

CanRC decisions regarding Indonesia

GS 1998

Indonesia is only referenced in relation to the ICRC and the FRCA.

GS 2001

Article 54 - CRCA: Pilgrim Reformed Churches in East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia.

Committee 3 presented its proposal on the Pilgrim Reformed Churches in East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia.

The following was adopted:

1. Material

1.1. Appendix to the Report of the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad regarding the Pilgrim Reformed Churches in East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia (GGRM).

2. Observations

- 2.1. The CRCA informs Synod in an appendix dated March 9, 2001 about a request from the GGRM to have a “contact relationship” with the CanRC.
- 2.2. The GGRM have recognized the CanRC as true churches; they are the fruit of Dutch missionary efforts; they have adopted the Reformed Confessions and Church Order; they have ecclesiastical contacts with the GKN and FRCA; some of their young men have studied or are studying at our Theological College; these churches have membership in the ICRC.
- 2.3. The CRCA points out that, although this is a recent request of the GGRM, it would only be brotherly to give direction at this time, rather than wait for the next Synod.
- 2.4. The CRCA points out that we have definite links with the GGRM through our two sister churches and through Rev. A.J. Pol who has had contact with these churches. Moreover there is the contact with the Theological College.
- 2.5. Thus the CRCA recommends that Synod mandate the CRCA to:
 - 2.5.1. Gather more information about the GGRM;
 - 2.5.2. Inform the GGRM of our Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship and ask if they can live in a relationship with those rules;
 - 2.5.3. Discuss with representatives of the GGRM how they envision a relationship between two federations so far apart geographically can be meaningful;
 - 2.5.4. Come with recommendations to the next Synod.

3. Considerations

- 3.1. The CRCA is correct that although the request from the GGRM came in late, nevertheless, considering the contacts these churches have with two of our sister churches, the fact that they have adopted the Reformed Confessions and Church Order, and the other points mentioned in the Observations above, it would be good to deal with their request at this point in time rather than wait until the next Synod.
- 3.2. The CRCA’s own recommended mandate would raise the discussion with representatives of the GGRM as to how, “they envision a relationship between two federations so far apart geographically can be meaningful.” With this in mind, it would be good that even though we would make progress in our discussions with the GGRM, and perhaps even enter into ecclesiastical fellowship at a certain point, the contact with the GGRM should rest primarily in the hands of the FRCA who are geographically much closer. This would also be in line with decisions of previous Synods. For instance, at Synod Fergus, in article 72, the CRCA’s own proposed mandate reads, “Whenever the CRCA receives a new request from a church located in Africa, Asia or Europe to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with the CanRC, it shall direct that church to take up contact with one of the sister churches in that part of the world.” In Consideration B, Synod agrees with this line of thinking. At the same time, Synod added in

Consideration C, “Restructuring the work of the CRCA should not detract from our ecumenical calling. Therefore Synod upholds the consideration of Synod Lincoln 1992, Article 128 III D, namely that ‘a regional approach to 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 home environment.’”

4. Recommendations

Synod decide to present the CRCA with the following mandate in connection with the GGRM:

- 4.1. To gather more information about the GGRM.
- 4.2. To consult with the GKN and the FRCA regarding the GGRM.
- 4.3. To inform the GGRM of our Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship and ask if they can live in a relationship with those rules.
- 4.4. To discuss with representatives of the GGRM how they envision a relationship between two federations so far apart geographically can be meaningful, also reminding them that the FRCA should have the primary contact with the GGRM.
- 4.5. To come with recommendations to the next Synod.

GS 2004

Article 100 CRCA re: Indonesian Churches, Reformed Church in New Zealand and General Mandate

Committee 3 again presented its proposal on the report of the CRCA re: Indonesian Churches, Reformed Church in New Zealand and General Mandate. After a few rounds of discussion, the following amendment was adopted:

To add to Consideration 4.5:

The fact, however, remains that in order to foster a meaningful relationship, creating a greater awareness of our federation, every effort should be made to encourage face-to-face meetings with the church federations in question. However, this should be done within the CRCA’s existing budget.

Then the main proposal was put to a vote. The following was adopted:

1. Material

- 1.1. Report of the CRCA re: other matters, namely, Indonesian Churches, Reformed Church in New Zealand and General Mandate
- 1.2. Supplementary Report CRCA
- 1.3. Letter from the church at Winnipeg (Redeemer)
- 1.4. Letter from the church at Carman (West)
- 1.5. Letter from the church at Guelph
- 1.6. Letter from the church at Grand Rapids
- 1.7. Letter from the church at Elora
- 1.8. Letter from the church at Aldergrove

2. Admissibility

The report and the letters are admissible.

3. Observations

- 3.1. The report of the CRCA under the heading “Other Matters,” which is included as an appendix in the Acts, serves as Observations.
- 3.2. The CRCA recommends that Synod decide:
 - 3.2.1. With respect to the Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Calvinis in East Nusa Tenggara (GGRCNTT):
 - 3.2.1.1. Not to enter in Ecclesiastical Fellowship at this time but to give the contact with the church at Smithville an opportunity to develop;

- 3.2.1.2. To recommend to the churches in the federation to receive visitors from the GGRC-NTT in the knowledge that these churches adhere to the Three Forms of Unity;
 - 3.2.2. To approve the proposed budget of \$14,500 for the period 2004-2007;
 - 3.2.3. To give the CRCA the following general mandate:
 - 3.2.3.1. To investigate diligently all the requests received for entering into ecclesiastical fellowship outside the Americas;
 - 3.2.3.2. To respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests made to attend Assemblies, Synods, or meetings of other churches outside the Americas;
 - 3.2.3.3. To serve Synod 2007 with a report with suitable Recommendations, to be sent to the churches six months prior to the next General Synod.
 - 3.2.4. To appoint one new member to serve on the CRCA for a nine year term (till 2013).
- 3.3. In the Supplementary Report, the CRCA:
- 3.3.1. Reports that it has received a request about establishing Ecclesiastical Fellowship from the Gereja-Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia (GGRI-NTT). The GGRI-NTT is a result of the missionary activities of our Dutch sister churches. Currently the GKN and the FRCA have Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the GGRI-NTT. The CRCA also received a request from the Reformed Churches in New Zealand (RCNZ). The CRCA feels that with the information available it is premature to recommend entering into Ecclesiastical Fellowship with these churches. Synod needs to be provided with more comprehensive information. This information should also be available to the churches.
 - 3.3.2. Notes that the GGRC-NTT is a younger federation which only recently adopted the Three Forms of Unity and the Reformed Church Order.
 - 3.3.3. Requests to increase the budget by \$6,000.00 to allow two members of the committee to visit Indonesia and New Zealand, enabling the committee to make appropriate recommendations to the next General Synod.
- 3.4. The church at Winnipeg (Redeemer) questions the validity of the distinction made by the CRCA regarding the GGRC-NTT. "The CRCA does not recommend that we enter into Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the GGRC and yet recommend that as churches we receive visitors from the GGRC." The church at Winnipeg (Redeemer) is of the view that the observations of the CRCA should lead to the Canadian Reformed Churches extending Ecclesiastical Fellowship to the GGRC-NTT.
- 3.5. The Church at Carman (West) suggests that the information given by the CRCA in its supplementary report warrants the conclusion that there should be no impediments to the GGRI-NTT being accepted as sister churches. Carman West would like to see the contacts with the GGRI-NTT formalized.
- 3.6. The churches at Guelph, Grand Rapids, Elora and Aldergrove are opposed to the request of the CRCA for a \$6,000.00 increase. The church at Guelph refers to the Acts of Synod Fergus, Art. 72, consideration B, namely, "The CRCA is correct when it suggests that it would seem more realistic and responsible for our sister churches to concentrate their efforts on establishing relations with faithful Reformed churches in their parts of the world and for the Canadian Reformed Churches to do the same in North and South America." The church at Aldergrove "would like General Synod to consider encouraging the CRCA to find avenues to continue the dialogue with these churches other than a personal visit of two members and thus to maintain the current budget of the committee." The church at Grand Rapids suggests asking the FRCA to introduce our churches to the churches in Indonesia and New Zealand.
- 3.7. Synod West Albany 2000 of the Free Reformed Churches in Australia decided to continue its sister relationship with the GGRI with a view to supporting them in a "well-considered and responsible way with the intention of building up the Reformed character of these churches." Synod West Albany found that the GGRI give evidence of continuing "faithfulness to the Word of God, maintaining the Reformed Confessions and Church Order." With regard to the GGRC Synod West Albany considered that it "needs to be stabilized before recommendations regarding sister church relationships can be considered."

- 3.8. Synod Rockingham 2003 of the FRCA (Acts, Art. 73) decided “to continue sister relations with the GGRI in accordance with the adopted rules” and “to continue contacts with the GGRC.” Rockingham also mandated the FRCA deputies to “monitor and report developments on the unity of the GGRI with the GGRC. Where possible, to encourage these churches to fully put into practice the unity which they already recognize.” With regard to the RCNZ, Synod Rockingham 2003 decided to recognize that “the only remaining difficulty with entering into a relationship with the RCNZ is the relationship of the RCNZ with the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia” (Acts, Art. 72).
- 3.9. The GGRI-NTT is part of the GGRI.

4. Considerations

- 4.1. Re: the GGRI. Since both the FRCA and the GKN have Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the GGRI it would be good to have a similar relation with the GGRI as well, especially in light of the fact that these churches are the result of missionary work by the GKN and also our churches. At the same time, Synod agrees with the CRCA that at this time not enough information is available to all the churches. This makes it difficult for Synod to make a decision at this time. Synod also agrees with the churches that suggest that this information can be gathered in other ways than a visit by two members of the CRCA. Especially the work of the FRCA deputies should be used by the CRCA. The churches at Smithville and Toronto, which are involved in missionary work in Indonesia, can be of great help to the CRCA as well.
- 4.2. Re: The GGRC-NTT. Synod agrees with the recommendation of the CRCA not to enter into Ecclesiastical Fellowship at this time. The CRCA is to provide more information to the churches, making use of the work of the deputies of the FRCA and the church at Smithville.
- 4.3. Synod cannot deal with the recommendation of the CRCA regarding visitors from GGRCNTT since the CRCA does not substantiate this recommendation. Synod cannot deal with the suggestion of the church at Winnipeg (Redeemer) either.
- 4.4. Re: the RCNZ. Synod notes the decision of Synod Rockingham 2003 and agrees with the CRCA that more information should be made available to the churches regarding the RCNZ. This should be done in consultation with the work of the FRCA, GKN and via the ICRC.
- 4.5. Synod agrees with the churches that oppose the increase in budget. There are other ways available to gather the necessary information. The fact, however, remains that in order to foster a meaningful relationship, creating a greater awareness of our federation, every effort should be made to encourage face-to-face meetings with the church federations in question. However, this should be done within the CRCA’s existing budget.

5. Recommendations

Synod decide:

- 5.1. To thank the CRCA for the work done.
- 5.2. To accept the budget of \$14,500.
- 5.3. To mandate the CRCA:
- 5.3.1. with respect to the GGRI, to continue the contact and diligently correspond with the GGRI, to make more information available to the churches and to report to the next Synod, in the hope that Ecclesiastical Fellowship can be established;
 - 5.3.2. with respect to the GGRC-NTT, to continue the contact and investigate further the GGRC-NTT, also in light of the discussions of the FRCA with the GGRC-NTT and make the information available to the churches;
 - 5.3.3. with respect to the RCNZ, not to enter into Ecclesiastical Fellowship at this time.
- 5.4. To give the CRCA the following general mandate:
- 5.4.1. To investigate diligently all the requests received for entering into ecclesiastical fellowship outside the Americas;
 - 5.4.2. To respond, if possible and feasible, to specific requests made to attend Assemblies, Synods,

- or meetings of other churches outside the Americas;
- 5.4.3. To serve Synod 2007 with a report with suitable recommendations, to be sent to the churches six months prior to the next General Synod.

GS 2007

Article 150 - Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Calvinis in Nusa Tenggara Timur (GGRC-NTT)

The advisory committee presented its proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CRCA Report 7B
- 1.2-3 Letters from Smithville and Edmonton Immanuel

2. Admissibility

The report and letters from the churches are admissible.

3. Observations

- 3.1 The report of the CRCA, which is included as an appendix to the Acts, serves as Observations.
- 3.2 The CRCA recommends that:
 - 3.2.1 [7.10.1] Synod Smithers delay entering into a sister church relationship until the legal proceedings have been resolved and unqualified support can be obtained for ecclesiastical fellowship from our Australian sister churches.
 - 3.2.2 [7.10.2] Synod mandate the committee to maintain close contact with this federation:
 - 3.2.2.1 [7.10.2.1] To encourage the GGRC to resolve its dispute with the GGRM.
 - 3.2.2.2 [7.10.2.2] To promote efforts towards federative unity with the GGRI.
 - 3.2.2.3 [7.10.2.3] To encourage the GGRC to cooperate with the FRCAus, GKN and GGRI in the establishment of joint theological training with the GGRC.
 - 3.2.3 Synod encourage our churches to work together in supporting the mission efforts of Smithville and channel support which is needed to clear the way to establish ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRC.
- 3.3 Smithville informs synod that they have “a mission field in Timor and [have] regular contact with the GGRC through [their] missionary, Rev. Edwer Dethan and through visits of several members of the Mission Board of Smithville to Timor.” Smithville objects to the CRCA’s recommendation 7.10.1 and instead recommends that “Synod decide to enter into a sister church relationship with the GGRC.” Smithville points to Art. 50 CO and to Article 29 of the Belgic Confession to conclude that it is the “task of Synod to judge whether the GGRC are true (‘Reformed’) churches or not, and based on that judgment a decision shall be made regarding a sister church relationship.” According to Smithville, “the only reason to postpone a decision can be that there is not sufficient information to make this judgment.” Pertaining to the specific arguments presented by the CRCA for delaying entering into ecclesiastical fellowship, Smithville counters as follows:
 - 3.3.1 Re: Legal proceedings - From Smithville’s close knowledge of the situation they advise synod that these proceedings arise from one minister and his church taking the GGRC to court over a name-change (to the federation) adopted by the GGRC in 2002. Instead of following the ecclesiastical way, they continue to pursue the matter in the courts. Meanwhile, “this minister and his church have in fact left the federation of the GGRC and they go their own ways.” Smithville opines that such a situation is no proper impediment to ecclesiastical fellowship.
 - 3.3.2 Re: Unqualified support from the FRCA - Smithville notes that Rule #3 for Ecclesiastical Fellowship mandates consultation with sister churches but not unqualified support from them. They conclude that to do so could even mean that we “ask the Australian churches to lord it over us.” Moreover, Smithville believes the FRCA have implied that the GGRC are true churches when the FRCA encouraged the GGRC to “fully put into practice the unity they already recognize” with

the GGRI (Art. 58 III B4, Acts of Synod West Kelmscott, 2006).

3.4 Edmonton Immanuel informs synod of their support for Rev. Yonson Dethan in Timor “so that he can give seminars to ministers, office bearers and society leaders about various topics.” Rev. Yonson Dethan is a minister in the GGRC which has ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI. Edmonton Immanuel submits that synod should consider how its actions towards the one federation will affect the other. They state that entering into relations with the one and not the other (at the same time) may well have negative ramifications on relations between the Indonesian federations. They plead for a tandem approach where the CanRC would enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with both federations and in that context encourage them to cooperate in joint theological training and work towards federative unity.

4. Considerations

- 4.1 While the committee gives an encouraging report about the Reformed character of the GGRC, it is not yet complete. Rule #3 for Ecclesiastical Fellowship mandates our federation to consult with sister churches prior to entering into ecclesiastical fellowship. This has been done with respect to the FRCA but there is no evidence that it has been done with the GKN who presently maintain ecclesiastical fellowship with both the GGRC and GGRI. Rule #3 obligates us to do so before making a final decision on entering into ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRC. Their input may prove to be quite helpful in gaining clarity into the GGRC and its circumstances.
- 4.2 The need to consult still with the GKN and the other sister churches is highlighted all the more when it is noted that another sister church, the FRCA, have as yet refrained from entering into ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRC, though they have ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI. The CRCA has not reported on the reason for this. This should give us pause before hurrying into ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRC without all the facts and concerns clearly understood and evaluated by ourselves. The reasons why the FRCA refrains from ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRC should be probed and evaluated.
- 4.3 Smithville’s point about the legal proceedings and the unqualified support of a sister church being improper impediments to ecclesiastical fellowship is in itself correct. On their own, neither one of these things can be an impediment to ecclesiastical fellowship. Both of these matters, however, only demonstrate that the committee does not yet have clarity on all the pertinent facts surrounding the GGRC and that more consultation is needed with the parties involved and the churches with whom we have fellowship before a decision can be made.
- 4.4 From the information provided by both Edmonton Immanuel and Smithville, it is clear that entering into ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRC would be quite beneficial for them and, by implication, for the churches which support them in their endeavours in Indonesia. The CRCA should make a concerted effort to work toward this goal using also information that can be garnered from these two churches.

5 Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 5.1 To thank the committee for the work done re the GGRC.
- 5.2 To delay entering into a sister church relationship until:
 - 5.2.1 Proper consultation with other churches in ecclesiastical fellowship has taken place according to Rule #3.
 - 5.2.2 The reasons why the FRCA have not as yet entered into ecclesiastical fellowship are understood and evaluated.
 - 5.2.3 It is clear that there are no obstacles to entering into ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRC.
- 5.3 To mandate the CRCA to maintain close contact with this federation and:
 - 5.3.1 To consult with all sister churches as per Rule #3 bearing in mind Considerations 4.2- 4.4 and Recommendation 5.2.

- 5.3.2 To seek clarity into the situation of the GGRC using also information solicited from the churches at Smithville and Edmonton Immanuel.
- 5.3.3 To promote efforts towards federative unity with the GGRI.
- 5.3.4 To encourage the GGRC to cooperate with the FRCA, GKN and GGRI in the establishment of joint theological training.

ADOPTED

Article 151 - Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Di Indonesia Propinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur (GGRI-NTT)

The advisory committee presented its second proposal:

1. Material

- 1.1 CRCA Report 7A
- 1.2-5 Letters from the following four churches: Spring Creek, Surrey, Lynden, Edmonton Immanuel

2. Admissibility

The report and letters from the churches are admissible.

3. Observations

- 3.1 The report of the CRCA, which is included as an appendix to the Acts, serves as observations.
- 3.2 The CRCA recommends that:
 - 3.2.1 [7.5.1] Synod accepts the invitation from the GGRI to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship.
 - 3.2.2 [7.5.2] Synod mandate the CRCA to inform the GGRI and the FRCA of this decision and make formal arrangements for this relationship.
- 3.3 Spring Creek, considering the geographical distance, cultural differences and language barriers, states: "We do not think that ecclesiastical fellowship with... the GGRI would be a meaningful relationship for the Can. Ref. Churches." Lynden feels the same as does the church at Surrey which asks: "Can we realistically maintain meaningful relations with these churches, given the limited resources we have and given the number of other churches with whom we already have ecclesiastical fellowship?"
- 3.4 Edmonton Immanuel submits that synod should consider how its actions towards the one federation in Indonesia will affect the other. They state that entering into relations with the one and not the other (at the same time) may well have negative ramifications on relations between the Indonesian federations. They plead for a tandem approach where the Canadian Reformed Churches would enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with both federations and in that context encourage them to cooperate in joint theological training and work towards federative unity.
- 3.5 Smithville informs synod that they have "a mission field in Timor and [have] regular contact with the GGRC through [their] missionary, Rev. Edwer Dethan and through visits of several members of the Mission Board of Smithville to Timor." Smithville also "urges Synod to... urge the GGRI to do what they can to come to federative unity with the GGRC and to cooperate with the GGRC for the theological training."

4. Considerations

- 4.1 From the report it is clear that the CRCA has fulfilled the mandate given to it by Synod Chatham with respect to the GGRI.
- 4.2 The committee provides the proof (Report, 7.3) that the GGRI are a federation of faithful churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. The committee gives evidence that it followed Rule #3 for Ecclesiastical Fellowship when it consulted with the GKN and the FRCA (Report, 7.4).
- 4.3 At present two churches (Smithville & Edmonton Immanuel) have contact with the GGRC but no churches have contact with the GGRI. The benefits of ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI are directly tied to our relationship with the GGRC. The common point of contact between the two

federations is joint cooperation in theological training.

- 4.4 The concern of Edmonton Immanuel that we deal with both Indonesian church federations in tandem is pertinent and important. Since more information needs to be collected and evaluated before ecclesiastical fellowship can be established with the GGRC, and since there is no pressing reason to establish ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI at the moment, it is wiser to wait until all the relevant information pertaining to the GGRC is available.

5 Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 5.1 To thank the committee for the work done re the GGRI.
- 5.2 To delay accepting the invitation from the GGRI to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship until all the necessary information is available to make a decision concerning ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRC.
- 5.3 To mandate the CRCA to encourage the GGRI to:
- 5.3.1 Promote efforts toward federative unity with the GGRC.
 - 5.3.2 Cooperate with the GGRC in joint theological training.

ADOPTED

GS 2010

Article 108 – Churches in Indonesia

1. Material

- 1.1 Two reports from the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) concerning the Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia (CRCI), and the Reformed Churches in Indonesia – NTT (RCI-NTT) (8.2.m.i and ii).
- 1.2 Letters from Hamilton-Providence (8.3.M.3), Grand Valley (8.3.M.4), Coaldale (8.3.M.8), Attercliffe (8.3.M.26), Taber (8.3.M.27), Abbotsford (8.3.M.35), and Lincoln (8.3.M.36).

Acronyms

Various documents are inconsistent in the acronyms used to refer to the churches in Indonesia. Please note that for the sake of readability, also when quoting from such documents, the following acronyms will be used.

CRCI Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia. The Indonesian name is: Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Calvinis di Indonesia NTT. The letters NTT refer to the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur (East Nusa Tenggara), where these churches are located. In some documents this federation is sometimes referred to as GGRC - NTT.

GGRM The Pilgrim Reformed Churches in East Nusa Tenggara, originally one federation together with the CRCI.

RCI Reformed Churches in Indonesia (unless otherwise indicated, only those in the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur). The Indonesian name is: GerejaGereja Reformasi di Indonesia NTT. In some documents this federation is therefore sometimes referred to as the GGRI-NTT.

2. Observations

- 2.1 The CRCA notes that where the church of Smithville is working through the mission efforts of Rev. Ed. Dethan in Indonesia, there are already two faithful federations: the CRCI and the RCI. It also indicates that:
- 2.1.1 The RCN has recognized both as sister churches.
 - 2.1.2 The FRCA has extended ecclesiastical fellowship to the RCI and has declared the CRCI to be a faithful church of Jesus Christ.

- 2.1.3 It would not be desirable that through the mission of work of Smithville a third federation of churches would be established next to the CRCI and the RCI.
- 2.2 In regard to the CRCI, Synod Smithers 2007 (Article 150, Recommendation 5.2) decided to delay entering into a sister church relationship until:
- [5.2.1] Proper consultation with other churches in ecclesiastical fellowship has taken place according to Rule 3.
 - [5.2.2] The reasons why the FRCA have not as yet entered into ecclesiastical fellowship are understood and evaluated.
 - [5.2.3] It is clear that there are no obstacles to entering into ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRCI.
- 2.3 Synod 2007 also decided to mandate the CRCA to maintain close contact with this federation and:
- [5.3.1] To consult with all sister churches as per Rule 3 bearing in mind Considerations 4.2-4.4 and Recommendation 5.2.
 - [5.3.2] To seek clarity into the situation of the CRCI using also information solicited from the churches at Smithville and Edmonton-Immanuel.
 - [5.3.3] To promote efforts towards federative unity with the RCI.
 - [5.3.4] To encourage the CRCI to cooperate with the FRCA, RCN and RCI in the establishment of joint theological training.
- 2.4 In regard to the RCI, Synod Smithers 2007 (Article 151, Recommendation 5) decided:
- [5.2] To delay accepting the invitation from the RCI to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship until all the necessary information is available to make a decision concerning ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRCI.
 - [5.3] To mandate the CRCA to encourage the RCI to:
 - [5.3.1] Promote efforts toward federative unity with the CRCI.
 - [5.3.2] Cooperate with the CRCI in joint theological training.
- 2.5 The CRCA reports that there are problems between the CRCI and the GGRM (the Pilgrim Reformed Churches in East Nusa Tenggara, originally one federation together with the CRCI) that have not been resolved despite efforts on the part of the RCI to mediate. The differences are not doctrinal but personal between Rev. Yonson Dethan of the CRCI and Rev. Eli Fangidae of the GGRM. However, the church at Lincoln recommends in regard to the CRCI and RCI: "to mandate the committee to assess the causes of the separation between these two apparently faithful federations, and offer all possible assistance in reconciling them."
- 2.6 The CRCA notes that "the RCI is convinced that it has done all it could to promote unity between itself and the CRCI." It is also open to cooperation between the two federations in regard to theological education. Ministers of the CRCI have even been members of the Board of Governors of the Theological College of the RCI in Sumba.
- 2.7 The CRCA expresses some frustration in its supplementary report that in its own communication with the CRCI it did not receive official responses but "personal answers from Rev. Yonson Dethan," making it difficult "to gain any sense of the character and direction of the CRCI." The church at Taber, however, notes that Rev. Dethan is the chair of the CRCA of the CRCI and "is quite distressed that he did not make it clear that he spoke officially. Communication received by him was sometimes informal and personal, not always with official designation, and he merely responded in kind."
- 2.8 The CRCA notes in its first report that the RCI has invited the CRCI to participate in a merger. In its supplementary report the CRCA lists objections that Rev. Yonson Dethan has raised on the basis of differences of culture, language, and church history. It notes further: "In regard to unification possibilities between the CRCI and the RCI, the CRCA feels that the CRCI lacks enthusiasm for this endeavour."
- 2.9 The CRCA observes in regard to the CRCI "that while the Free Reformed Churches of Australia have more knowledge of the situation in Indonesia, they have not yet established ecclesiastical fellowship

with these churches but are still monitoring the situation.” The church at Taber notes that while the CRCA has had repeated contacts with deputies of the FRCA, it “does not report on the reasons for the hesitation of the FRCA nor give us an evaluation of them.” It therefore questions whether there are valid reasons for continuing to withhold ecclesiastical relations with the CRCI.

- 2.10 The FRCA delegates attending Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 explained why the FRCA has not established sister church relations with the CRCI. The FRCA has had sister church relations with the RCI for many years. It is only in the recent history that contact began with the CRCI. Synod Legana 2009 appointed deputies for contact with the CRCI and mandated them to continue contact and “to encourage the CRCI to work towards federal unity with the RCI, especially in view of the anticipated unification of the three federations of the RCI” (Acts Legana 2009, Article 57). The Australians are referring to the three groups of Reformed churches in Indonesia that have been established through the mission work of the RCN and the CanRC: RCI-KalBar in Kalimantan Barat, RCI-NTT in the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur, and RCI-Papua in Papua (formerly Irian Jaya).
- 2.11 The fraternal delegates of the FRCA also indicate that since the beginning of the Australian contact with these churches in Indonesia, the Australian churches have always insisted that there should not be two federations of churches in the same province. The CRCI are very similar to the RCI in governance, history, background and even culture. They both have ministers who have been trained at the theological seminary of the RCI on the island of Sumba. Moreover there are also churches of the CRCI and RCI in Kupang. The Australian churches therefore believe that it is best for unity that the CRCI is encouraged to work towards unity with the GGRI. The brothers from the FRCA are of the opinion that it is not warranted to delay establishing ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCI-NTT.
- 2.12 In regard to the CRCI, the CRCA recommends that Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 decide:
 - [1.] To not at this time offer a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship to the CRCI.
 - [2.] To mandate the CRCA to continue contact with the CRCI with a view to improving official communications.
 - [3.] To acknowledge that unity between the CRCI and the RCI should not be a prerequisite for ecclesiastical fellowship with either of these church federations.
 - [4.] To mandate the CRCA to continue to promote unity efforts between the CRCI and the RCI.
 - [5.] To authorize the CRCA to appoint Dr. A.J. Pol and Rev. A. Souman to visit a General Synod of the CRCI and to generally assess the ecclesiastical situation of these churches.
- 2.13 In regard to the RCI, the CRCA notes that Synod 2007 already “considered that the CRCA ‘provides the proof that the RCI are a federation of faithful churches of our Lord Jesus Christ’ and further that ‘the Committee gives evidence that it followed Rule 3 for Ecclesiastical Fellowship when it consulted with the GKN and the FRCA’ (Acts of Synod 2007, Article 151, section 4.1).”
- 2.14 The CRCA recommends that Synod Burlington-Ebenezer 2010 decide:
 - [1.] To accept the invitation of the RCI to enter into a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship.
 - [2.] To maintain the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship under the adopted rules.
 - [3.] To monitor the progress of dialogue between the RCI and the CRCI.
- 2.15 Two churches noted not yet having seen the Supplementary Report and could not interact with it, although one did not wish to state this as an objection to Synod discussing it.
- 2.16 Grand Valley cautions against making “any conclusions that could have a negative bearing on the churches in NTT.”
- 2.17 Two churches recommend that Synod refrain from making any decisions regarding ecclesiastical fellowship with either the CRCI or the RCI until these churches have sorted out their own issues. Coaldale suggests further that it would be best to consult closely with the FRCA in this matter.
- 2.18 Attercliffe wonders “whether it would not be practical to limit our contacts and to request the FRCA to act on our behalf seeing both their insights and proximity to Asian culture,” while Abbotsford questions the necessity and value of entering into ecclesiastical fellowship since “there are already ties

with the FRCA” and “more Reformed church federations in Indonesia it could seek ties with.”

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The CRCA has stressed the importance of ecclesiastical relations with faithful federations in Indonesia, given the current involvement of the church of Smithville in mission work on the island of Timor. The churches being established through this mission work need to align themselves with an existing, faithful Reformed church federation. Indirect interaction with such federations in the same area through the FRCA would not be beneficial for the progress of the mission work undertaken through Smithville.
- 3.2 Since Synod Smithers 2007, churches with which we have ecclesiastical fellowship are now sufficiently aware of our developing contacts with the churches in Indonesia.
- 3.3 The FRCA, which already has had a relationship with the RCI for years, has not yet established ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRCI because their contacts with this federation are more recent. Moreover, they would prefer to see the CRCI merge with the RCI.
- 3.4 The CRCA is not yet ready to recommend ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRCI. It desires first to get a clearer sense of “the character and direction of the CRCI.” So far the CRCA has apparently only been able to communicate with the CRCI through Rev. Yonson Dethan (Observation 2.7). The interaction between the CRCA and the CRCI would be enhanced if the CRCI would approach the CRCA in an official way as a federation of churches and not only through one particular individual. A visit to Indonesia to interact with more church leaders than only Rev. Yonson Dethan could provide clarity in regard to this and related matters.
- 3.5 The CRCI and the RCI have already had ecclesiastical relations with each other for years. The RCI has made efforts to seek unity with the CRCI. However, it does not look like these efforts will be successful in the immediate future. It would therefore also not be realistic to postpone establishing ecclesiastical fellowship until there is a positive outcome.
- 3.6 Given the fact that the RCI has made it possible for members of the CRCI to be trained at their Theological College and even to be members of the Board of Governors of that institution (Observation 2.6), it seems that the RCI has already shown its goodwill in regard to cooperation with the CRCI in joint theological training.
- 3.7 It is not necessary for Synod to mandate the CRCA to assess the causes of a supposed separation between the CRCI and RCI as recommended by the church at Lincoln (Observation 2.5), since the separation was actually between the CRCI and the GGRM (originally one federation). The CRCA noted that the RCI has attempted to mediate between the CRCI and the GGRM (see Observation 2.5).
- 3.8 The RCI has shown repeatedly willingness to promote unity between itself and the CRCI. That this has not been fruitful yet should not become a reason to withhold ecclesiastical fellowship from them. They already have a long established relationship with the RCN and the FRCA. The fraternal delegates from the FRCA have made it very clear that they see no reason for the CanRC to delay establishing ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCI. Synod Smithers 2007 has also already considered that the CRCA “provides the proof (Report, 7.3) that the RCI are a federation of faithful churches of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts, Article 151, paragraph 4.2).
- 3.9 The Free Reformed Churches of Australia live in closer proximity to the Indonesian churches and are more familiar with the complexities and the developments that have taken place within these churches. Therefore, it would be prudent to leave any face-to-face discussions with Indonesian churches to the FRCA. The CRCA would be welladvised to work in consultation with the FRCA.

4. Recommendation

That Synod decide:

- 4.1 To not at this time offer a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship to the CRCI.
- 4.2 To mandate the CRCA to continue contact with the CRCI with a view to improving official

communications and to gain more insight in the character and direction of the CRCI.

- 4.3 To acknowledge that unity between the CRCI and the RCI should not be a prerequisite for ecclesiastical fellowship with either of these church federations.
- 4.4 To accept the invitation of the RCI to enter into a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship.
- 4.5 To maintain the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship under the adopted rules.
- 4.6 To mandate the CRCA:
 - 4.6.1 To monitor the progress of dialogue between the RCI and the CRCI and where possible to continue to promote unity efforts between the CRCI and the RCI.
 - 4.6.2 To work in consultation with the FRCA, receiving their reports and any other information that would be helpful in assessing the ecclesiastical situation of these churches.
- 4.6.3 If necessary, to send Dr. Pol and Rev. Souman to visit the CRCI and to combine this with a visit to a General Synod of the RCI.

ADOPTED

In accordance with Article 32 CO, one member of Synod abstained from voting.

GS 2013

GGRI-NTT - Article 123 - Gereja-Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia (GGRI)

Committee 3 presented its third draft and this was the result:

1. Material

- 1.1 Report from the CRCA (8.2.1) and the CRCA Supplementary Report (8.2.1.3).
- 1.2 Letters from the churches at Carman West (8.3.1.8), Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.1.17), Lincoln (8.3.1.23), Orangeville (8.3.1.25), and Burlington-Rehoboth (8.3.1.26).
- 1.3 Letter of Greetings to Synod 2013 from the GGRI by Rev. Pila Njuka, chairman of the Committee on Relations of the GGRI.

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Burlington 2010 decided "to accept the invitation of the RCI to enter into a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship" and "to maintain the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship under the adopted rules" (*Acts of Synod 2010*, Article 108, Recommendation 4.4-5). These Reformed Churches in Indonesia are referred to in their own language as the Gereja-Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia (GGRI) in the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT).
- 2.2 The CRCA reports that it reverted back to the use of GGRI-NTT for these churches instead of the acronym RCI, which Synod Burlington 2010 used. The reason is that the name GGRI-NTT is commonly used by our sister churches and by many in our churches. The use of RCI would only increase confusion about the different churches in Indonesia.
- 2.3 The CRCA explains that "there are three federations in Indonesia which have the name GGRI." They are located in the provinces of Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT), Kalimantan Barat (KalBar), and Papua. Now that these federations have united, the federation can be referred to as GGRI at the national level and their regional synods can be designated according to their respective provinces as GGRI-KalBar, GGRI-NTT, and GGRI-Papua.
- 2.4 The three federations originate from mission work conducted by our sister churches in the Netherlands (RCN) and they are listed as three distinct groups of churches in Indonesia and the RCN maintain a sister church relationship with each one (<http://www.bbk.gkv.nl/ecumenical-contacts/732/>). A historical overview of the development of the GGRI in their respective three provinces can be found on the website of the RCN at <http://www.bbk.gkv.nl/styleit/706/>.
- 2.5 The first national synod of the GGRI took place in Sentani, Papua, Indonesia, from February 22-25, 2012. No invitation was extended to the Canadian Reformed Churches. The FRCA was invited to this national synod and Synod Armadale 2012 of the FRCA has subsequently accepted the GGRI as sister

churches.

- 2.6 The CRCA had not been consulted or informed of the merger of the three federations before it took place, but received a letter in November 2012 to inform the Canadian Reformed Churches of the development. The deputies of the GGRI apologized for not inviting the Canadian Reformed Churches as sister churches of the GGRI-NTT to the first national synod of the GGRI. They expressed appreciation for the presence of Rev. Versteeg even though he was not there officially on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches.
- 2.7 The letter from the GGRI explained that previously the GGRI-NTT held national Conferences of the Reformed Churches in Indonesia together with the Reformed Churches in KalBar and Papua. "The forum of a National Synod has now taken the place of the forum of a National Conference which until now did not have the authority to make binding ecclesiastical decisions. The purpose of forming a National Synod of the Reformed Churches in Indonesia was to enable the Reformed Churches in their respective three provinces to work together more closely and to help each other. This confirms the unity of faith on the basis of Holy Scripture, as summarized in the Three Forms of Unity and with the Reformed Church Order in Indonesia as our norm in fulfilling our calling and service in a uniform way in order to testify of the Reformed faith in Indonesia more effectively as put into practice by you, our brothers in the federations of the Reformed churches in Canada and the Netherlands."
- 2.8 The letter from the GGRI goes on to describe the historical background of the GGRI as resulting from joint mission work of the RCN and the Canadian Reformed Churches, and speaks of "the joyful developments regarding the unification of the Reformed Churches of Indonesia in these three provinces," expressing the hope that this will be reported to the upcoming General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches.
- 2.9 The Committee on Relations of the GGRI requests "that the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad of the Canadian Reformed Churches propose to the General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches that the bond of ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI-NTT may be broadened since we now form a national federation of Reformed Churches in Indonesia."
- 2.10 The Committee on Relations of the GGRI also writes: "We are also looking further ahead to the strategic impact and prospect that this proposal may have in connection with the efforts of your CRCA to promote the unification of the Reformed Calvinist Churches (GGRC) with the GGRI, and also remembering the existence of churches which are the results of mission work of the church at Smithville in Timor and the College of the Reformed Christian Religion (Sekolah Tinggi Agama Kristen Reformed Indonesia / STAKRI) in Kupang."
- 2.11 The CRCA disagrees with the proposal of the GGRI to accept them as a federation at the national level. It states first of all that "we do not know the other two federations (in Papua and in Kalimantan Barat) at all." Secondly, it questions why neither the GGRC nor the church of Smithville and the mission churches in Timor were informed about this process of unification, whereas other sister churches were invited and were present. Thirdly, it asks how important a relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches is for the GGRI since the Canadian Reformed Churches were not invited to the first general synod and it took almost nine months to receive a letter from them.
- 2.12 The CRCA therefore recommends "to suspend the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI (NTT), to take up contact with the Committee on Relations of the Reformed Churches in Indonesia to gain more information about this new federation and to come with a recommendation to the general synod of 2016 regarding a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI." The concern of the CRCA is to "tread carefully and follow proper procedure."
- 2.13 The GGRI-NTT has a sister church relationship with the Calvinist Reformed Churches (GGRC) in West Timor. The CRCA has been actively encouraging these two church federations to become one. The CRCA notes that "as Canadian Reformed Churches we should not make any decision that would cause this process to slow down or come to a stop, and both church federations should be encouraged to

continue to seek ecclesiastical unity. We have experienced that often this can be done best by someone from or delegated by the CRCA being present there from time to time to bring them together and facilitate a meeting between delegates from both federations."

- 2.14 The CRCA also notes that it "encouraged the GGRI (NTT) to come to closer cooperation with the Canadian Reformed Church of Smithville, especially in the area of theological education." A theological school has been established in Kupang, Timor, through the work of Rev. Edwer Dethan, missionary of Smithville. This institution is flourishing and has already received accreditation from the Indonesian government. The theological seminary of the GGRI-NTT has a relatively long history but is struggling to establish itself properly and is not yet accredited by the government.
- 2.15 Burlington-Rehoboth expresses its reservation regarding the recommendation to suspend the relationship with the GGRI-NTT and asks: "What other options did the committee consider? We also note that the FRCA is still maintaining EF with the GGRI (NTT)."
- 2.16 Speaking on behalf of the FRCA, br. Wayne Pleiter cautioned Synod 2013 against following the recommendation of the CRCA to suspend relations, since that would be a "setback" in the interaction between the Canadian Reformed Churches and the GGRI.
- 2.17 The church at Carman West notes the common mission history of the Reformed Churches in Indonesia and emphasizes that the three federations of the GGRI have not become an essentially new body of churches but a larger body of churches maintaining the same Three Forms of Unity and the Reformed Church Order. Carman West also states that the GGRC have already shown themselves not to be eager to pursue unification with the GGRI-NTT. This should not be used against the GGRI. Rather, the Canadian Reformed Churches should make use of the opportunity to encourage unity between the GGRI and the GGRC as well as with the churches in Timor being established through the mission work of Smithville. Carman West recommends that Synod Carman 2013:
 - [1.] Accept the apologies of the GGRI for not having invited us to their First National Synod;
 - [2.] Accept the offer of ecclesiastical fellowship with the Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRI);
 - [3.] Mandate the CRCA to take up contact with the Committee on Relations of the Reformed Churches in Indonesia and to request them to be mindful of our rules for ecclesiastical fellowship.
- 2.18 Fergus-Maranatha notes that "language barriers, as in the case of contact with churches in Korea and Indonesia, and the matter of distance make it difficult to work together fruitfully."
- 2.19 The church at Orangeville recommends that synod decide:
 - [1.] To suspend the relationship of EF with the GGRI(NTT);
 - [2.] To suspend further efforts at establishing EF with various churches in Indonesia until such a time there is greater clarity on the situation of the Indonesian churches;
 - [3.] To leave it to churches involved in mission work in Indonesia to assist the churches in growing in reformed character by sending someone when necessary and requested.
- 2.20 The Vineyard Canadian Reformed Church of Lincoln commends the CRCA "for the efforts for the sake of church unity and ecclesiastical fellowship with the churches in Indonesia."
- 2.21 In the Letter of Greetings from the GGRI to Synod Carman 2013, the Rev. Pila Njuka, chairman of the Committee on Relations of the GGRI, writes: "Rev. Souman witnessed that we invited the GGRC to unify with GGRI in 2016. We would like to give them time to discuss it among themselves. We hope and pray that they will join the GGRI because the GGRI is now one national church or one federation with the GGRI in Papua and West Kalimantan. It would be great if the GGRC would become part of this federation. We will invite them to our upcoming Synod and the same thing will be stressed again."
- 2.22 In the same letter, Rev. Pila Njuka informs us in regard to the GGRI-NTT: "we would like to let you know that our Synod is scheduled to be convened from August 6-20 in 2013. A letter of invitation will be sent. We hope that as our sister churches, the Canadian Reformed Churches will send a delegation to our Synod." This is a regional synod of the GGRI-NTT, not a general synod of the entire federation of the GGRI.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 The GGRI-KalBar, GGRI-NTT, and the GGRI-Papua share a common mission history. They have expressed their commitment to uphold Scripture together as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity and confirmed their intent to abide by the Reformed Church Order. Given the prayer of Jesus Christ for the unity of the church (John 17:20-23), it should be a source of joy to note this. It is regrettable that the CRCA was not informed or consulted about the unification of the GGRI-NTT with the GGRI-Papua and the GGRI-KalBar. It would have been good if the Canadian Reformed Churches could join the sister churches in Australia and the Netherlands at the National Synod and express our joy and thankfulness for this unification.
- 3.2 The GGRI apologized for not informing the Canadian Reformed Churches about the plans for unification and for not inviting the Canadian Reformed Churches to the first national synod in 2012. Synod Carman 2013 would do well to accept these apologies.
- 3.3 The CRCA is overstating matters when it says "we do not know the other two federations (in Papua and in Kalimantan Barat) at all." While this may apply to the GGRI-KalBar, we should not forget our history of extensive involvement with the GGRI-Papua and current contacts. As can be seen in 2013 Yearbook of the Canadian Reformed Churches, we have been heavily involved in the mission work among the GGRI-Papua from 1960-1976 through the mission work undertaken by Rev. H. Knigge through the church in Toronto, and subsequently through Rev. H. Versteeg (1977-1997). He still visits the churches there annually (December-January) and has reported on his activities to the Canadian Reformed Churches in Mission News. Support for the GGRI-Papua also takes place through the Feunekes family, which is supported through a committee of the Canadian Reformed Church of Aldergrove with donations coming from various Canadian Reformed Churches in Western Canada.
- 3.4 It is true, however, that all we know about the GGRI-KalBar is that after having been established by mission work from our sister churches in the Netherlands, they have progressed sufficiently to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCN. Given our relationship with the GGRI-NTT we should be interested in getting to know the GGRI-KalBar and the GGRI-Papua better.
- 3.5 Although information about the GGRI-KalBar and GGRI-Papua can be gleaned from several sources, including the letter which was received from the GGRI, this information is scattered and does not give a complete picture of these churches. Making a decision solely based on the fact that these churches were the fruit of the combined mission efforts of the Dutch sister churches and the church in Toronto is not prudent and is not the way we went about such requests in the past. The GGRI-NTT is the result of the mission work of our Dutch sister churches. Nevertheless, the Canadian Reformed Churches were also careful not to rush into a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI-NTT.
- 3.6 Although the CRCA is correct in stating that we don't have relationships with parts of church federations, this is an exceptional situation. It would not be good for the GGRI-NTT if we would suspend our relationship with them. At the same time we are not ready yet to enter into a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship at the national level with the GGRI. It is best for the coming three years to maintain the status quo and give the CRCA the opportunity to do due diligence in preparing a good recommendation for General Synod 2016, based on its own findings.
- 3.7 Observation 2.16 notes the question of the CRCA: "why neither the GGRC nor the church of Smithville and the mission churches in Timor were informed about this process of unification, whereas other sister churches were invited and were present." A letter from the CRCA to the GGRI-NTT dated August 5, 2010 shows that the committee did inform the GGRI-NTT of our decision to accept their invitation to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship and it attached the relevant decision of Synod Burlington 2010. However, the letter does not offer an explanation of what it means "to maintain the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship under the adopted rules." It appears therefore that there was a lack of sufficient information on our part as well as on the part of the GGRI-NTT. In any case, not being invited to the first national synod of the GGRI was an oversight on the part of the convening church of the

GGRI-Papua and a written apology for this has been extended to the Canadian Reformed Churches. This apology should be accepted.

- 3.8 The CRCA has made it clear that the involvement of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Indonesia has already provided opportunities for encouraging church unity between the GGRI-NTT and the GGRC. Now that the GGRI-NTT are united with churches of the same Reformed confessions and church order in KalBar and Papua, the opportunity for further interaction and encouragement is present on an even larger scale. In Observation 2.10, it is clear that the GGRI are interested in the involvement of the Canadian Reformed Churches in promoting "the unification of the Reformed Calvinist Churches (GGRC) with the GGRI." We should see this as a welcome opportunity to participate in the continuing church gathering work of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
- 3.9 The GGRI in the respective provinces have entered into a period of transition by deciding to federate at a national level. Our knowledge about the current state of affairs in the GGRI-KalBar and GGRI-Papua is limited. Now that men who have functioned in the Committee on Relations of the GGRI-NTT are active at the national level, they can help us come to a fuller understanding of the churches in those other provinces. Until then, it would be difficult to proceed beyond the relationship we have with the GGRI-NTT.
- 3.10 Suspending the relationship with the GGRI-NTT would undermine the potential of the Canadian Reformed Churches to play a positive role among the GGRI and to encourage them to work toward ecclesiastical unity with the GGRC and the churches being established through the mission work of the Canadian Reformed Church of Smithville on the island of Timor. As described by the FRCA delegates, it would be a "setback" instead of a step forward such as has already been taken by the FRCA, which have acknowledged the development of the national federation of the GGRI "with gratitude to the Lord." (See the "Free Reformed Churches of Australia - Press Release of Synod Armadale 2012 - Week 2," in the section on "Reformed Churches in Indonesia," on the internet at http://synod.frca.org.au/2012/acts/pressrelease2_FRCA_Synod.pdf).
- 3.11 In regard to the comment of Fergus-Maranatha concerning "language barriers," it should be noted that this is not a significant issue in contacts with the Reformed Churches with which we have contact in Indonesia. Various members of these churches (both GGRI-NTT and GGRC) are able to communicate in English. An issue that does play an important role is that of the cultural differences. As is the case in relationships with other church federations in non-Western societies, a good understanding of the culture is important to get a grip on developments within these churches and to be able to help and encourage them. Time and effort should be spent on that.
- 3.12 The proposal of the church at Orangeville essentially involves drawing back rather than continuing or increasing our interaction with the churches in Indonesia. The best way to gain the desired "greater clarity on the situation of the Indonesian churches" is to put greater effort into knowing them better through more regular contact.
- 3.13 The church of Smithville is actively involved in mission work in West Timor. Through Rev. Edwer Dethan a Theological School has been established and Smithville has tried to establish contact with the GGRI-NTT. This is starting to have results, but they are limited so far. We can be thankful for progress, but in this situation we cannot expect Smithville to assist these churches in growing in Reformed character by sending someone when necessary and requested, as Orangeville suggests. Strengthening churches and helping them to grow in Reformed character in this context is a responsibility for sister churches, while the church in Smithville focuses on mission work. We have the ability and opportunity to combine our resources with that of the FRCA for the sake of the development of Reformed Churches in Indonesia.
- 3.14 In order to get to know the GGRI better and to offer support and encouragement and foster church unity among the Reformed Churches in Indonesia, it would be beneficial to send a delegation to the Regional Synod of the GGRI-NTT, to be convened on the island of Sumba from August 6-20 in 2013, as

well as to the national synod scheduled to take place there in 2016. Combining a visit to the Regional Synod of the GGRI-NTT with a trip to Timor to visit the GGRC and the churches being established through the work of Rev. E. Dethan could also be considered by the CRCA in consultation with the Canadian Reformed Church of Smithville.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 To accept the apologies of the GGRI for not having invited us to their First National Synod;
- 4.2 To continue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI-NTT under the adopted rules;
- 4.3 To mandate the CRCA:
 - 4.3.1 To discuss our rules for ecclesiastical fellowship with the Committee on Relations of the GGRI and to gather as much information as is needed to come to a good recommendation to General Synod 2016 regarding a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRI;
 - 4.3.2 To gather and evaluate information regarding the GGRI-KalBar and the GGRI-Papua in order to prepare a proposal as to how to deal with the GGRI as a national federation instead of dealing exclusively with the GGRI-NTT, which has become part of this larger federation of churches.
 - 4.3.3 To request input from the FRCA and the RCN.
 - 4.3.4 To try to ensure that a delegation of two brothers is sent to Indonesia to represent the Canadian Reformed Churches at a synod of the GGRI-NTT.
 - 4.3.5 To work in consultation and cooperation with the deputies of the FRCA, with the church of Smithville and the church of Edmonton (Immanuel), and as much as possible and desirable with other organizations involved in the work among the GGRI, to encourage and support these churches in their efforts to grow in the Reformed doctrine and Church Polity;
 - 4.3.6 To encourage the GGRI-NTT to seek cooperation with the Reformed Theological School in Kupang (established by the church in Smithville);
 - 4.3.7 To encourage the GGRI-NTT to seek closer contact and cooperation with the GGRC and to monitor the progress of the dialogue between the GGRI-NTT and the GGRC.

ADOPTED

GGRC - Article 124 - Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Calvinis (GGRC)

Committee 3 presented a proposal. With a few changes, this was the result:

1. Material

Report from the CRCA (8.2.1) and the CRCA Supplementary Report (8.2.1.3).

2. Observations

- 2.1 Synod Burlington 2010 decided the following in regard to the Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia (*Acts of Synod 2010*, Article 108, Recommendation 4.1-3):
 - [4.1] To not at this time offer a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship to the CRCI.
 - [4.2] To mandate the CRCA to continue contact with the CRCI with a view to improving official communications and to gain more insight in the character and direction of the CRCI.
 - [4.3] To acknowledge that unity between the CRCI and the RCI should not be a prerequisite for ecclesiastical fellowship with either of these church federations. 2.2 These Calvinist Reformed Churches are referred to in their own language as the Gereja- Gereja Reformasi Calvinis (GGRC). The CRCA reports that it now uses the acronym GGRC to refer to these churches.
- 2.3 A matter of concern noted in the *Acts of Synod 2010*, Article 108, Observation 2.5 was the "problems between the CRCI (=GGRC) and the GGRM (the Pilgrim Reformed Churches), originally one federation together with the CRCI." In May 2011 Dr. A.J. Pol accompanied Rev. A. Souman on a visit to the GGRC on the islands of Timor and Rote. The CRCA reports with thankfulness that the visit could be

instrumental in bringing the GGRM back together with the GGRC after they had been separated from each other for some time. "Delegates from both groups of churches came together and signed an agreement of reconciliation during this visit. In July 2011 a synod was convened where this reconciliation was confirmed. One of the decisions was to use the name GGRC for the federation. Another decision was that the churches which previously were called GGRM would discontinue the practice of ordaining women as deacons."

- 2.4 During his visit in July 2012, it became apparent to Rev. Souman that "not all the decisions made in the agreement of reconciliation have been implemented yet." Also, although progress has been made in regard to ensuring that ecclesiastical assemblies take place, such meetings are not yet regular "and the synod did not finish its work properly."
- 2.5 The CRCA notes that "the churches depend too much on one person, who has a lot of influence in the churches, and several of the delegates were extremely hesitant to commit to anything without his approval."
- 2.6 The CRCA does however see slow movement "in the right direction." "Help, encouragement, and from time to time also admonition from sister churches" is needed on a regular basis. The Canadian Reformed Churches have been the most involved in this situation even though there is no ecclesiastical fellowship with these churches yet.
- 2.7 Synod notes that "the CRCA is convinced that we do have a responsibility towards the GGRC, even if we cannot decide to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with them. There is still too much uncertainty about the direction of the GGRC (see 4.2 of article 108, page 189 of the Acts of Synod Burlington 2010)."
- 2.8 Regular visits are important to continue to encourage ecclesiastical cooperation and the pursuit of ecclesiastical unity between the GGRC and the GGRI-NTT, which have already been sister churches of each other for about twenty years. During his visit in July 2012 Rev. Souman observed that "the GGRI(NTT) showed willingness to work on this unity, while the GGRC also expressed willingness but was a bit more reluctant."
- 2.9 The pursuit of unity is also important since "the mission churches established through the mission work of Smithville indicated that they intend to join the new federation once the GGRI(NTT) and GGRC decide to unite."
- 2.10 The CRCA has stayed in touch with the deputies of the FRCA in regard to the GGRC and has the impression "that the deputies of the FRCA and the CRCA agree on most of the issues regarding the relationship between the GGRI and GGRC."
- 2.11 Given the uncertainty in regard to the direction of the GGRC, the CRCA stresses the responsibility of the Canadian Reformed Churches "to send someone to Timor on a regular basis to encourage the GGRC to become more Reformed and apply the Reformed doctrine and church order in their church life." This is all the more important since "the Canadian Reformed Churches are in a better position to assist the GGRC to maintain, defend and promote the Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline and liturgy and to be watchful for deviations than any other church federation with which the GGRC has contact."

3. Considerations

- 3.1 Faithfulness to Scripture as we confess that in the Three Forms of Unity as well as loyal observance of the Reformed Church Order is essential for ecclesiastical fellowship between Reformed church federations. There are no indications that in the GGRC there is a lack of faithfulness to Scripture. The weaknesses seem to lie in the realm of a proper understanding and implementation of the Reformed Church Order.
- 3.2 The CRCA should give special attention to finding out what obstacles the GGRC are experiencing in understanding and implementing the articles of the Reformed Church order and how to help the GGRC to remedy the situation. Education given through the Reformed Theological School in Kupang

(established by the church in Smithville) can also be helpful in consolidating the GGRC in Reformed doctrine and church polity.

- 3.3 It is good to note with thankfulness to the Lord that the visit of Dr. A.J. Pol and Rev. A. Souman could be instrumental in bringing about reconciliation between the GGRC and the GGRM. The CRCA should be requested to continue to monitor developments to see if the decisions made at that time are implemented.
- 3.4 Since the GGRC are receptive to input from the Canadian Reformed Churches and are willing to work with this, efforts should be made to continue to assist them in their development. This will help to lay the basis for a future relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship in which we as churches help each other "to maintain, defend and promote the Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline and liturgy."
- 3.5 Given the fact that the FRCA are in close geographical proximity to the churches in Indonesia, it is important to stay in contact with their deputies to ensure a harmonious and fruitful approach in dealing with the GGRC.

4. Recommendation

Synod decide:

- 4.1 At this time not to offer a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship to the GGRC, but to work toward that goal;
- 4.2 To note with gratitude to the Lord that the work of the Canadian Reformed Churches has borne fruit, also in the reconciliation that could take place between the GGRC and the GGRM.
- 4.4 To mandate the CRCA:
 - 4.4.1 To continue contact with the GGRC to encourage these churches to be faithful to the Reformed doctrine and church order;
 - 4.4.2 When possible to send someone from or delegated by the CRCA to help and encourage these churches to grow in Reformed character, giving priority to finding out what obstacles the GGRC are experiencing in understanding and implementing the articles of the Reformed Church Order and how to help the GGRC to remedy the situation;
 - 4.4.3 To work in consultation and cooperation with the deputies of the FRCA, with the church of Smithville and the church of Edmonton (Immanuel), and as much as possible and desirable with other organizations involved in the work among the Reformed churches in the province of NTT;
 - 4.4.4 To encourage the GGRC to make use of the Reformed Theological School in Kupang (established by the church in Smithville) for the training for the ministry in their churches.

ADOPTED

GS 2016

GGRI-NTT - Article 115 – GGRI-NTT (Reformed Churches in Indonesia – Nusa Tenggara Timor)

1. Material

- 1.1 Report of Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) – section Reformed Churches in Indonesia – Nusa Tenggara Timor (GGRI-NTT) (8.2.1)
- 1.2 Letters from the following CanRC: Glanbrook-Trinity (8.3.1.4), Flamborough (8.3.1.6), and Toronto-Bethel (8.3.1.8)

2. Observations

2.1 GS 2013 (Art. 126) decided:

- [4.1] To accept the apologies of the GGRI for not having invited us to their first National Synod;
- [4.2] To continue the relationship of EF with the GGRI-NTT under the adopted rules;

[4.3] To mandate the CRCA:

- [4.3.1] To discuss our rules for EF with the Committee on Relations of the GGRI and to gather as much information as is needed to come to a good recommendation to General Synod 2016 regarding a relationship of EF with the GGRI;
- [4.3.2] To gather and evaluate information regarding the GGRI-KalBar and the GGRI-Papua in order to prepare a proposal as to how to deal with the GGRI as a national federation instead of dealing exclusively with the GGRI-NTT, which has become part of this larger federation of churches;
- [4.3.3] To request input from the FRCA and the RCN;
- [4.3.4] To try to ensure that a delegation of two brothers is sent to Indonesia to represent the CanRC at a synod of the GGRI-NTT;
- [4.3.5] To work in consultation and cooperation with the deputies of the FRCA, with Smithville and Edmonton-Immanuel and as much as possible and desirable with other organizations involved in the work among the GGRI, to encourage and support these churches in their efforts to grow in the Reformed doctrine and church polity;
- [4.3.6] To encourage the GGRI-NTT to seek cooperation with the Reformed Theological School in Kupang (established by Smithville);
- [4.3.7] To encourage the GGRI-NTT to seek close contact and cooperation with the GGRC and to monitor the progress of the dialogue between the GGRI-NTT and the GGRC.

2.2 From the CRCA report, the following:

- 2.2.1 The decisions of GS 2013, including the rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF), were passed on to the deputies of the GGRI-NTT.
- 2.2.2 In July 2013, the Revs. A.J. Pol and E. Dethan attended the synod of the GGRI-NTT on behalf of the CanRC.
- 2.2.3 In July 2015, the Revs. A. Souman and E. Dethan met with the deputies of the GGRI-NTT. Several significant items were noted from this visit:
 - 2.2.3.1 The GGRI-NTT has a seminary at Sumba. The CRCA has encouraged this non-accredited seminary to continue to pursue cooperation with the accredited STAKRI (Theological School in Kupang) which is supported by the church at Smithville.
 - 2.2.3.2 The Reformed churches in The Netherlands (GKv) are reducing their financial support to the GGRI-NTT significantly and are planning to phase out all financial support by 2020. The Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) are increasing financial support in response and the GGRI-NTT is also requesting support from the CanRC.
 - 2.2.3.3 There is some contact between the churches in the three geographical areas, Nusa Tenggara Timor (NTT), Kalimantan-Barat (KalBar), and Papua (formerly known as Irian Jaya). It is estimated that the GGRI-Papua consist of 50 churches, 40 mission posts, 16,412 members, 15 active ministers, and 65 evangelists. The GGRI-KalBar have 35 churches, 5878 members and a total of 35 active ministers and evangelists. The GGRI-NTT have a total of 75 churches and mission posts (of which 20 are instituted churches), and around 7,000 members. The GGRI-NTT shared with the CRCA some concerns that they have about the GGRI-Papua and GGRI-KalBar. These concerns will be discussed at the upcoming National Synod 2016.
 - 2.2.3.4 There is no progress in the process of closer unity with the GGRC. Both the CRCA and the corresponding deputies of the FRCA have continued to encourage the GGRI-NTT and the GGRC to work together and seek ecclesiastical unity.

2.3 Glanbrook-Trinity notes that we have historical missionary ties with the KalBar and Papua parts of the

GGRI, which have now federated with GGRI-NTT. They also note that the GGRI-NTT exists in a confusing ecclesiastical context, especially when considering its faltering relationship with the GGRC and the yet non-affiliated Smithville mission churches in Timor. Glanbrook-Trinity makes some suggestions for how to improve the familiarity with our sister-churches.

2.4 Flamborough supports the recommendations made by the committee.

2.5 Toronto-Bethel notes that the incomplete information and lack of familiarity with the complex inter-church relationships in Indonesia are hampering the development of our relationship with the GGRI. Toronto-Bethel pleads for the seminary in Sumba to remain as a viable option for the training for the ministry. Toronto-Bethel recommends that the committee engage and make use of the experience and relationships which the Rev. Versteeg has with the Indonesian churches.

2.6 The committee recommends:

2.6.1 To continue the relationship of EF with the GGRI-NTT under the adopted rules;

2.6.2 To mandate the CRCA:

2.6.2.1 To discuss our rules for EF with the Committee on Relations of the GGRI and to gather as much information as is needed to come to a good recommendation to General Synod 2019 regarding a relationship of EF with the GGRI;

2.6.2.2 To gather and evaluate information regarding the GGRI-KalBar and the GGRI-Papua in order to prepare a proposal as to how to deal with the GGRI as a national federation instead of dealing exclusively with the GGRI-NTT, which has become part of this larger federation of churches;

2.6.2.3 To try to ensure that a delegation of two brothers is sent to Indonesia to represent the CanRC at a synod of the GGRI;

2.6.2.4 To work in consultation and cooperation with the deputies of the FRCA to encourage and support the churches of the GGRI in their efforts to grow in the Reformed doctrine and church polity;

2.6.2.5 To encourage the GGRI to seek cooperation with the Reformed Theological School in Kupang (established by the Smithville CanRC);

2.3.2.6 To encourage the GGRI to seek closer contact and cooperation with the Reformed Calvinist Churches in Indonesia (GGRC) and to monitor the progress of the dialogue between the GGRI and the GGRC.

3. Considerations

3.1 The CRCA has attempted to fulfill its mandate with regard to the GGRI-NTT.

3.2 Even though the GGRI-NTT has federated with the GGRI-Papua and GGRI-KalBar, it must be noted that we have incomplete information about the workings of the federation and the Reformed character of GGRI-Papua and GGRI-KalBar. We currently have EF only with the GGRI-NTT.

3.3 The recommendations from Toronto-Bethel have merit.

3.4 The suggestions of Glanbrook-Trinity to improve familiarity with our sister-churches could be beneficial to our CRCA.

4. Recommendations

That Synod decide:

4.1 To continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Reformed Churches in Indonesia – Nusa Tenggara Timor (GGRI-NTT) under the adopted rules;

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

4.2.1 To discuss our rules for EF with the Committee on Relations of the GGRI and to gather as much information as is needed to come to a good recommendation to General Synod 2019 regarding a relationship of EF with the GGRI;

- 4.2.2 To gather and evaluate information regarding the GGRI-KalBar and the GGRI-Papua in order to prepare a proposal as to how to deal with the GGRI as a national federation instead of dealing exclusively with the GGRI-NTT, which has become part of this larger federation of churches;
 - 4.2.3 To try to ensure that a delegation of two brothers is sent to Indonesia to represent the CanRC at a synod of the GGRI;
 - 4.2.4 To work in consultation and cooperation with the deputies of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) to encourage and support the churches of the GGRI in their efforts to grow in the Reformed doctrine and church polity;
 - 4.2.5 To encourage the GGRI to seek cooperation with the Reformed Theological School in Kupang (established by Smithville);
 - 4.2.6 To encourage the GGRI to seek closer contact and cooperation with the Calvinist Reformed Churches (GGRC) and to monitor the progress of the dialogue between the GGRI and the GGRC.
- 4.3 To pass on the letter of the Toronto-Bethel CanRC to the CRCA for consideration.

ADOPTED

GGRC - Article 116 – GGRC (Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia)

1. Material

- 1.1 Report of Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA) – section Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRC) (8.2.1)
- 1.2 Letters from the following CanRC: Glanbrook-Trinity (8.3.1.4), Flamborough (8.3.1.6)

2. Observations

2.1 GS 2013 (Art. 127) decided:

- [4.1] At this time not to offer a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship to the GGRC, but to work toward that goal;
- [4.2] To note with gratitude to the Lord that the work of the Canadian Reformed Churches has borne fruit, also in the reconciliation that could take place between the GGRC and the GGRM¹;
- [4.3] To mandate the CRCA:
 - [4.3.1] To continue contact with the GGRC to encourage these churches to be faithful to the Reformed doctrine and church order;
 - [4.3.2] When possible to send someone from or delegated by the CRCA to help and encourage these churches to grow in Reformed character, giving priority to finding out what obstacles the GGRC are experiencing in understanding and implementing the articles of the Reformed Church Order and how to help the GGRC to remedy the situation;
 - [4.3.3] To work in consultation and cooperation with the deputies of the FRCA, with the church of Smithville and the church of Edmonton-Immanuel, and, as much as possible and desirable, with other organizations involved in the work among the Reformed churches in the province of NTT;
 - [4.3.4] To encourage the GGRC to make use of the Reformed Theological School in Kupang (established by the church in Smithville) for the training for the ministry in their churches.

2.2 From the CRCA report, the following:

- 2.2.1 The Rev. A. Souman visited the GGRC churches in July 2015. He visited with the deputies

¹ Reformed Pilgrim Churches.

of the GGRC and received from them the Acts of their synods.

2.2.2 Contact has been maintained with Smithville regarding the development of the missions in Indonesia. Smithville has contact with the GGRC but not with the Reformed Churches in Indonesia – Nusa Tenggara Timor (GGRI-NTT). This contact is relevant for the mission churches with regard to STAKRI (Reformed Theological School in Kupang). Neither GGRI-NTT nor the GGRC have shown much interest in cooperating with STAKRI which is supported by the Smithville CanRC.

2.2.3 “The present state of the GGRC leads the CRCA to the question how long we should continue pursuing a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the GGRC. The GGRC came with this request to the Canadian Reformed Churches in 2001. Initially the Canadian Reformed Churches didn’t know the GGRC well enough and were not ready to accept this offer. Over time, however, the Canadian Reformed Churches got to know the GGRC quite well, but in the meantime several difficulties and divisions within the GGRC made the Canadian Reformed Churches reluctant to enter into such a relationship. This situation continues and over the past three years the CRCA has not seen much positive change in this situation”.

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

2.3Glanbrook-Trinity notes that the relationship that the GGRC has with the GGRI-NTT is faltering.

2.4Flamborough supports the recommendations made by the committee.

2.5The committee recommends:

2.5.1 At this time not to accept the offer of the GGRC to enter into a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship, but to work towards that goal;

2.5.2 To mandate the CRCA:

2.5.2.1 To continue contact with the GGRC to encourage these churches to be faithful to the Reformed doctrine and church order;

2.5.2.2 To work in consultation and cooperation with the Smithville CanRC and the deputies of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA);

2.5.2.3 To encourage the GGRC to make use of the Reformed Theological School in Kupang (established by the Smithville CanRC) for the training for the ministry in their churches.

3. Considerations

3.1The committee is thanked for doing their work diligently.

3.2From the report, it is clear that there are still too many unknowns. It would be premature to enter into Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the GGRC at this time.

4. Recommendations

That Synod decide:

4.1At this time not to accept the offer of the Reformed Calvinist Churches in Indonesia (GGRC) to enter into a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF);

4.2 To mandate the CRCA:

4.2.1 To continue contact with the GGRC to encourage these churches to be faithful to the Reformed doctrine and church order;

4.2.2 To work in consultation and cooperation with the Smithville CanRC and the deputies of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA);

4.2.3 To encourage the GGRC to make use of the Reformed Theological School in Kupang (established by the Smithville CanRC) for the training for the ministry in their churches.

ADOPTED