,080	3,860
Provision for building improvements	11,000	6,542	8,092
Depreciation of equipment	0	9,062	6,930
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	42,400	44,767	41,160
ADMINISTRATION			
Travelling and meetings – Board of Governors and committees	4,000	3,604	3,622
Administration and office supplies	5,600	5,525	5,341
Salary – administrator	18,100	19,518	17,073
Social insurances – administrator	860	982	884
Other personnel insurances – administrator ...	800	565	693
Legal and audit	2,500	1,463	950
Telephone	2,000	2,201	1,604
General	1,000	1,270	1,099
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	34,860	35,128	31,266
LIBRARY			
Supplies	1,100	764	1,931
Wages including social insurances	13,800	10,509	13,217
Subscriptions	2,000	753	1,633
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	16,900	12,026	16,981
APPROPRIATIONS			
Loan reductions	7,200	7,200	12,000
Moving fund	0	0	6,000
Library fund	13,000	13,000	9,306
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	20,200	20,200	27,306
UNFORESEEN			
Festschrift	0	5,265	0
Retirement events	0	1,180	0
Other	890	345	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	890	6,790	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	\$ 403,000	\$ 410,567	\$ 338,267

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1990

1. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICES

FIXED ASSETS

The College does not record depreciation on the building, parking lot, landscaping and library books as these assets are considered not to physically depreciate.

Depreciation is recorded on the equipment, furniture and fixtures on the straight line basis over their estimated life expectancy of ten years.

2. INVESTMENTS – WOMEN’S SAVINGS ACTION

The breakdown of the funds held is as follows:

	1990	1989
Cash in bank.....	\$43,636	\$21,455
Term deposit.....	0	33,000
Accrued interest	0	1,692
Loan receivable	9,527	0
	\$53,163	\$56,147

3. LOAN PAYABLE – DUCA COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION LTD.

This loan is an open loan with interest payable monthly at a floating rate. It is secured by a mortgage on the real estate owned by the College.

4. DUE TO WOMEN’S SAVINGS ACTION

The College purchased a computer for \$17,027. Women’s Savings Action provided an outright gift of \$7,500 and a loan for \$9,527 to complete the purchase. The loan bears no interest and is to be repaid within four years.

5. PENSION – PROFESSOR

The detail is as follows:

	1990	1989
Pension paid to retired professor.....	32,634	20,789
Less– Payments received from superannuation fund	(16,118)	(10,843)
	\$16,516	\$ 9,946

**THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE
OF THE
CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1991**

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AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Board of Governors of the
Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches

I have audited the balance sheet of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches as at May 31, 1991, and the statements of equity and revenue and expenditures for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Board of the College. My responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on my audit.

Except as explained below, I conducted my audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that I plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

The College does not record depreciation on the real estate or library books as disclosed in Note 1. In common with many charitable organizations, the College derives some of its revenue from gifts and collections, the completeness of which is not susceptible to satisfactory audit verification. Accordingly, my verification of these revenues was limited to the amounts recorded in the records of the College and I was not able to determine whether any adjustments might be necessary to donation revenues, excess of revenue over expense, assets and equity.

In my opinion, except for the effect of adjustments, if any, which I might have determined to be necessary had I been able to satisfy myself concerning the completeness of the donations referred to in the preceding paragraph, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the College as at May 31, 1991 and the results of its operations for the year then ended in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Burlington, Ontario
August 13, 1991

Chartered Accountants.

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES
(Incorporated under the laws of Ontario)

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT MAY 31, 1991

	ASSETS	1991	1990
CURRENT			
Cash		\$ 6,196	\$ 31,901
Allotments receivable		36,100	15,945
Miscellaneous accounts receivable			7,347
		42,296	55,193
INVESTMENTS			
Savings accounts and term deposits re Womens's Savings Action – note 2		62,780	53,163
Bursary Funds		10,537	0
		73,317	53,163
FIXED			
	COST	ACCUMULATED DEPRECIATION	
Equipment, furniture and fixtures	111,414	64,969	46,445
Real estate	524,728	0	524,728
Library books	157,085	0	137,706
		728,258	712,482
 TOTAL ASSETS		\$ 843,871	\$ 820,838
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT			
Loan payable –DUCA Community credit Union Ltd. – note 3		36,000	40,000
Due to Women's Savings Action re computer – note 4..		9,527	9,527
Accounts payable		376	0
Employees' payroll deductions payable		8,661	0
Allotments received in advance		22,703	28,031
		77,267	77,558
EQUITY			
DESIGNATED			
Bursary Funds		10,537	0
Women's Savings Action		62,780	53,163
		73,317	53,163
GENERAL		693,287	690,117
TOTAL EQUITY		766,604	743,280
 TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		\$ 843,871	\$ 820,838

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

EQUITY

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1991

	DESIGNATED EQUITY	1991	1990
LIBRARY			
Balance at beginning of year		\$ 0	\$ 0
Add – Appropriation from budget		17,700	13,000
Less transfer to general equity		(17,700)	(13,000)
Balance at end of year		<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>
MOVING FUND			
Balance at beginning of year		0	12,000
Add – Appropriation from budget		0	0
Deduct – Transfer to general equity		(0)	(12,000)
Balance at end of year		<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>
WOMEN'S SAVING ACTION			
Balance at beginning of year		53,163	56,147
Add – Contributions received		27,046	18,420
– Interest earned		2,296	5,693
Less gifts to College		(19,431)	(26,939)
Less administrative costs		(294)	(158)
Balance at end of year		<u>\$ 62,780</u>	<u>\$ 53,163</u>
BURSARY FUNDS			
Balance, beginning of year		0	0
Add contributions received		11,500	0
Add interest earned		1,137	0
Less amounts paid out		(2,100)	(0)
Balance, end of year		<u>\$ 10,537</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>
GENERAL EQUITY			
BALANCE , at beginning of year		690,117	674,450
ADD – Transfer from Library Fund		17,700	13,000
– Transfer from moving fund		0	12,000
– Loan reduction in budget		0	7,200
– Value of building improvement included in budget...		0	6,252
		<u>707,817</u>	<u>712,902</u>
DEDUCT – Excess of expenditures over revenue		(14,530)	(22,785)
BALANCE , at end of year		<u>\$ 693,287</u>	<u>\$ 690,117</u>

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1991

	1991	1991	1990
	BUDGET	ACTUAL	ACTUAL
REVENUE			
Allotments from churches.....	\$ 340,798	\$ 345,272	\$ 303,952
Gifts and collections	4,500	8,143	5,200
Gifts from Australian sister churches	32,500	24,501	30,760
Student fees	18,000	23,747	20,125
Women's Savings Action.....	20,000	19,431	26,939
Investment income	1,200	656	806
	<u>416,998</u>	<u>421,750</u>	<u>387,782</u>
 EXPENDITURE			
Faculty.....	300,980	303,789	291,656
Property.....	42,388	54,164	44,767
Administration	41,280	45,531	35,128
Library	13,650	11,212	12,026
Appropriations	17,700	17,700	20,200
Unforeseen	1,000	3,884	6,790
	<u>416,998</u>	<u>436,280</u>	<u>410,567</u>
 EXCESS OF EXPENDITURE OVER REVENUE	 \$ 0	 (\$14,530)	 (\$22,785)

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

EXPENDITURE DETAIL

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1991

	1991	1991	1990
	BUDGET	ACTUAL	ACTUAL
FACULTY			
Pension – professor – net (note 3).....	\$ 26,980	\$ 27,370	\$ 16,516
Salaries – professors	220,800	219,907	217,077
Superannuation	13,500	14,524	21,071
Social insurance	6,500	12,571	5,732
Other personal insurances	7,000	4,654	3,625
Scholarly conferences	1,200	1,013	938
Moving costs and relocation	25,000	23,750	26,697
	<u>300,980</u>	<u>303,789</u>	<u>291,656</u>
PROPERTY			
Repairs and maintenance	6,000	5,310	4,367
Caretaking and grounds maintenance	9,500	8,741	9,538
Hydro and water	2,970	3,139	2,790
Fuel	3,700	3,406	3,337
Insurance	4,018	4,905	4,051
Interest on loan	6,200	6,500	5,080
Provision for building improvements	10,000	12,679	6,542
Depreciation of equipment	0	9,484	9,062
	<u>42,388</u>	<u>54,164</u>	<u>44,767</u>
ADMINISTRATION			
Travelling and meetings – Board of Governors and committees	4,000	4,506	3,604
Administration and office supplies	5,600	7,059	5,525
Salary – administrator	23,660	25,948	19,518
Social insurances – administrator	1,420	1,471	982
Other personnel insurances – administrator ...	600	788	565
Legal and audit	2,500	1,759	1,463
Telephone	2,000	2,314	2,201
General	1,500	1,686	1,270
	<u>41,280</u>	<u>45,531</u>	<u>35,128</u>
LIBRARY			
Supplies	1,150	543	764
Wages including social insurances	10,200	8,314	10,509
Subscriptions	2,300	2,355	753
	<u>13,650</u>	<u>11,212</u>	<u>12,026</u>
APPROPRIATIONS			
Loan reductions	0	0	7,200
Library fund	17,700	17,700	13,000
	<u>17,700</u>	<u>17,700</u>	<u>20,200</u>
UNFORESEEN			
Festschrift	0	0	5,265
Retirement events	0	0	1,180
Other	1,000	3,884	345
	<u>1,000</u>	<u>3,884</u>	<u>6,790</u>
	<u>\$ 416,998</u>	<u>\$ 436,280</u>	<u>\$ 410,567</u>

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1991

1. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICES

FIXED ASSETS

The College does not record depreciation on the building, parking lot, landscaping and library books as these assets are considered not to physically depreciate.

Depreciation is recorded on the equipment, furniture and fixtures on the straight line basis over their estimated life expectancy of ten years.

2. INVESTMENTS – WOMEN’S SAVINGS ACTION

The breakdown of the funds held is as follows:

	1991	1990
Cash in bank.....	\$33,253	\$43,636
Term deposit.....	20,000	0
Loan receivable.....	9,527	9,257
	<u>\$62,780</u>	<u>\$53,163</u>

BURSARY FUNDS

Funds held in the Faber-Holwerda Bursary and Christian Disciple Fund:

Cash.....	527	0
Term Deposits.....	10,000	0
	<u>\$10,537</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>

3. LOAN PAYABLE – DUCA COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION LTD.

This loan is an open loan with interest payable monthly at a floating rate. It is secured by a mortgage on the real estate owned by the College.

4. DUE TO WOMEN’S SAVINGS ACTION

The College purchased a computer in 1990. Women’s Savings Action provided an outright gift of \$7,500 and a loan for \$9,527 to complete the purchase. The loan bears no interest and is to be repaid within four years.

5. PENSION – PROFESSORS

The detail is as follows:

	1991	1990
Pension paid to retired professors.....	51,939	32,634
Less– Payments received from superannuation fund.....	(24,569)	(16,118)
Net cost to College.....	<u>\$27,370</u>	<u>\$16,516</u>

6. COMPARATIVE FIGURES:

The comparative figures for 1990 are based upon financial statements which were reported on by other auditors.

**THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE
OF THE
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AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Board of Governors of the
Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches

I have audited the balance sheet of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches as at May 31, 1992, and the statements of equity and revenue and expenditures for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Board of the College. My responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on my audit.

Except as explained below, I conducted my audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that I plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

The College does not record depreciation on the real estate or library books as disclosed in Note 1. In common with many charitable organizations, the College derives some of its revenue from gifts and collections, the completeness of which is not susceptible to satisfactory audit verification. Accordingly, my verification of these revenues was limited to the amounts recorded in the records of the College and I was not able to determine whether any adjustments might be necessary to donation revenues, excess of revenue over expense, assets and equity.

In my opinion, except for the effect of adjustments, if any, which I might have determined to be necessary had I been able to satisfy myself concerning the completeness of the donations referred to in the preceding paragraph, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the College as at May 31, 1992 and the results of its operations for the year then ended in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Burlington, Ontario
July 31, 1992

Chartered Accountants.

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES
(Incorporated under the laws of Ontario)

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT MAY 31, 1992

	ASSETS	1992	1991
CURRENT			
Cash		\$ 13,194	\$ 6,196
Allotments receivable		15,811	36,100
GST refundable		1,493	0
		30,498	42,296
INVESTMENTS			
Savings accounts and term deposits re Womens's Savings Action – note 2		70,346	62,780
Bursary Funds		17,562	10,537
Publication Foundation		13,818	0
		101,726	73,317
FIXED			
	COST	ACCUMULATED DEPRECIATION	
Equipment, furniture and fixtures	112,913	74,335	
Real estate	524,728	0	
Library books	177,585	0	
		740,891	728,258
TOTAL ASSETS		\$ 873,115	\$ 843,871
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT			
Loan payable –DUCA Community credit Union Ltd. – note 3		31,000	36,000
Due to Women's Savings Action re computer – note 4..		7,145	9,527
Accounts payable		645	376
Employees' payroll deductions payable		9,093	8,661
Allotments received in advance		24,516	22,703
TOTAL LIABILITIES		72,399	77,267
EQUITY			
DESIGNATED			
Bursary Funds		17,562	10,537
Women's Savings Action		70,346	62,780
Publication Foundation		13,818	0
		101,727	73,317
GENERAL		698,990	693,287
TOTAL EQUITY		800,716	766,604
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		\$ 873,115	\$ 843,871

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

EQUITY

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1992

	DESIGNATED EQUITY	1992	1991
LIBRARY			
Balance at beginning of year		\$ 0	\$ 0
Add – Appropriation from budget		(17,700)	(17,700)
Less transfer to general equity		17,700	17,700
Balance at end of year		<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>
WOMEN'S SAVING ACTION			
Balance at beginning of year		62,780	53,163
Add – Contributions received.....		23,331	27,046
– Interest earned		4,304	2,296
Less – gifts to College.....		(20,000)	(19,431)
– administrative costs		(69)	(294)
Balance at end of year		<u>\$ 70,346</u>	<u>\$ 62,780</u>
BURSARY FUNDS			
Balance, beginning of year.....		10,537	0
Add – contributions received		10,000	11,500
– interest earned		888	1,137
Less – amounts paid out.....		(3,850)	(2,100)
– bank charges		(13)	0
Balance, end of year		<u>\$ 17,562</u>	<u>\$ 10,537</u>
PUBLICATION FOUNDATION			
Balance, beginning of year.....		0	0
Add – contributions received		13,815	0
– interest earned		86	0
Less – administrative costs.....		(83)	(0)
Balance, end of year		<u>\$ 13,818</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>
GENERAL EQUITY			
BALANCE , at beginning of year.....		693,287	690,117
ADD – Transfer from Library Fund.....		17,700	17,700
– Loan reduction in budget		7,000	0
		<u>717,987</u>	<u>707,817</u>
DEDUCT – Excess of expenditures over revenue		(18,997)	(14,530)
BALANCE , at end of year		<u>\$ 698,990</u>	<u>\$ 693,287</u>

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1992

	1992	1992	1991
	BUDGET	ACTUAL	ACTUAL
REVENUE			
Allotments from churches.....	\$ 356,578	\$ 355,407	\$ 345,272
Gifts and collections	5,000	4,568	8,143
Gifts from Australian sister churches	42,500	44,687	24,501
Student fees	25,500	19,860	23,747
Women's Savings Action.....	20,000	20,000	19,431
Investment income	800	17	656
	<u>450,378</u>	<u>444,539</u>	<u>421,750</u>
 EXPENDITURE			
Faculty.....	313,659	313,882	303,789
Property.....	53,118	58,790	54,164
Administration	45,801	52,525	45,531
Library	12,100	11,422	11,212
Appropriations	24,700	24,700	17,700
Unforeseen	1,000	2,217	3,884
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	<u>450,378</u>	<u>463,536</u>	<u>436,280</u>
 EXCESS OF EXPENDITURE OVER REVENUE	 \$ 0	 (\$18,997)	 (\$14,530)

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

EXPENDITURE DETAIL

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1992

	1992 BUDGET	1992 ACTUAL	1991 ACTUAL
FACULTY			
Pension – professor – net (note 3).....	\$ 35,475	\$ 34,831	\$ 27,370
Salaries – professors	240,084	240,571	219,907
Superannuation	14,100	14,064	14,524
Social insurance	12,000	11,797	12,571
Other personal insurances	10,800	11,994	4,654
Scholarly conferences	1,200	625	1,013
Moving costs and relocation	0	0	23,750
	<u>313,659</u>	<u>313,882</u>	<u>303,789</u>
PROPERTY			
Repairs and maintenance	6,000	8,914	5,310
Caretaking and grounds maintenance	9,800	13,595	8,741
Hydro and water	3,500	3,677	3,139
Fuel	3,668	3,156	3,406
Insurance	5,150	4,402	4,905
Interest on loan	5,000	4,308	6,500
Provision for building improvements	20,000	11,372	12,679
Depreciation of equipment	0	9,366	9,484
	<u>53,118</u>	<u>58,790</u>	<u>54,164</u>
ADMINISTRATION			
Travelling and meetings – Board of Governors and committees	4,000	5,544	4,506
Administration and office supplies	4,981	8,290	7,059
Salary – administrator	27,000	26,806	25,948
Social insurances – administrator	2,300	2,762	1,471
R.R.S.P. – administrator	720	806	788
Legal and audit	1,500	1,493	1,759
Telephone	2,300	2,158	2,314
Bank Charges	1,000	1,292	0
General	2,000	3,374	1,686
	<u>45,801</u>	<u>52,525</u>	<u>45,531</u>
LIBRARY			
Supplies	1,000	1,292	543
Wages including social insurances	8,800	8,330	8,314
Subscriptions	2,300	1,800	2,355
	<u>12,100</u>	<u>11,422</u>	<u>11,212</u>
APPROPRIATIONS			
Loan reductions	7,000	7,000	0
Library fund	17,700	17,700	17,700
	<u>24,700</u>	<u>24,700</u>	<u>17,700</u>
UNFORESEEN			
Other	1,000	2,217	3,884
	<u>\$ 450,378</u>	<u>\$ 463,536</u>	<u>\$ 436,280</u>

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 1992

1. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICES

FIXED ASSETS

The College does not record depreciation on the building, parking lot, landscaping and library books as these assets are considered not to physically depreciate.

Depreciation is recorded on the equipment, furniture and fixtures on the straight line basis over their estimated life expectancy of ten years.

2. INVESTMENTS – WOMEN'S SAVINGS ACTION

The breakdown of the funds held is as follows:

	1992	1991
Cash in bank.....	\$33,201	\$33,253
Term deposit.....	30,000	20,000
Loan receivable.....	7,145	9,257
	<u>\$70,346</u>	<u>\$62,780</u>

BURSARY FUNDS

Funds held in the Faber-Holwerda Bursary and Christian Disciple Fund:

Cash.....	527	537
Term Deposits.....	14,300	10,000
	<u>\$17,562</u>	<u>\$10,537</u>

PUBLICATION FOUNDATION

Cash.....	<u>\$13,818</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>
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3. LOAN PAYABLE – DUCA COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION LTD.

This loan is an open loan with interest payable monthly at a floating rate. It is secured by a mortgage on the real estate owned by the College.

4. DUE TO WOMEN'S SAVINGS ACTION

The College purchased a computer in 1990. Women's Savings Action provided an outright gift of \$7,500 and a loan for \$9,527 to complete the purchase. The loan bears no interest and is to be repaid within four years.

Balance payable.....	<u>\$ 7,145</u>	<u>\$ 9,527</u>
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5. PENSION – PROFESSORS

The detail is as follows:

	1992	1991
Pension paid to retired professors.....	60,539	51,939
Less – Payments received from superannuation fund.....	(25,708)	(24,569)
Net cost to College.....	<u>\$34,831</u>	<u>\$27,370</u>

6. SUBSEQUENT EVENT:

Subsequent to May 31, 1992, the College entered into a contract in the amount of \$15,200 for partial replacement of the roof.

APPENDIX VI
REPORT TO SYNOD 1992
FROM THE COMMITTEE ON BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

CONTENTS

I. Mandate and General Activities

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VII. Appendix

1. C. Van Dam, "The New Revised Standard Version: Some First Impressions," *Clarion*, 40 (1991) 55-56.
2. J. H. Stek, "The New Revised Standard Version: A Preliminary Assessment," *Calvin Theological Journal*, 26 (1991) 80-99.

I. MANDATE and GENERAL ACTIVITIES

1. General Synod Winnipeg 1989 gave this committee the following mandate:
 - a. to scrutinize the NRSV Bible as soon as it becomes available with respect to faithfulness of translation, particularly in regard to the use of so-called inclusive language.
 - b. to provide information about its findings to the churches and report to the next General Synod. (Acts, Art. 88.D)
2. Once the NRSV became available this committee became active. Meetings were held at the Theological College on June 4 and Nov 26, 1990 and Oct 3, 1991. The result of these meetings and work by the different participants is this report.
3. a. In answer to correspondence from the Deputies for Bible Translations of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (September 29, 1990) we

expressed our doubts about the feasibility of the churches themselves undertaking the task of translating the Bible. Furthermore, our synods have never called for a translation from within our own churches. (See the Correspondence in the archival part of this report.)

- b. After this report had been prepared, a letter was received from the Deputies for Bible Translations of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (October 23, 1991). They informed us that their Synod 1990 declared that the New American Standard Bible, the New King James Bible, and the New International Version are deemed better translations than the RSV and that these translations are being further studied by their committee. They also wrote in the hope that Australia and Canada would not end up using different Bible translations and that they were open to any suggestions for cooperation. We herewith pass on their information and concerns to Synod. (A copy of this letter can be found in the archival part of this report.)
4. An article written by Dr. C. Van Dam on the NRSV (*Clarion*, 40 [1991] 55-56) informed the church membership about first impressions on the NRSV. These impressions have been not been contradicted by further study. (A copy of this article has been enclosed in the Appendix of this report.)
5. Also included in the Appendix for your information is an article by Professor J. H. Stek entitled "The New Revised Standard Version: A Preliminary Assessment," *Calvin Theological Journal*, 26 (1991) 80-99.

II. THE BACKGROUND OF THE NRSV

The background information we are here presenting is gleaned from the preface "To the Reader," written by the NRSV's chief translator, Bruce M. Metzger, and complemented with information from other sources. Our purpose is to pass on data of a more or less objective and official character respecting the background and translation procedure followed in the NRSV. At this point we are not primarily interested in evaluating this information.

The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible is an authorized revision of the Revised Standard Version, published in 1952, which was a revision of the American Standard Version, published in 1901, which in turn, embodied earlier revisions of the King James Version, published in 1611. This translation was sponsored by the National Council of Churches in the U.S. and expedited by a standing RSV Bible Committee, comprising about thirty members, both men and women. Ecumenical in representation, it includes scholars affiliated with various Protestant denominations, as well as several Roman Catholic members, an Eastern Orthodox member, and a Jewish member who serves in the Old Testament section. This also explains why there will be a variety of editions.¹ Some editions will print only the 39 Old Testament books recognized by Protestantism and Judaism, while others will include additional books that Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy regard as Scripture. In time, a Roman Catholic edition of the NRSV is expected.

Following the publication of the RSV Old Testament in 1952, significant advances were made in the discovery and interpretation of documents in Semitic languages related to Hebrew. The second edition has taken into account a fuller appraisal of textual evidence derived from the Dead Sea Scrolls, which had begun to come to light just before the publication of the RSV Old Testament in 1952.² Subsequent acquisitions from the same area brought to light many other early copies of all the books of the Hebrew Scriptures (except Esther), though most of these copies are fragmentary. A result is, for example, that four sentences based upon one of the Dead Sea Scrolls have been added to Chapter 10 of 1 Samuel.³

For the Old Testament the Committee has made use of the *Biblia Hebraica*

Stuttgartensia (1977; ed. sec. emandata, 1983) [the so-called Masoretic Text]. For the New Testament the Committee has based its work on the most recent edition of *The Greek New Testament*, prepared by an interconfessional and international committee and published by the United Bible Societies (1966; 3rd ed., corrected 1983). As for the style of English adopted for the present revision, among the mandates was the directive to continue in the tradition of the King James Bible, but to introduce such changes as are warranted on the basis of accuracy, clarity, euphony, and current English usage. The translation committee describes the English as English that is "direct and plain and meaningful to people today." Prof. John Stek (chairman of the Committee on Bible Translation that produced the NIV) observes, that the English is "without the heavy Hebraic 'brogue' that made so much of the biblical text seem strange and awkward."⁴ The Committee has followed the basic translation maxim "as literal as possible, as free as necessary." Paraphrastic renderings have been adopted only sparingly, and then chiefly to compensate for a deficiency in the English language — the lack of a common gender third person singular pronoun. The translation aims to circumvent what is considered the "inherent bias of the English language towards the masculine gender" During the 1980s the National Council of Churches (N.C.C.), in response to insistent feminist demands, published three sets of highly controversial rewrites of certain Bible passages ..., "but the NRSV translators (four of the 30 are women) refused to play games with God. They use inclusive terms only when the manuscripts clearly intend to speak of humans in general."⁵ Says the Rev. Bruce Metzger ... "The changes introduced in language relating to the Deity are tantamount to rewriting the Bible. As a Christian, and as a scholar, I find this altogether unacceptable. It will divide the church, rather than work for ecumenical understanding."⁶ However, where earlier English translations employed a heavily masculine-oriented phraseology, even when this is not demanded by the original texts, the translators adjusted what they considered overmasculinized language without changing what they perceived to be the intent of the original writers.⁷ Translators were given the mandate that, with references to humans, masculine-oriented language should be eliminated as far as this can be done without altering passages that reflect the historical situation of ancient patriarchal culture. Only very occasionally has the pronoun "he" or "him" been retained in passages where the reference may have been to a woman as well as to a man; for example, in several legal texts in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. In the vast majority of cases, however, inclusiveness has been attained by rephrasing or by introducing plural forms where this was thought not to distort the meaning of the passage.⁸ The gender aspect of the translation has been and remains controversial.⁹

Concerning another aspect of style, the traditional distinction between "shall" and "will" in English has been retained in the Old Testament, while in the New Testament the abandonment of such distinctions in the usage of the future tense in English reflects the more colloquial nature of the koine Greek used by most New Testament authors. The committee also voted to drop "thou, thee, thine which had been retained from the King James version in prayers and psalms addressed to God."¹⁰ Furthermore, in the tradition of the King James Version one will not expect to find the use of capital letters for pronouns that refer to the Deity. The head of the NRSV committee ends his account by stating that the Bible carries its full message to all persons and communities who read it so that they may discern and understand what God is saying to them. That message must not be disguised in phrases that are no longer clear, or hidden under words that have changed or lost their meaning; it must be presented in language that is direct and plain and meaningful to people today.¹¹

Our report can be considered our response (in the light of our mandate) to the more controversial guidelines set for the NRSV and our answer respecting the acceptability of this translation for the Canadian Reformed Churches.

¹Richard N. Ostling, "Farewell to Thee's and He's," *Time*, 21 May 1990.

²Bruce M. Metzger, "Trials of the Translator," *Theology Today*, 33:1 (1976), p. 100.

³See on this Rev. W. Huizinga, "A Missing Paragraph?," in *Una Sancta*, 38 (1991) 385-387. He reserves judgment on this addition.

⁴John H. Stek, "The New Revised Standard Version: A Preliminary Assessment," *Calvin Theological Journal*, 26:1 (April 1991), p. 81.

⁵Richard N. Ostling, *Time*, 21 May 1990.

⁶Richard N. Ostling, "O God Our [Mother and] Father," *Time*, 24 October 1983, p. 59.

⁷Bruce M. Metzger, "The 'Desexing' of Scripture," *Evangelical Newsletter*, Vol. 8:5 (March, 1981). Where the Hebrew and Greek refer to people in general the RSV committee employs a variety of expressions, including "those who," "all people," "everyone" and "human beings," rather than the traditional rendering "man."

⁸Stek (*op.cit.*, 90) observes that a proliferation of footnoting has taken place which might benefit the pastors and academicians (who do not need them, seeing that they are trained in the original languages and in text criticism), but which will be of little benefit to the average reader, puzzling them rather than enlightening.

⁹While not agreeing with all his terminology, we pass on the comments of John H. Stek (*op. cit.*, 94). "But the committee has gone well beyond that effort; it has taken great pains to undo also the sexual bias of the original languages and to conceal the male domination of social structures in the related cultures." Even a feminist like Phyllis A. Bird cannot be satisfied with the attempts made. In her article, "Translating Sexist Language as a Theological and Cultural Problem," (*Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, 42 [1988] 89) she writes: "But the problem it signals cannot be solved, in my view, by translation, because it is essentially a hermeneutical problem." She adds on p. 90: "The problem of androcentric language is essentially the same problem that Bultmann addressed in his attempt to free the gospel from the bondage of its mythological language and worldview."

¹⁰Bruce M. Metzger, *Theology Today*, p. 100.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 100, "having attempted, namely, conveying in the translation the same impression to its audience as the original did to its original audience."

III. PAST RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE NRSV

What follows is a comparison of the NRSV with recommendations made to the Standard Bible Committee by the Canadian Reformed Churches in past reports.

1. OLD TESTAMENT

1.A. SPECIFIC TEXTS

Genesis 1:1

original recommendation: Delete alternate translation ("When God began to create")

NRSV: "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth ..." with alternate translations in note: "when God began to create" or "In the beginning God created."

response: The traditional translation is now relegated to final place in the note. The NRSV rendering understands $b^e r' _ _ t$ as a construct form. However, it should be noted that the Masoretic accent (the disjunctive Tipcha), the ancient versions, and the context favours the absolute understanding of $b^e r' _ _ t$ (See E.J. Young, *Studies in Genesis One*, 5-7). When $b^e r' _ _ t$ is understood as an absolute, verse one stands a declaration of the fact of creation. Translating $b^e r' _ _ t$ as construct, however, means that verse one becomes a subordinate clause to verse two, suggesting that the earth was already existing when God began to create. This is readily seen when one reads Gen 1:1,2 in the NRSV.

Genesis 1:2

Since we are busy with the first two verses of Genesis 1, it should also be noted here that the NRSV also departs from traditional rendering in verse 2.

NRSV: "the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God^b swept over the face of the waters."

note b gives two alternate renderings: “while the Spirit of God” or “while a mighty wind.”

response: The RSV should have been retained “... the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.”

m^erahepet does not describe a mighty wind. *rhp* in the piel denotes the hovering of a bird over its young, as the NRSV correctly renders in Deut 32:11 (“hovers”): the only other place where the piel is found).

Because this verb is not appropriate to describe a mighty wind, *r_ah ^el_h_m* should be rendered “the Spirit of God.” Furthermore, it remains questionable whether *_^el_h_m* can ever be used as an indication of the superlative (cf., e.g., W. Baumgartner, ed., *Hebr_isches und Aram_isches Lexikon*, 52a).

Genesis 11:1

original recommendation: Replace “and few words” by “and the same words.”

NRSV: “and the same words.”

response: The recommendation was adopted.

Genesis 12:3 (similarly Gen 18:18)

original recommendation: Change the translation of the text to the one in the footnote and put in the footnote what is now in the text.

NRSV: “... and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”^e Note e gives as alternative: “by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves.”

response: The recommendation was adopted.

Genesis 24:67

original recommendation: Translate retaining the Hebrew. “Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother.”

NRSV: “Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah’s tent.”

response: The recommendation was adopted.

Genesis 25:27

original recommendation: Replace “quiet” by “plain.” Add footnote Heb. lit. “complete.” Alternative translation “upright, straightforward, undeviating.”

NRSV: “... Jacob was a quiet man, living in tents.”

response: The recommendation was not adopted.

Exodus 21:22

original recommendation: Translate “so that her child is born” instead of “so that there is a miscarriage.” The verb is often used to refer to normal birth (e.g. 1 Kings 8:19) and in no case is it used to indicate a miscarriage (Num. 12:12 refers to a stillborn child).

NRSV: “so that there is a miscarriage.”

response: The recommendation was not adopted.

Exodus 32:1,4,8

original recommendation: Translate “god” instead of “gods.” This is a possible translation and there is no reason to assume that Israel turned polytheist.

NRSV: “gods”

response: The recommendation was not adopted.

Deuteronomy 11:14, 15

original recommendation: Retain Hebrew “I” for it makes perfectly good sense since God speaks through His prophets.

NRSV: “then he ... and he”

response: The *NRSV* has gone further than the *RSV* in also changing the first person in verse 13 to third person with respect to commandment. The recommendation was not adopted.

Deuteronomy 16:7

original recommendation: Change “boil” into “cook” since the *RSV* creates an unnecessary conflict with Exodus 12:9.

NRSV: “You shall cook it”

response: The recommendation was adopted.

1 Samuel 13:1

original recommendation: This verse cannot be read out loud in this way. There are two other possibilities. Leave this verse out of the text and place it in a footnote with an explanation why this is done. Or retain it but add an estimated number of years plus a footnote which explains why this has been estimated.

NRSV: It is unchanged from the *RSV*, except that one of the notes contains the additional information that “(the verse is lacking in the Septuagint).”

response: The recommendation was not adopted.

1 Kings 7:24

original recommendation: Translate “ten to a cubit” instead of “for thirty cubits.” This is the obvious meaning of the Hebrew and technically 10 “gourds” to a cubit was not at all impossible.

NRSV: “each of ten cubits.”

response: The recommendation was not adopted. Although the *NRSV* appears to be more sensitive to the Hebrew text, it is difficult to see how the Hebrew justifies this translation.

1 Kings 7:24

original recommendation: Translate *p^eq_`_m* with “knobs” instead of “gourds.” The word is vague in Hebrew. The meaning seems to be oval protusions which look somewhat like gourds or eggs.

NRSV: “panels.”

response: The translation is more general. The matter remains difficult.

1 Kings 8:12

original recommendation: Omit the Greek addition “the LORD has set the sun in the heavens but.”

NRSV: The Greek addition is omitted.

response: The recommendation was adopted.

2 Chronicles 4:3

original recommendation: Translate “figures like oxen” instead of “figures of gourds.”

NRSV: *NRSV* renders “panels” (cf. 1 Kings 7:24) although *p^eq_`_m* is not found and the word for oxen is ignored.

response: The recommendation was not adopted.

2 Chronicles 4:5

original recommendation: Translate “three thousand baths” instead of “over three thousand baths” since this is what the Hebrew says.

NRSV: “three thousand baths.”

response: The recommendation was adopted.

2 Chronicles 4:10 and 1 Kings 7:39

original recommendation: Translate “at the right side of the house to the south-east.” This is a more precise translation and therefore more fitting for the rather careful description of which this is part.

NRSV: Unchanged from the RSV: “southeast corner of the house.”

response: The recommendation was not adopted.

2 Chronicles 21:2

original recommendation: Translate “of Israel” (instead of “of Judah”) or at least add a footnote informing the reader that Israel is in the Hebrew text. Elsewhere the RSV does not substitute “Judah” for “Israel” (cf. 2 Chron. 12:6; 19:8; 21:4; 23:2).

NRSV: “of Judah” with a note that the Greek and Syriac is followed but that the Hebrew has “Israel.”

response: Part of the recommendation was followed.

Job 17:3

original recommendation: Add a footnote: Heb. “strike hands with me.”

NRSV: unchanged.

response: The recommendation was not adopted.

Job 36:21b (the uncorrected report read 26:21b)

original recommendation: Translate: “because for this reason you were tested by affliction.” (Using the pual of *bhr* clears up the difficulty which *`al* presents here, since this preposition never completes *bhr*.)

NRSV: “ ... because of that you have been tried by affliction.”

response: The recommendation was adopted.

Psalms 2:12

original recommendation: Translate “kiss the Son,” since the meaning of the Masoretic text is not uncertain as the footnote suggests.

NRSV: No change from the RSV in the disputed place.

response: The recommendation was not adopted.

Psalms 29:1

original recommendation: Instead of “heavenly beings” translate “sons of God.” As grounds were given that this is a possible Hebrew translation which then refers to the believers (cf. Gen. 6:4). In Psalm 96:7-9 similar verses have “families of the peoples” instead of the phrase in question here suggesting that human beings and not heavenly beings are referred to.

NRSV: There is no change from the RSV.

response: The recommendation was not adopted.

Psalms 45:6

original recommendation: Translate “Thy throne O God.” Reasons given were the quotation in Hebrew 1:8 and the fact that the Davidic throne was at bottom God’s throne.

NRSV: “Your throne O God.”

response: The recommendation was adopted.

Psalms 51:18

original recommendation: Translate “build the walls of Jerusalem” and if desired put “rebuild” in a footnote. The normal translation of the Hebrew is

“build,” unless the context makes clear it is otherwise. As the translation now reads, it contradicts the heading “Psalm of David” and begs the question regarding the Davidic authorship of v v. 18ff.

NRSV: “... rebuild the walls of Jerusalem” (as RSV).

response: The recommendation was not adopted.

Psalm 109:8

original recommendation: Replace “his goods” by “his office” since this is the common meaning of the Hebrew word (cf. Septuagint).

NRSV: It renders the term in question by “his position.”

response: The recommendation was adopted.

Isaiah 49:17

original recommendation: The translation “builders” should be footnoted to indicate that the Hebrew reads “sons.”

NRSV: “Your builders outdo your destroyers! ...” with footnote 1 giving as alternative rendering: “Your children come swiftly, your destroyers.”

response: The rendering in the text is essentially unchanged. New is the addition of the footnote. However, with respect to the point raised in the original recommendation, our objection still stands. “Builders” and “children” are not translations of the same Hebrew. To translate the former involves a slight emendation that should be acknowledged.

Ezekiel 27:19

original recommendation: The Hebrew should be retained with the translation “Vedan and Javan paid for your wares from Uzal.”

NRSV: “Vedan and Javan from Uzal^l entered into trade for your wares ...” footnote j: “Meaning of Heb. uncertain.”

response: The NRSV is a great improvement and essentially follows the recommendation that the Hebrew text be followed.

Ezekiel 34:16

original recommendation: Retain Hebrew and translate “the fat and the strong I will destroy.”

NRSV: “the fat and the strong I will destroy.”

response: The recommendation was adopted.

Hosea 2:23 (Heb. verse 25)

original recommendation: The correction is unnecessary. Translate “I will sow her.” No textual evidence exists for the emendation “him.” It is unnecessary. Israel is seen as bride and therefore to be referred to as “her.” This observation receives confirmation from the Septuagint, Vulgate and Peshitta which all translate “her.” Later in this verse it switches to masculine (“he shall say”) because of its close proximity to the masculine “people.”

NRSV: “I will sow him^a for myself.” note q: Cn: Heb “her.”

response: The recommendation was not adopted.

Hosea 6:7

original recommendation: Retain the Hebrew text “like Adam.” In view of Genesis 3 there is no need to change the Hebrew. “There” (further in verse 7) could implicitly refer to Paradise or could also be taken in a temporal sense (e.g. Psalm 14:5).

NRSV: “But at^a Adam they transgressed ...” Note e: Cn: Heb “like.”

response: The recommendation was not adopted.

Hosea 12:6 (Hebrew verse 7)

original recommendation: Translate: "So you, return to your God." Reasons include that k^e can often have the meaning "to" with verbs of motion (e.g. Isaiah 19:23).

NRSV: "But as for you, return to your God."

response: The recommendation was adopted.

Zechariah 6:13

original recommendation: Translate "and He shall be a priest on His throne." Although the RSV rendering is technically possible, it goes against the structure of verse 13. Now there is an abrupt change of subject. The fact that there will be a priest on the throne has already been said in different words earlier in this verse and therefore this last clause is a natural conclusion. The preposition 'al is now translated in two different ways in the same verse. This seems forced. Since the final "them" refers to the two offices there is no problem here (cf. Psalm 110).

NRSV: "There shall be a priest by his throne."

response: The recommendation was not adopted.

summary

The above can be summarized as follows. Of the above 31 recommendations made, 12 were adopted, two were partly adopted, and 17 were not adopted.

1.B. COMPARISON BETWEEN RSV AND NRSV ON CORRECTIONS IN HOSEA

legend: col II indicates same cn, although trans. may not necessarily be identical.

col III indicates emendation is warranted according to the report to Synod 1974.

col. IV notes instances where the NRSV no longer emends the text

* = a translation similar to our recommendation or one mentioned as a possibility in 1974 Report

? = NRSV notes that the Heb. is uncertain

cn = correction for which there is no text evidence

I TEXT	II SAME CN IN RSV AND NRSV	III EMENDATION WARRANTED	IV CN IN RSV BUT NOT IN NRSV
2:23 (25)	x		
4:4	x	x	
4:18(a)			x *
4:18(b)	x	x	
5:2	x	x	
5:8			x *
5:13	x (same as 10:6)		
6:7	x		
6:9(a)	x		
7:12			x * ?
7:16	x (different trans.)		
8:1			x * ?
8:13	x (different trans.)	x	
9:4			x *

9:6		x *?
9:13		x ?
10:5	x	
10:6(A)	x (same as 5:13)	
10:6(B)	x	
10:10	x	
10:15		x *
11:6		x *
11:9		x * ?
11:12 (12:1)		x (n. gives lit. Heb)
12:8 (9)		x * ?
13:6	x	
13:10(A)		x *
13:10(B)		x *
13:10(C)		x *
13:15		x *
14:5 (6)		x * (rev trans, but still needlessly marked as cn)
14:7 (8)	x	

note: 9:7 (NRSV) is marked with a cn, but this is not a cn in the sense of the NRSV preface since LXX is followed.

Statistical Summary re Hosea

RSV had a total of 31 different corrections (cn).

NRSV has retained 14 of these (of which 4 were deemed responsible by the 1974 Report to Synod), but rejected the conjectural emendations in the other 17 cases, translating in a manner consistent with the possibilities mentioned in the 1974 Report to Synod.

The above indicates a greater respect for the integrity of the Masoretic Text (i.e. Hebrew Text). This development is as such no surprise considering current scholarly trends which show a greater appreciation for the Masoretic Text.

The NRSV is therefore an advance textually over the RSV in Hosea. It would seem reasonable to suppose that this more conservative attitude to the Masoretic Text is in all likelihood evident elsewhere in the OT of the NRSV. Although, to be sure, one would have to study this matter further.

2. NEW TESTAMENT

2.A. SPECIFIC TEXTS

- I TEXT
- II RSV
- III CAN REF RECOMMENDATION
- IV NRSV

- I Luke 4:22a
- II And all spoke well of him.
- III And all testified about him.
- IV All spoke well of (So NIV).

- I Luke 4:22b
- II and wondered at the gracious words

- III and were shocked at the words of grace
 - IV and were amazed at the gracious words (So NIV).
- I Rom. 3:9
 - II Are we Jews any better off?
 - III Are we any better off?
 - IV Are we any better off?
- I Rom. 3:25
 - II expiation
 - III "propitiation" or "satisfaction"
 - IV a sacrifice of atonement (So NIV).(The same for 1 John 2:2; 4:10; both NRSV and NIV: "atoning sacrifice.")
- I Rom. 3:30
 - II (Gr.: out of faith) on the ground of their faith
 - III by faith
 - IV on the ground of faith
- I Rom. 4:13
 - II The promise ... (as NIV)
 - III For the promise ...
 - IV For the promise ...
- I Rom. 8:10
 - II your spirits
 - III the Spirit
 - IV the Spirit
- I Rom. 9:5
 - II Christ. God who is over all be blessed for ever.
 - III Christ, who is God over all, blessed for ever.
 - IV Messiah, who is over all, God blessed for ever.
- I Heb. 2:11
 - II have all one origin
 - III all are of one
 - IV all have one Father (NIV: "are of the same family")
- I Heb. 6:14
 - II 'Surely I will bless you and multiply you.'
 - III 'Surely I will richly bless you and multiply you.'
 - IV 'I will surely bless you and multiply you.' (NIV: 'I will surely bless you and give you many descendants.'
- I Heb. 12:2
 - II (sprinkled blood that speaks more graciously than) the blood of Abel
 - III (sprinkled blood that speaks more graciously than) Abel
 - IV (sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than) the blood of Abel (NIV: "sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.")
- I 1 John 5:16ff.
 - II what is not a mortal sin ... which is mortal
 - III sin leading to death ... sin leading to death
 - IV what is not a mortal sin ... sin that is mortal (NIV: "sin that does not lead to death" or "that leads to death.")

Summary

Our committee made a total of twelve recommendations. In three cases the NRSV changed the reading of the RSV in agreement with our committee's recommendations (Rom. 3:9, 4:13, and 8:10). In five cases our recommendations were not complied with, although a slight change may have taken place (Luke 4:22a, Rom. 3:30, Heb. 6:14, 12:2, and 1John 5:16,17); hereby an unchanged Rom.3:30 weighs heavily. In one case our recommendation was not accepted but the NRSV's change is an improvement, while our recommendation was not (Luke 4:22b: "shocked" is too strong). In two cases the NRSV's change did not follow our recommendation and was no improvement (Rom. 3:25, Heb. 2:11). In one case the NRSV changed partially in agreement with our recommendation, but the new translation is ambivalent (Rom. 9:5; while the change from "Christ" to "Messiah" is the opposite of an improvement. In summary: there are four improvements in translation of which three are in agreement with our committee's recommendations. The eight other cases are either no improvement or no change took place.

2.B. TEXT QUESTIONS

An earlier Canadian Reformed report noted, in a comparison between the first (1952) and the second (1971) edition of the RSV, that Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53-8:11 were "brought back into the text." The same counts for Luke 22:19b- 20 and 24:51b. It also mentioned that Luke 22:43-44 and part of Luke 12:39 were still left in the footnotes. In the NRSV the former is restored into the text, but not the latter. Basis for the retaining of this omission is, probably, that three of the older Greek and some old Latin and other manuscripts omit the words. Since the great majority of the manuscripts contain the words concerned, there is no good ground to leave them out.

2.C. THE SON AND THE SPIRIT

An earlier Canadian Reformed Report mentioned that with the second edition of the RSV there was "no change regarding inconsistencies and translation problems surrounding the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit." It mentioned Rom.9:5 and Heb.2:11, which have been dealt with above. The problem of "inconsistencies regarding the usage of thou/you when referring to the Lord Jesus" does not exist anymore since all "thou"s and "thee"s are abandoned.

This report also noted that "the holy Spirit is still in some instances referred to in the neuter (cf. Romans 5:5, 8:11, Ephesians 1:14, 1John 3:24)."

Rom.5:5 reads in the NRSV: "...through the Holy Spirit that [RSV: "which"] has been given to us."

Rom.8:11 now reads: "...through his Spirit that [RSV: "which"] dwells in you."

Eph.1:14 reads in the NRSV: "(... marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit); this is the pledge of our inheritance"

In a note attached to "this" it says: "Other ancient authorities read who." The RSV reads: "(... the Holy Spirit,) which" The Greek text with the neuter relative pronoun (because the word for "Spirit" is a neuter word) is found in some older manuscripts; however, the majority of the manuscripts have here the masculine relative pronoun. The fact that the large majority of the manuscripts has the masculine relative pronoun, and the fact that in 2 Cor. 1:22 and 5:5 the Holy Spirit Himself, and not the act of the sealing with the Spirit, is called "the guarantee" lead to the conclusion that the masculine relative pronoun is to be considered the correct reading. This, in turn, stresses that the Holy Spirit is not an impersonal, neuter, power but a divine Person, and that He should be presented in this way in the translation.

In conclusion, respecting the points just mentioned, there is no improvement except in one instance.

2.D. COMPARISON BETWEEN THE RSV AND THE NRSV ON GALATIANS.

Legend: The following procedure is use in the "COMMENTS" column

* = the NRSV has resorted to inclusive language.

*RSV = the RSV is more literal and a definite masculine form or word is used in the original.

TEXT
RSV
NRSV
COMMENTS

1:1

not from men (pl.) nor through man (sg.)
neither by human commission nor from human authority
*RSV. In NRSV plural and singular obscured.

1:6

deserting him
deserting the one
RSV more literal.

1:8,9

let him be accursed
let that one be accursed
NRSV acceptable

1:10

favour of men (pl.)
human approval
*RSV. In NRSV plural obscured.

1:11

not man's gospel
not of human origin
*RSV.

1:12

not from man
not from a human source
*RSV.

1:13

no doubt
Not in text.
Perhaps translation of *gar*

1:14

tradition of my fathers
...my ancestors
*RSV.

1:15

But when he
But when God
Improvement. NRSV has opted for expanded reading.

1:16

not confer with flesh and blood
not confer with any human being

*RSV. In NRSV this change is inconsistent. —> 3:3, 5:13, 5:16

1:17

who were apostles before me

...already apostles before

"already" not in original.

went into Arabia

went at once

"at once" not in original.

and again I returned

afterwards I returned

Grk. *palin* NRSV transl. "afterwards" Seems more clear.

1:20

() parentheses removed

Improvement.

1:22

churches of Christ in Judea

churches of Judea that are in Christ

NRSV more literal.

1:23

He who ...

the one ...

RSV preferred even though original has "the one." But the reference is clearly to Paul.
Here elimination of masculine gender is carried to an extreme.

once persecuted

formerly ...

Improvement. Consistent with 1:13.

1:18

went up

did go up

Improvement. NRSV made choice to show contrast clearly. In v.17 did *not* go up. In v.18 *did* go up.

2:2

but privately before those who were of repute

though only in a private meeting with the acknowledged leaders

Paraphrase. So 2:6

2:4

false brethren

false believers

*RSV.

our freedom which we have

the freedom we have

RSV more literal.

2:6

what they were

what they actually were

"actually" not in original.

2:8

he who worked through Peter for the mission to the circumcised
for he who worked through Peter making him and apostle to the circumcised
NRSV inconsistent. It retains "he" and does not substitute "the one" as in 1:23.

2:9

to me and Barnabas
Barnabas and me
RSV more literal.

that we should go
agreeing that we ...
"agreeing" not in original. Confusing addition.

2:10

only they would have us
They asked only one thing
RSV more literal.

2:12

he ate
he used to eat
Improvement.
but when they came
but after ...
RSV better.

2:13

insincerity
hypocrisy
NRSV more literal.

2:14

were not straightforward
were not acting consistently
RSV better.

2:16

a man is not justified by
a person is justified not by
*RSV.

3:2

let me ask only this
The only thing I want to learn from you is this:
NRSV more literal.

3:2

or by hearing with faith?
or by believing what you heard?
So 3:5. NRSV seems clearer.

3:3

ending with the flesh
same
NRSV inconsistent. Why here 'flesh' while in 1:16 did not want to translate "flesh and blood" —> 5:13, 5:16.

3:6

Thus Abraham
Just as Abraham
Improvement.

3:7

men of faith
those who believe
*RSV. So 3:9
sons of Abraham
are descendants of Abraham
*RSV.

3:8

In you shall all the nations be blessed.
All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you.
NRSV uses Gentiles here as earlier in same verse.

3:11

He who through faith is righteous shall live
The one who is righteous will live by faith
NRSV has taken the footnote in RSV and put RSV translation in footnote RSV translation is better. We are righteous before God
by or through faith in Jesus Christ.
NRSV rendition can give the impression that faith is the result of righteousness. The most literal translation would have been: The righteous shall live by faith.

3:15

To give a human example
I give an example from daily life...
RSV more literal.
a man's will...
a person's will...
*RSV.

3:16

offspring
same
Like RSV but NRSV footnotes "seed." Good. So in 3:19
which is Christ
who is Christ
Improvement.

3:19

ordained by angels through an intermediary
ordained through angels by a mediator
NRSV more literal.

3:22

the scripture consigned all things to sin
has imprisoned all things under the power of sin
"the power" not in original. RSV uses "consigned" here and "confined" in 3:23. NRSV more consistent.

what was promised to faith in Jesus Christ
promised through faith in Jesus Christ
NRSV has footnote: "Through the faith of Jesus Christ"

3:24
so that...
therefore...
Improvement.
custodian
disciplinarian
Better. So v.25

3:26
you are all sons of God
children of God
*RSV.

4:1,2
I mean that the heir as long as he is a child (sg. form)
My point is this: heirs, as long as they are minors (plural)
In vv.1,2 the NRSV has transposed all the singular forms into the plural to avoid reference to gender. To speak of minors seems to distance the relationship.

4:3
children
minors
RSV more literal.
we were slaves
we were enslaved
NRSV more literal. So in 4:9.
elemental spirits
same
NRSV has in footnote: "rudiments." Good. So in 4:9.

4:4
when the time had fully come
when the fullness of time had come
NRSV more literal.

4:5
receive adoption as sons
adoption as children
son(s) also translated by child(ren) in v.6,7 NRSV tries to avoid reference to gender.

4:10
You observe days
You are observing special days
"special" not in original.

4:20
I could wish to be present with you now and change my tone
I wish I were present with you and could change my tone
Improvement. "Could" switched places. NRSV flows better.

4:23
son of the slave / free woman
child of the slave / free woman
Literally "the one" in masc. gender. But this form is not used here because the NRSV tries to avoid reference to gender. RSV more literal.

4:24

One is from ...
One woman, in fact, is Hagar
RSV more literal.

4:26

But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.
But the other woman corresponds to Jerusalem above; she is free, and she is our mother.

RSV better. NRSV is a Paraphrase.

4:27 Both the RSV and NRSV take liberties here, especially in the last two lines.
Literally: because many (are) the children of the desolate one rather than of the one (the woman) who has a husband.

STRIKING: Whenever the masculine gender is used in this letter it is changed to the neutral form "the one." Where RSV has 'the one' as in this quote from Isaiah 54, the NRSV committee felt compelled to substitute 'the woman' when from the context this is obvious since only women, not men, give birth.

4:29

he who was born
the child who ...
Literally "the one." NRSV tries to avoid reference to gender.
persecuted him
persecuted the child
Literally "the one" NRSV tries to avoid reference to gender.

4:30

slave and her son
slave and her child
*RSV. In NRSV son changed to 'child' 3x in this verse. Again a clear indication how the NRSV tries to avoid reference to male gender.

5:2

Now, I, Paul, say to you
Listen! I, Paul, am telling you
Interesting! NRSV tries to do justice to Grk. ide = see! note! listen!
if you receive circumcision
if you let yourselves be circumcised
...Improvement. So v.3

5:10

I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view than mine
I am confident about you in the Lord that you will not think otherwise.
NRSV more literal.

5:13

opportunity for the flesh
opportunity for self-indulgence
RSV better. *sarki* points to a totally corrupt nature. Self-indulgence is a weakness.
be servants of one another
become slaves
NRSV more literal.

5:14

the law is fulfilled in one word
... summed up in a single commandment
RSV more literal.

5:16

flesh ... flesh

same

Here NRSV did not substitute another word for flesh. Good. —> 1:16, 3:3, 5:13.

5:16

walk by the Spirit

... live by ...

RSV more literal. —> 5:25

5:25 RSV and NRSV translate same. Yet NRSV is not consistent. In 5:16 it translated *peripateo* by “live” while RSV has “walk.” Here NRSV renders *zaoo* also as “live.”

The RSV is not consistent either. It does not show the difference between *peripateo* (walk) in v.16 and *stoixeoo* (follow, march in line behind the Spirit) in v.25.

6:1

overtaken in a trespass

detected in a transgression

Prefer RSV.

6:2

and so fulfil the law

in this way you will fulfill

Improvement. Reflects the future tense. NRSV has in footnote: “in this way fulfill”

6:3

if any one (sing.)

if those... (plural)

*RSV.

6:6

let him... with him who teaches

Let those ... with their teacher

Switch from sing. to plural. Literally “Let the one.”

NRSV tries to avoid reference to gender.

6:8

he

you (2x)

Literally “the one.” NRSV tries to avoid reference to gender.

6:14

Far be it from me to glory except in the cross

May I never boast of anything except the cross

NRSV more literal.

6:15

but a new creation

but a new creation is everything!

“is everything” not in original.

6:16

Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule

As for those who will follow this rule — peace be upon

NRSV more literal.

6:17

bear on my body the marks of Jesus
I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body
"branded" derived from stigma

EVALUATION:

The NRSV is inconsistent in translating *adelphos* (brother). It is rendered as: members of God's family (1:2); brothers and sisters (1:11, 3:15, 5:13, 6:18); false believers (2:4); friends (4:12, 4:31); my friends (4:28, 6:1).

Other inconsistencies in the NRSV are noted, especially regarding the translation for *sarki* (flesh). See comments by 1:16; 3:3; 5:13 and 16.

In chapter 4:23-29 the Greek text uses what we could translate by "the one." Only in 4:23 is the masculine gender used. Of course, the whole passage is governed by what Paul writes in v.22, that Abraham had two sons. Thus the following references to "the one" apply to these two sons. Therefore the NRSV, though technically correct in translating "the child," is not doing its readers a service. Here the gender bias is very evident. The RSV is here definitely better.

On the whole the RSV sticks closer to the original. At times the NRSV takes on the form of a paraphrase. This makes the NRSV more lucid in certain instances.

Several improvements are also noted. A definite improvement is in chapters 1:13,14 and 2:13-16 where the NRSV cuts the long sentences into smaller sections. In these instances the use of shorter sentences gives greater clarity.

This comparison between the RSV and the NRSV shows that the latter has taken too many liberties.

IV. INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

The most controversial aspect of the NRSV is the matter of inclusive language and the manner in which this "ideal" showed itself in the translation. It is chiefly in this area where our greatest concerns as Committee lie.

IV.1. GENERAL EXAMPLES

To be sure, no one will have any difficulty if the NRSV avoids reference to a particular sex if such a reference is not found in the original. For example, both the King James Version (KJV) and the RSV render "if any man" in Mark 4:23 (if any man has ears to hear ...) and in John 7:17 ("If any man will do his will ..."). However, the Greek original does not specify gender and so the NRSV can accurately translate "anyone."

Other examples that could possibly be justified or contested as being consistent or inconsistent with the intent of the text are as follows:

- a. Mt. 23:8 - "brothers" becomes "members of my family"
- b. Lk. 9:56 - "men's lives" becomes "the lives of human beings"
- c. Lk. 17:3 - "your brother" becomes "another disciple"
- d. Acts 7:37 - "brother" becomes "people"
- e. Rom. 12:1 - (and frequently elsewhere) "brothers" becomes "brothers and sisters" e.g. Gal. 5:13; 6:18; 3:15; 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:14; 2:17; 4:6; 4:10; Jas. 3:1; 2 Pet. 1:10; 1 Jn. 2: 10; 3:10; 4:20.
- f. Acts 3:17 - "brothers" becomes "friends" (also frequently elsewhere, e.g. Gal. 4:28; 2 Cor. 11:9, 3 Jn. 10, etc.)
- g. Gal. 2:4 - "false brethren" becomes "false believers" Gal. 1:2 also has "members of God's family" cf. 1 Jn. 2:11.

- h. Eph. 6: 23 - "brothers" becomes "the whole community"
- i. 1 Pet. 2:17 - "all men" becomes "everyone"; "Love the brotherhood" becomes "Love the family of believers." (Also see the examples at the end of § III.2.D above.)

In all the above examples, precision of translation is sacrificed for the policy of inclusive language. This point can be further underlined by two additional examples. In Rom.8:14 and 16-17 Paul writes that those who are led by the Spirit of God are "sons of God," and that the Spirit of God testifies that we are "children of God, and if children, then heirs." The NRSV translates both underlined words with the same English word "children," without indicating in a footnote that the Greek text uses two different words.

The same technique occurs in Gal.4:4-7: God sent "His Son" (v. 4) in order that we might "receive adoption as sons" (v. 5). "And because you are sons..." (v. 6). Then follows in v. 7 (RSV): "So through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir." In these cases, too, the NRSV replaces the Greek word "son" with the neuter word "child" when it is used for believers in general.

These examples raise objections in our mind because the translations are determined by the ideology of feminism and are not demanded by the text. The NRSV, however, goes even further than the above examples for the translators appear determined to avoid gender references wherever possible, even if it means changing the plain meaning of the original language text, or hindering the understanding of prophecy, or introducing new doctrines.

IV.2. CHANGING THE INTENT OF THE TEXT

One result of the inclusive language policy is that the original text is sometimes no longer recognizable in the translated version.

The RSV of Psalm 55:20 reads: "My companion stretched out his hand against his friends, he violated his covenant." To avoid using a reference to a male, the NRSV renders: "My companion laid hands on a friend and violated a covenant with me." The sole footnote (Hebrew lacks "with me") is misleading for it only registers one of the places where the NRSV for the sake of inclusive language differs from the Hebrew text. The three references in the Hebrew text to the masculine possessive pronoun are left unmentioned. Such a translation can no longer be called either literal or accurate. Revelation 3:20 is correctly rendered in the RSV by "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me." The NRSV however reads: "Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me." What is noteworthy about examples such as these is that the translation is no longer determined by what the text says, but by what certain people like to hear. Apparently feminists no longer want to listen to language that they perceive as male dominated and so the Word has to be purged from what is considered a male bias.

IV.3. UNDERSTANDING PROPHECY

The deletion of male references is quite pervasive and it can even hinder an accurate understanding of Christ's identity as Messiah. In the RSV we read in Daniel 7:13 of "one like a son of man" who comes on the clouds of heaven and to whom is given everlasting dominion over all nations. The NRSV renders "one like a human being" (with a footnote giving the literal translation). However, it is important to keep the literal rendering in the text of Daniel 7. The literal translation "son of man" is necessary in order to understand Christ's words to His accusers when our Saviour says "you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the

clouds of heaven” (Mk. 14:62 [NRSV]; also see, in a different context Luke 21:27). Furthermore the references to our exalted Lord in the NRSV as “one like the Son of Man” in Revelation (1:13; 14:14) can only be properly understood if the background of Daniel 7 is appreciated.

IV.4. NEW TEACHINGS

The Scriptural exclusion of the sisters from the special office is not adequately safeguarded in the NRSV. For example, in Phil. 1:14 - “brothers” becomes “brothers and sisters” here in the context of the official proclamation of the word (*logon tou Theou lalein*). Also, the notes given in the translation betray a bias in favour of women in office. For example, with 1 Tim 3: 11, note *j* says “*Or their wives or women deacons,*” and with Rom 16:1 – note *j* says “*Or minister.*” It is also unclear why 1 Cor 14: 33b-36 has been bracketed. No justification is given.

Sometimes terms are introduced which have unbiblical connotations in the present modern context and thus raise questions. In Eph.4:24 and Col. 3:10, in the phrase “the new man” (KJV; in RSV: “the new nature”) the word “man” is interpreted, in the NRSV, by the modern philosophical and psychological term “self” which can easily be connected with ideas from the eastern religions. It is certainly not an improvement of the RSV’s translation, “the new nature.”

IV.5. CONCLUSION

The NRSV’s policy of inclusive language leads to results that are unacceptable. In key areas this translation is not governed by the language and thinking of Scripture, but by current ideology, especially feminism. Such cannot be called a faithful translation of God’s Word.

V ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE NRSV

The matter of inclusive language was considered of paramount and decisive importance by this Committee and hence other aspects of the NRSV were not dealt with in a consistent and thorough manner. We would however like to bring a few examples of improvements and deficiencies to your attention which were not covered in § III.

V.1. ADDRESSING GOD

A significant change in policy was the decision to drop the use of the archaic “thee,” “thou,” and “thine” in prayers addressing God. Also the antiquated verb forms “art,” “hast,” and “hadst” are no longer used. In evaluating this change, it must be noted that in none of the original languages of Scripture is any linguistic distinction made between addressing a human being and addressing God. Since Biblical usage is our norm, one cannot have principle objections against the deletion of these archaic forms.

V.2. IMPROVEMENTS

In several instances the NRSV is closer to the original text. For example, Gen. 3:6 now reads: “...she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate” (RSV lacked “who was with her”); Ps. 130:6 now has “Lord” (instead of “LORD”). Other examples of being more faithful to the Hebrew text are: Prov. 12:9; 13:8; 14:17; 15:26.

In the New Testament we can note that Col. 3:6 takes the expanded reading. “On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient.” (RSV lacked “on those who are disobedient.”) and 1 Cor. 15: 28 becomes “all in all.”

V.3. DEFICIENCIES

As a somewhat random sampling the following can suffice.

Ex. 20:7 now reads “a wrongful use of” which is a much broader and freer translation than the RSV “take in vain.”

Ex. 20:4 now reads “you shall not make for yourself an idol” — creating more overlap between the first and second commandments.

It is questionable whether we need to follow the Greek translation of the Old Testament in Prov. 11:16 as the NRSV does with the result that there is the addition of two members to create two antithetical proverbs. MT is: “The gracious woman gets honour, but the aggressive (only) riches.”

Mt. 6:13, now reads :”and lead us not to the time of trial.” This rendition of *eis peirasmon* takes away the *present* thrust of the petition, and puts its focus in the future. It should read “And lead us not into temptation.”

The quotation of Ex. 16:18 in 2 Cor. 8:15 is somewhat strange.

In the NRSV, Ex. 16:18 reads: “... those who gathered much had nothing over, and those who gathered little had no shortage” while the quotation in 2 Cor. 8:15 reads as “The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little.” The RSV is more true to original. It translates: Ex. 16:18 “... he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack;” and reads 2 Cor. 8:15 thus “He who gathered much had nothing over, and he who gathered little had no lack.”

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

- A. There are good things about the NRSV. Improvements over the RSV are evident. These have been detailed in §§ III and V.
- B. However, the concern about inclusive language overshadows any gains made. Because the translation shows evidence of an overriding preoccupation with this gender issue, the NRSV is unacceptable for use in the Canadian Reformed Churches. The imposition of an artificial gender guideline for translation (which has its roots in ungodly philosophies like feminism) has resulted in a translation that changes the intent of the text, hinders an understanding of prophecy, and introduces new teachings. (See § IV).
- C. It appears likely that the RSV will go out of print within five years.

yours in Christ,
The Committee on Bible Translations

C. Van Dam, convener/reporter
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