

I N D E X

Agenda	Art.	6
Agreement with three Forms of Unity	-	4
Appendix	-	55
Appointments	-	48
Archives of Synod	-	33
Australian Council of Reformed Churches	- 11, 17,	41
Bible-translation - English	-	47
Business concerning art. 41 C.O.	-	56
Church service book in English language	- 22,	46
Closed session	-	45
Closing of Synod	- 50,	59
Credentials	-	2
Deputies to Foreign sister-Churches	-	18
Discipline	-	57
Eligibility Bachelors of Divinity	-	19
Government - Correspondence	-	28
Hattem - Synod of	-	40
Instructions	-	53
Military Servicemen	-	25
Mission	- 34,	38
Moderamen	-	3
Next Synod	-	49
Non-delegated elders	-	9
Opening	-	1
Percentage figures	-	30
Presbyterian Reformed Churches	- 26,	29
Press-Review	-	58
Schedule of meetings	-	5
Sister-Churches - correspondence	- 31,	42
Synod treasurer	-	29
Training to the Ministry of the Word	- 12,	13
Travel-attestations	-	20
Voting rights for women in the Church	-	21

ACTS

of the NINTH SYNOD of
The Free Reformed Churches of Australia

held in the Church building of the Church at Armadale, Western
Australia, from October 21st to October 28th, 1972.

E v e n i n g s e s s i o n on Saturday, October 21st, 1972.

Article 1

OPENING

On behalf of the convening church, the Church of Armadale, Rev.K.Brüning, opens the meeting. This is done in the English language. The meeting, which is attended by the delegates of the Churches, and various visitors from the Churches of Albany, Launceston and Armadale, sings Psalm 68:9, at the request of the chairman, who then prays to God for a blessing on the work of the Synod. The Bible reading is from Jeremiah 32:1-9 and 25-40.

The following opening words were spoken by Rev. Brüning:

Brothers delegates of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia;
brothers and sisters from the congregations!

It is my privilege to welcome you all at this meeting. The Church Council of the Free Reformed Church of Armadale has invited you for the opening of the Synod of our Churches. This occasion by which the delegates of the congregations meet, is a happy occurrence; and this meeting is of great importance not in the least in connection with the vast geographical distance between Tasmania and Western Australia.

It is for me a pleasure to greet the delegates here tonight. Both ministers (or must I say both "mini-stars") from Launceston and Albany together with their fellow-delegates, br. Buist from Launceston and br. Diek of Albany, as well as br. Terpstra of Armadale. It is good to see that you brothers are present here, and we are thankful that the brothers from far have been able to survive so well their long and tiring journey!

It is not necessary to draw your attention to the eventful task which will be required of us. One of the most important issues will be that our Australian Churches not only in their own state and environment but also in the bond of Churches maintain their true reformed character. It is of vital significance that we are absolutely sure of this, because the loss of our actual reformed being would instantaneously put an end to our Church-history in this country.

The importance of this calling and struggle is not only for our people and families with their generations, but also for the rest of Australia's population with which we live and work. When the Church searches influences and expects blessings amongst those outside the Church, she will have to launch her offensive directly from the Bible and the true

confession. If this is not clear to us, then we had better to quit, for example, our missionwork and our seeking contacts with others.

It could be so that one says: "is it actually worth discussing about offensives to the world?" "Isn't it better to concentrate on conserving what we have?" We know that the influence of the true Church can come to a dead end. It is sometimes noticeable that people are pessimistic about the future of the Church. I read an article this week wherein was stated that the Church is dying. Rev. Norman Webb told the Methodist Annual conference among other things:

- : "It has come to rely on organisational procedures - indoctrination, manipulation, earthly powers and so on - which are antipathetic to the Gospel", he said.

.....

- : He believed the Church would increasingly lose leadership. But while it was dying, the values of love, faith, hope, sacrifice and truth which Christianity put forward would continue to exist and flourish.

.....

- : "It is the old age of a Church that has had a valid life for 18 or 19 centuries till a secular order of understanding replaced the previous religious order of understanding", he said.

.....

- : "The Church's ability to influence life will decrease and its institutional form will mainly serve dependent people while the free and leading members of society will only be able to express their lives outside the Church".

.....

We witness a great amount of apostasy in our days. The strongest symptom of this apostasy is that a spirit of lawlessness, normlessness and of false freedom in conscience and behaviour stubbornly demands recognition. Even in our Churches the effects are noticed. People themselves want to decide what they will confess and how they shall live. The Church - and it actually means, the Word of God - has no right to decide on a person's life and thoughts.

Do we still have trust in the future of the Church and her activities? Do we still see the need for this Synod? Or is there in our mind a hint of "What are we actually getting 'worked up' for?"

I would like to underline the words of Jeremiah, which we read. The prophet buys a block of land from his cousin, according to the rules of those days. It is a remarkable business. Jeremiah himself is in jail in the 10th year of king Zedekiah. His future seemed far from bright. Furthermore the army of the Chaldeans had laid a siege around Jerusalem; and the distress of the city was so violent that the last stadium of her existence had come. In verse 24 we read that Jerusalem was practically in the hands of the Chaldeans, which also meant of course, that the whole country was occupied by the enemy.

The land overpowered by the Chaldeans, Jeremiah in prison, and yet Jeremiah buys a piece of land. In verse 9 we read that the deal was for 17 silver shekels, a price not cheap for that time. You would not expect this high price in such a gloomy period.

The meaning of this story is great.

The Lord God told Jeremiah to do this. By this the Lord showed Jeremiah and the other believers, clearly, that they must not be overcome by pessimism. How gloomy and dull the situation may seem, it was still worth buying a block of land. Thus, in other words, the Church still had a future. The Lord would make sure of this for His Name's sake and for the coming of Christ, the promised Messiah.

Let us be encouraged by this word tonight. Even if we do live in a dark time, and even if the Church does not have much chance and perspective, we should still believe that God's true congregations have a future. We have all reason to continue our work in all aspects in which God gives us room and calling. God's work will continue until the last day of history. The fruits of Christ's cross must all be ripened and harvested, and till then we must be active on the place where God gives us room and possibilities.

Another eye-catching point in Jeremiah 32 is that Jeremiah himself, after the deal of the block, shows symptoms of pessimism. This we read in verses 16 - 26.

We must presumably conclude that Jeremiah pondered whether he himself would ever see the new future. God's answer in verses 36 - 44 makes clear that the Lord fulfills His promises at His time and in His way; and not according to man's calculations and desires. We can become impatient and, as it were, bothering or begging for visible feats and palpable fruits. For example, we are looking for certain results in our missionfield or a growing influence of the Church in this vast country. But we must not want to force the Lord, but with a believing heart leave it to Christ, how, where and when the Church will come to glory. We do not work for our own gladness and satisfaction; but whether God's work will come to completion. Therefore, we must work in the task asked of us, also in this Synod-week. Thus, there is no reason for pessimism, because Christ is the Lord of the Church, and He from His throne carries out the programme of God. The Lord is still so good for us, that He gives us fruits and shows actual progress of His work in our midst. Every now and then Christ makes it clear that the Word, preached by the Churches, penetrates into the world, and influences people, who live outside the Lord's congregations.

We can also mention that there is, here and there, a beginning of new desire for the truth and the seriousness of the Word of God's grace. If people join the Church because they, being led by the Spirit, can no longer conform with the desertion of the Word, or if they become desirous for the salvation of Christ and His redemption, then I say: Let us be thankful that we, just like Jeremiah, continue as it were with the buy-

ing of land, for the Church has a future. But it is the Lord Who decides as to the how, where and when.

This chapter has, brothers and sisters, a third element. We must not lose the relationship between this chapter and chapter 31 and these prophecies. In that chapter the Lord makes it known to Jeremiah that he will work conversion in the rest of the apostate nation. He will again bow the hearts to belief and loyalty. The Lord will again inscribe them with the law and write it in their hearts. In that way they will once again submit themselves to the worship of the Lord and become joyful in the God of the Covenant. Chapter 32 also shows this clearly. The verses 38 - 41 speak rich words. The rest of God's people shall in love and willingness, live for the Lord. In that way, brothers and sisters, the Church has a new future. God works regret and conversion, but He also asks and calls His people to return and become loyal again. These things always go hand in hand and in that way our prospects become rich and happy. We must not lose this factor from sight.

Whenever we speak of the future of the Church and the sense in our work, then we must also see the great and tremendous voice of the Lord calling us to be loyal, after the working and promises of His Spirit.

It is regrettably true that the Church is always exposed to apostacy and disloyalty, to lawlessness and indiscipline. Many people prefer not to hear about the law of God and His commandments. Real and concrete conversion are so often refused and paralysed, sometimes even with a false calling upon the grace of God. Admonition and discipline are often seen as unlawful weapons in the Church of God. We want to see that conversion to the Lord, who bought us with His blood, and a new thankful life according to God's law, (Lord's Day 32, 33), are essential in the expectation of a blessed future of the congregation.

By the negligence of the honour of God, and the denial of His covenant and words, it is of no use to work for the future of the Church.

Deputy brothers, as a Synod bind yourselves together unconditionally in true love and scriptural faith in the Lord and in His Word and Spirit. Then our work will be a blessing for the Churches that sent us, so that also God's congregations in Launceston, Albany and Armadale, may in all respects be and remain loyal to Him who rescued us from calamity and death and Who gives us a future; the future of His unshakeable kingdom.

Hereby on behalf of the Church of Armadale, I open the ninth Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia.

Article 2

CREDENTIALS

The roll is signed by the delegates of the three Churches and the delegates of the Church of Launceston examine the credentials. All Churches are lawfully represented.

The primary representatives are present, namely:

from the Church of Albany: Rev. J.D. Wielenga and
elder J.A. Diek.

from the Church of Armadale: Rev. K. Brüning and
elder H. Terpstra
from the Church of Launceston: Rev. G. van Rongen and
elder W. Buist.

Article 3

MODERAMEN

The Synod is constituted and the following officers are elected:

president: Rev. G. van Rongen
assessor: Rev. J.D. Wielenga
first clerk: Rev. K. Brüning
second clerk: elder J.A. Diek

Article 4

AGREEMENT WITH THE THREE FORMS OF UNITY

The president Rev. van Rongen takes the chairman's hammer and asks the delegates to testify their agreement with the three forms of Unity by standing up. This takes place.

Article 5

WORKING METHOD

The working method of the Synod is fixed. The meetings shall take place from

10.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.
2.00 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.
7.30 p.m. to 10.00 p.m.

Those points on the agenda of special interest to visiting Church members will be dealt with in the evening as far as possible.

People who are not members of the Church may only visit the meetings with special permission. The president points out, that officers of the Church should be present at the open-sessions as much as possible; they could advise the Synod if the opportunity arises.

Correspondence which has been received will be dealt with at point 7 of the agenda.

Article 6

AGENDA

The agenda is fixed as drafted with additions given by the convening Church. It is as follows:

Discussion of inward correspondence and overtures.

From the Church of Armadale:

a: proposal in connection with delegation from our Churches to Synods of sister-Churches abroad.

- b: proposal to revise the rules regarding the eligibility for call in our Churches of Bachelors of Divinity
- c: fund for students in theology.

From the Church of Launceston:

- a: proposal in connection with travel attestations
- b: proposal in connection with franchise of confessing female members.

Discussion of instructions.

Reports:

- a: on Church visitation
- b: from the Church of Armadale concerning the archives of Synod
- c: from the Church of Albany concerning the examination of the archives of Synod
- d: from the Churches concerning the work amongst the "scattered brothers and sisters".
- e: from the Churches of Albany and Armadale concerning Mission work in Western Australia
- f: from the Church of Launceston concerning the spiritual support of members in military service
- g: from deputies for correspondence with foreign sister-Churches
- h: from deputies for correspondence with the Government
- i: from deputies for an English Version of the Bible
- j: from deputies for an English Church service book
- k: from deputies ad article 24 Acts of Synod 1970 (South Africa)
- l: from the Church of Armadale concerning correspondence with the "Presbyterian Reformed Churches"
- m: from the deputies concerning the Training for the Ministry of the Word
- n: from the Synod Quaestor concerning income and expenditure
- o: report deputies art. 49 Church Order

Auditing of the books of the Treasurer of Synod

Appointment of deputies

Determination of the percentage figures for the apportionment of Synod costs between Churches

Appointment of the convening Church, place and date of the next Synod

Business concerning article 41 Church Order

Personal business

Adoption of Acts of Synod

Adoption of Press Report

Discipline after article 43 Church Order

Closing

It is decided to deal with the Church visitations at the closed session of Monday morning.

Article 7

ADJOURNMENT

The president speaks several words of thanks to the convening Church for the welcome given and the preparatory work for the Synod. Psalm 123 is sung. The president leads in prayer and the Synod is adjourned till Monday, October 23rd, the Lord willing.

Article 8

REOPENING OF THE MEETING IN EVENING SESSION ON MONDAY
OCTOBER 23rd.

The Synod is reopened. This session is held in the English language. Psalm 121:1 and 2 are sung, Ephesians 2 is read and visitors are welcomed.

Article 9

NOT-DELEGATED OFFICE BEARERS

The president announces that in closed session not-delegated office bearers will not be present. Further that in the closed session of that day the visitation reports were dealt with.

Article 10

CORRESPONDENCE

The president informs of some correspondence which belong in part to the closed session. Further some announcements are made concerning dealing of points on the agenda in open-sessions.

Article 11

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF REFORMED CHURCHES

The next point on the agenda is the letter received from the Australian Council of Reformed Churches, dated June 9th, 1971. The letter sent to the above council by the Synod of Albany 1968 is read; as well as the answer received from the council. In the discussion it is pointed out that the Council does not go into the letter from Albany 1968; moreover that the letter from the Council has various errors. It is not correct that other Reformed Churches in the world have not chosen sides in the conflict in the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland - 1944.

The Christian Reformed Churches of the U.S.A., the so-called Doppekerk in South Africa and the First Ecumenical Synod at Grand Rapids 1946 are mentioned. It is decided to send an answer in the line of the discussion.

Article 12

TRAINING MINISTRY OF THE WORD

The next agenda point is the report for the training for the ministry of the Word. The Church of Armadale proposes to start a fund for the training immediately. The question is asked whether a fund must already be set up. It is said that the deputies should come to the Churches with a budget in good time, so that these know how much money is needed. Synod decides to accept the proposals of the report after a small change. The decisions are as follows:

1. Synod decides to let the idea of a student from our Churches who has studied four years at the Theological College in Kampen, to complete his studies in Australia, rest.
2. Synod decides to set up a fund in the Free Reformed Churches of Australia for support for students after article 19 C.O. The following directives are adopted for the management of this fund:
 - (I) The Free Reformed Churches of Australia have a fund for financial support, in accordance with article 19 of the Church Order, of students from within the Churches who study at a Theological School of sister-Churches in Canada or in the Netherlands.
 - (II) The Synod of the Churches charges deputies for the Training of the Ministry of the Word, as appointed from time to time by the Synod, with the daily management of this fund.
 - (III) Synod charges one of the Churches with the audits of the books and monies of the fund. This audit shall be held six monthly and its findings are to be reported to the local Church Council, whilst a summarising report is to be submitted to Synod.
 - (IV) Monies for the fund will be gathered by the Churches on the basis of proportionality according to the number of communicant members. Deputies shall from time to time announce how much money will be needed for the satisfactory running of the fund.
 - (V) Requests for support will be assessed by deputies, after they have asked advice from the Church Council of the congregation from which the student came originally. Deputies shall report regularly to the Churches concerning their activities in financially supporting students and submit a summarising report to Synod.
3. Synod decides not to make a choice, at this time, between the Theological training in Canada or the Netherlands, but to leave this choice up to the person who is going to study theology.
4. The Synod is of the opinion that, since a student with a proper preparatory study in Australia, will be admitted without further requirements to the Training in Kampen, it is not necessary to examine further the possibility of exemption of admission exams in Kampen.
5. Synod is of the opinion that a period of 5 or 6 years of study in Kampen, after a suitable preparatory study in Australia, should not be

regarded as "too long".

The deputies are discharged from their task.

AFTERNOON SESSION OF TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24th

Article 13

CONTINUATION TRAINING FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Synod decides to instruct the deputies who will be appointed for the Training of the Ministry to ask the Churches for an amount of \$600.00 as of January 1st on ground of the directives named in article 12.

Article 14

ACTS

Articles 1 - 14 of the Acts are adopted and the meeting is adjourned after the singing of Psalm 121:3 and 4 and prayer of thanksgiving lead by the assessor.

OPEN SESSION, WEDNESDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 25th

Article 15

REOPENING OF THE MEETING

The president reopens the meeting with the singing of Psalm 84:3 and reads Ephesians 4:17-32. The president announces that in closed session, the following have been dealt with: Appeals, several mission items, and scattered reports, and that the minutes of the held closed sessions have been adopted.

Article 16

CORRESPONDENCE

A letter sent by the General Synod of the Gereformeerde Kerken held at Hattem is read. Synod decides to send an answer to the Synod of Hattem.

Article 17

DRAFT LETTER TO THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF REFORMED CHURCHES

Br. Diek reads the draft letter to the above council. Synod decides to duplicate this letter first before further discussion.

Article 18

PROPOSAL OF ARMADALE CONCERNING DELEGATION TO SYNODS OF FOREIGN SISTER-CHURCHES

Armadales proposes that Synod makes an arrangement for possible delegation to Synods of foreign sister-Churches.

Explanation:

It has been experienced in the past that an arrangement for these things can prevent unnecessary correspondence.

Synod decides to add an instruction in the mandate of the deputies to be appointed for the correspondence with foreign Churches, wherein they, as soon as they receive an invitation or announcement of a coming Synod in a foreign sister-Church, inform the Churches so that they can determine whether one of the office bearers can represent our Churches.

Article 19

PROPOSAL OF ARMADALE CONCERNING ELIGIBILITY FOR CALL OF
BACHELORS OF DIVINITY

The proposal is that Synod instructs the deputies for the training for the Ministry of the Word to revise the rules for the examination of Bachelors of Divinity, and to come to the next Synod with a proposal.

Explanation:

At the examination of Candidate A.H.Dekker it was evident that there are some practical problems with the present ruling, e.g. the deputation and the cooperation of the faculty of the training in Theology in Hamilton, Canada.

Synod decides to ask the deputies for the training for the ministry to revise the rules for the examination of Bachelors of Divinity within six months and to make a proposal to the Churches.

Article 20

TRAVEL ATTESTATIONS.

Launceston asked the Synod to declare that "so-called Travel attestations shall be valid no longer than during a period of six months as a maximum".

Explanation:

the Church Council of Launceston found that some members of our congregation stayed outside our territory for a considerably longer period than they intended. This way the value of the so-called travel attestation, which is issued in such cases, is reduced, because the Church Council concerned cannot guarantee its contents any longer. The council of Launceston prefers to issue a normal attestation when the absence from our congregation will last for more than a few weeks or months. However, some of our travel-loving members do not stay in the same place. Therefore a travel attestation was issued in certain cases. It seems to us that we have to take the supervision of such members seriously and consequently the issue of such travel attestations must be limited to the minimum, and also that they shall be valid for a rather short period of time. If the term of absence would extend a little bit longer than the proposed six

months, the Church Council concerned shall issue a new travel attestation, after having taken information on the conduct of the person concerned. This does not only regard members who are absent from Australia for a longer period of time but also within our country in one of the other congregations. For this reason it seems to be wise that our Churches adopt a common policy.

Synod decides that the so-called travel attestations shall not be valid for longer than six months.

Article 21

VOTING RIGHTS FOR WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

The Church of Launceston proposes that:

Synod appoints deputies who shall study the question whether active voting rights must be given to the female confessing members of the Church.

Explanation:

during home visits more than once the wish was expressed that also to the female members of the congregation, confessing members, active voting rights would be given. It appeared that this point has the attention of the congregation. However, the General Synod, 1923, of our sister-Churches in the Netherlands decided that this is a matter of the Churches-in-common. According to this decision it seems to be desirable that the Synod of our Churches shall settle this matter. This point will certainly require some thorough study. So it seems to us that it would be wise that Synod will appoint a number of deputies to study this matter.

Synod decides not to appoint deputies, and is of the opinion that the Church, wherein this matter is an issue should table definite proposals to Synod.

Article 22

REPORT FOR A CHURCHBOOK IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The Synod opens the discussion of the report for a churchbook in the English language. As focal point of the discussion is the hymn section of the Book of Praise; objections are raised against the large number of hymns, and the fact that this "proof book" is published as a definite book for Canada; and the Australian Churches are being forced into a situation.

Synod decides to accept the proposal of the committee: "to advise the Churches to put into use as a proof-collection the psalm section of the newly published Book of Praise".

Further discussion is postponed to another session.

Article 23

ACTS

The Acts of this session are adopted. Psalm 65:6 is sung, where-

after br. Buist leads in prayer of thanksgiving. The president adjourns the meeting.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SESSION, OCTOBER 26th

Article 24

REOPENING

The president reopens the meeting in the presence of a number of children from the John Calvin School. The youth receive an extra word of welcome.

Article 25

SPIRITUAL SUPPORT TO MILITARY SERVICE MEN

The report from Launceston about the support to military service men is read and discussed. The question is asked why Launceston supported attempts to keep some military men out of Vietnam. The delegates answer that this was not done for reasons of pacifism or something similar, of which the authorities concerned were also informed. Personal and family circumstances of the brothers concerned played a role here. Moreover it can be stated that going to Vietnam was practically on a voluntary basis. The opinion was voiced at the meeting, that in future, the Churches should avoid opposing the sending out of our boys who are called to areas where Australian forces are required. It is remarked that financial support for travelling costs of military men to come to Launceston is the responsibility of the home Church. The deputies obtain their discharge.

Article 26

PRESBYTERIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

The delegates from Armadale inform Synod that, through some misunderstanding, a letter from the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia dated September 14th, 1970 has not been answered. The letter is read.

Synod decides to ask the council to take up correspondence with this Church again; it is also decided to send a letter from the Synod with an apology.

Article 27

ADJOURNMENT OF THE SESSION

With the children of the John Calvin School Psalm 105:5 is sung after which the session is adjourned.

Article 28

REOPENING, REPORT CORRESPONDENCE GOVERNMENT

Rev. van Rongen reports about the correspondence with the government. He states that an official acknowledgement of our Churches by the government has no real significance. Therefore it is of no value to ask for such an acknowledgement. Synod agrees with this and the deputies are discharged.

Article 29

SYNOD TREASURY

The report of the treasurer of the Synod is tabled as well as the report of the Church of Launceston concerning the auditing of the books. These reports require no further discussion. Deputies are discharged.

Article 30

SYNOD COSTS

The costs of Synod are divided as follows:

The Church of Albany	22 $\frac{1}{2}$ %
The Church of Armadale	55%
The Church of Launceston	22 $\frac{1}{2}$ %

Article 31

CORRESPONDENCE SISTER-CHURCHES

The report of the deputies correspondence foreign sister-Churches is dealt with. To the report is added a letter from the deputies ad hoc from Canada, wherein is included a report to the Synod of New Westminster, Canada concerning the contact between the Canadian deputies and representatives from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

A lot of attention is paid in the discussion to the way in which foreign sister-Churches should be judged concerning their faithfulness to the Scripture, Confession and the Church Order. This discussion shall continue at another session.
The meeting is adjourned.

EVENING SESSION THURSDAY OCTOBER 26th.

Article 32

REOPENING

The president opens the meeting, with the singing of Psalm 119:67, whereafter he reads Ephesians 5:22-33. The visitors receive an extra word of welcome.

Article 33

ARCHIVES OF SYNOD

The report of the Church of Armadale concerning the archives is ta-

bled. The delegates from Albany state that the archives are in good order, with the exception of one missing visitation report. The Church of Armadale shall investigate this. Furthermore it is mentioned that there are no instructions for the archivaris, e.g. concerning giving certain pieces of importance for examination.

The Synod decides to arrange this with the instructions given to the various deputies. The deputies are discharged.

Article 34

MISSION

The report of Armadale concerning the mission is the next point on the agenda. The secretary of the mission committee will take part in the discussion. The report is read part by part.

The question whether there is a real need for an own hall in Pinjarra and what the motives are is asked. The large advantages of an own centre for the natives are pointed out. This also includes a stronger position of the mission in view of the environment and the government. Furthermore there is a better chance to expand the work with and education of native children and women.

The planned hall has room for approximately 60 visitors. The size of the hall is based on the present work. It has never been and never will be the intention to let the social aspect of the work be of foremost importance. But, if possible, the gospel must be accompanied by further action and education in daily life. Another question concerns the blessings which we may see on this work. The spiritual and material blessings are commented on, where there is joy if through the Word a new life is starting to become visible.

Synod is informed that natives usually do not come to the meetings on their own. Most of them are picked up at various places by bus. But they are not forced to go to the meetings. If after some time they have no apparent interest in the meetings, they are told they will no longer be asked to be brought along to the meetings.

The support from Holland has not yet been arranged. However, promises have been made and with the possible appointment of a fulltime mission worker further arrangements will have to be made with the Dutch sister-Churches.

Foster homes cannot easily be set up due to a lack of people who are willing or able to do this work. Albany points out to the placing of native children in Church families, which has worked well up to now. It might be possible to have Launceston join in this work and take up abandoned or orphaned children in their congregation. The reporting of and about a possible mission worker is arranged. A few changes are made in the proposals of Armadale and in this way all proposals discussed are accepted. They have the following contents:

APPOINTMENT OF A FULLTIME MISSION WORKER

The task of an appointing Church is:

1. The appointing Church under whose supervision the mission worker shall be, suggests the person they deem suitable to take up this task. After approval of the cooperating Churches, the appointing Church will handle further execution of the appointment.
2. The appointing Church will supervise the work of the mission worker; and report to the cooperating Churches once a year.

To take up this rule in the "Agreement of Cooperation".

Furthermore we propose the following plan in regard to the Church position of and the instruction to the mission worker.

1. A mission worker, appointed in agreement with the "Agreement of Cooperation" (art...), is employed by the Free Reformed Churches of Australia for mission work among the natives of Western Australia.
2. The task of the mission worker is:
 - a. preaching of the gospel and teaching catechism to the natives; a mission worker shall not, however, be authorized to administer the sacraments
 - b. visit the natives as much as possible and teach them in personal conversations of the riches of the Gospel.
 - c. visit the sick and prisoners
 - d. report on his work to the Church Council every two months, which report will be sent to the cooperating Churches.
3. The appointing Church shall see to it, that the mission worker and his family will be able to live off his work. His salary shall be fixed and possible review shall be made by the appointing Church after consultation with and agreement of the cooperating Churches.
4. The mission worker shall have one month holidays per year.
5. In case of illness the salary shall be paid; in case of death or chronic illness and disablement the family of the mission worker shall be supported in accordance with the needs of the family as decided in point 3.
6. From the retirement age of 65, the cooperating Churches shall supplement the mission worker and family adequately as pointed out in point 3.
7. Possible problems or disagreements between mission worker and appointing Church which cannot be solved locally, shall be put to the cooperating Churches.
8. Possible suspension of the mission worker can only be done with advice and agreement of at least the neighbouring Church; while dismissal from his work can only be done by the cooperating Churches.
9. If a mission worker is released from his task on his request, or if he is relieved of his task by the Churches due to stagnation in or ending of the mission work, the following financial arrangements shall be observed:

- a. by release on his own request, the salary shall be paid for one month.
- b. if he is relieved due to stagnation in or ending of the work, the salary shall be paid until he has other work to a maximum of six months.

To take up this arrangement in the "Agreement of Cooperation".

In connection with the cooperation in the Netherlands the following new arrangements are accepted.

1. The appointment of a mission treasurer.
2. All mission money from the Netherlands and Australia managed by the treasurer.
3. All bills are sent to the treasurer and paid by him.
4. After December 31st and June 30th he makes a financial report which will be sent to the cooperating Churches after approval of the appointing Church.
5. The books will be checked after December 31st and June 30th and will be reported on to the appointing Church.
6. The Free Reformed Churches will pay a minimum of \$10.00 per year per confessing member. This money will be given to the mission treasurer.
7. Albany and Armadale are to send a budget for the coming year to the treasurer by August 1st. The treasurer will send it with the financial report to the appointing Church.

In agreement with this the "Agreement of Cooperation" is to be changed.

HALL PINJARRA.

The proposal from the Church of Armadale to build a hall for the mission work in Pinjarra is accepted.

The delegates from Albany will have to discuss the financing of this hall in their own Church Council in as far as Albany's share is concerned.

The point of the use of a different Bible translation in the meetings with the natives remains undecided in so far that it is left up to the local Church.

Launceston asks for some more information regarding the mission work, if possible, e.g. some data out of minutes of meetings of the mission committee.

Article 35

ADJOURNMENT OF THE MEETING

The session is closed with the singing of Psalm 57:7, whereafter br. Terpstra leads in prayer.

FRIDAY MORNING SESSION, OCTOBER 27th.

Article 36

REOPENING

The meeting is reopened with the singing of Psalm 71:10, the president reads Ephesians 6:1-9 and leads in prayer.

Article 37

The Acts are adopted up to the present article.

Article 38

MISSION ALBANY

In the discussion of the report from Albany questions regarding the native children who are placed in families, are asked. The Church Council of Albany visits the Sunday and Thursday meetings every two months. The opinion in Albany is, that, although results are often disappointing the work must go on. The forming of Foster homes is not possible mainly through lack of people who can do this work.

Article 39

THE PRESBYTERIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

A draft letter to the Presbyterian Reformed Church is fixed.

Article 40

SYNOD OF HATTEM

An answering letter to the Synod at Hattem is fixed, see Acts Appendix I.

Article 41

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF REFORMED CHURCHES

An answering letter to the above council is read and accepted. See Appendix II.

Article 42

CORRESPONDENCE WITH FOREIGN SISTER-CHURCHES

The discussion of a previous session is continued. The attitude in connection with the so-called "buiten verband" churches and their members form the main part of the discussion.

Finally, Synod decides that:

- a. having heard the report of deputies for correspondence with the foreign sister-Churches, Synod ascertains that correspondence with the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland can be continued.
- b. regarding the churches 'outside the confederation' Synod is of the following opinion: As there is no longer an interim-situation of the same kind as defined in the Acts of the Synod of Launceston 1970 (Acts art. 26, second part) and as these Churches themselves have not yet

found one another in a regular confederation of Churches in accordance with the rules of the Church Order, while in the midst of these Churches serious objections are raised against re-establishing a confederation of Churches in accordance with the principles and rules of the Church Order;

and as still teachings that are in conflict with the Reformed Confession are found and tolerated in these Churches, - attestations issued by these Churches cannot be accepted, in accordance with the accepted rules for correspondence with Churches abroad and thus the stipulation of Acts Launceston Art. 26 is no longer operative.

Synod accepts the advice of the deputies which reads as follows:

Synod of Armadale would do well to ask the deputies in the Netherlands to inform the Australian Churches more regularly and also between times about the development, correspondence and the state of affairs in general; and ask them at the same time in how far it is possible to include them in the international and intercontinental fields.

Regarding the correspondence with Canada, the wish is expressed that the deputies will ad hoc succeed in getting better contact with the sister-Churches there.

Deputies will see if the Dutch sister-Churches observe the rules of correspondence, in case they should make changes in the Church Order and the Liturgical Forms.

The Synod deems it worthwhile to make contact with the sister-Churches in Sumba (Indonesia).

Article 43

ADJOURNMENT OF SESSION

The president adjourns the session

FRIDAY EVENING SESSION, OCTOBER 27th

Article 44

REOPENING OF THE MEETING

The president reopens the meeting with the singing of Psalm 139:14, and reads Ephesians 6:10-24.

Article 45

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CLOSED SESSION

The president makes an announcement of discussions in closed sessions.

a. discussed were the difficulties in the Church of Pretoria. The following decision was made.

Synod is of the opinion:

1. that the Council of the Vrye Gereformeerde Kerk in Pretoria (chairman Dr. C. van der Waal) has from the start been negligent in the pastoral approach of marriage problems which have been known for years and also refused to deal with this matter when it came to a crisis at the end of 1968.
 2. that the Council (chairman Dr. C. van der Waal) has, in the very least, officially accepted divorce theories after all, (see the letter of 26.2.1969; also of 1.4.1969; the letter of 2.1.1970 to the Synod of Hoogeveen, and the letter from 29.4.1970) and has never yet officially repudiated these theories, which are contrary to the Scriptures, the Confession and the form for marriage, in so far the mentioned theories recommend divorce as a positive commandment to both partners in a marriage where a deadlock has been reached, to find back the way to the glory of the beginning in rebus sexualibus and to the fulfilment of their cultural mandate.
 3. that it is not certain that the Council's policy regarding whether or not the minister should be suspended was in fact based on the divorce theories first formed after the schism, although these theories have been given by the Council as a legitimization of its policy.
d e c i d e s that the Vrye Gereformeerde Kerk of Pretoria (chairman Dr. C. van der Waal) cannot be recognized as sister-Church.
 1. as long as named divorce theories are not rejected as unscriptural by the church council, and
 2. as long as the Church Council does not declare that also due to their teaching and admonition everything is done by the marriage partners concerned to prevent a legal divorce and accomplish a reconciliation.
- b) Concerning the mission Synod decided to appoint br. P. 't Hart of Armadale as fulltime mission worker, which appointment can take effect when the financial arrangements with the Dutch sister-Churches have been made.
- The following directives regarding the appointment are accepted:
1. he shall have to prepare himself for the work according to a program of studies to be set up which will be based on a duration of four years.
 2. he shall be examined once a year and after four years have a final examination.
 3. he shall be working in the mission team during the four years and keep up the contact with the natives as much as possible.
 4. after the completion of his studies and successful final examination, a permanent appointment will follow.

Article 46

ENGLISH CHURCH BOOK

The next point on the agenda is the English Church Book.

Inquiries are made after the English text of the Confessions.

Point b. is accepted.

Concerning point c. Armadale proposes not to accept the hymn section as it is now set up in the proof collection.

Albany wants to see the proof collection before it comes to a definite point of view.

It is remarked that the Churches should strive to a unity also in the use of the hymn section.

Point c, d, en e, are adopted.

Point f. is amended and adopted.

The decisions now read as follows:

- a. to advise the Churches to accept the complete Book of Praise as proof collection
- b. to advise the Churches the same regarding the English text of the Confessions and the Liturgical writings.
- c. to advise the Churches regarding the use of the hymn section of the Book of Praise to limit themselves to the hymns named under 6 and to regard these also as a proof collection
- d. to ask the Churches to try out the Psalms, writings and hymns and to send the results to the deputies.
- e. to discharge the deputies appointed in 1970
- f. appoint new deputies with the mandate to come to a responsible Church Book in the English language, especially to change the hymn section as it is now set up in the proof collection in the manner indicated by previous Synods.

Article 47

ENGLISH BIBLE TRANSLATION

The report about the English Bible translation is discussed.

Suggestions in the report are discussed. Objections are raised for the use of the RSV.

Synod decides to appoint new deputies with the mandate to come to the next Synod with a report concerning a good English translation of the Bible; and including in their examination Bible translations such as 'the new American Standard Bible' and the 'King James II version' of Jay Green.

Article 48

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTIES

The following deputies are appointed:

For keeping the archives of the Synod: the Church of Armadale

For supervising the archives of the Synod: the Church of Albany

Synod treasurer: J. Kroeze, 22 Pomona Road, Riverside, Launceston, Tas. 7250; secundus: F. Streefland of Launceston.

Deputies ad articles 49 and 79 C.O.: the ministers and the brs. J.A. Diek of Albany, H. Terpstra of Armadale, W. Buist of Launceston.

Deputies for correspondence with foreign sister-Churches: Rev. K. Brünning, br. H. Terpstra and br. J. Zuidema of Armadale

Deputies for correspondence with the government: the chairman and secretary of every congregation (chairman Rev. G. van Rongen)

Deputies for a Church Book in the English language: Rev. G. van Rongen, (convener) and br. J. van der Ros of Launceston

Deputies for the English Bible translation: the ministers (chairman Rev. J.D. Wielenga)

Deputies for the training for the Ministry of the Word: Rev. G. van Rongen (convener), br. G. Numan, and K. Salomons of Launceston

Deputy Church for the correspondence with the 'Presbyterian Reformed Church' of Australia: the Church of Armadale

Deputy Church for the spiritual support to church members in military service: the Church of Launceston

Corresponding and appointing Church for the Mission: the Church of Armadale

For Church visitation: the minister: for each oral visitation the Church Council to which the deputy concerned belongs appoints one elder who will be regarded as having been appointed by Synod

Deputies examiners: the ministers (chairman Rev. K. Brünning).

Article 49

NEXT SYNOD

The convening Church for the next Synod is the Church of Albany. The Synod shall be held, the Lord willing, in March 1975 in Albany.

Article 50

FINAL ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

The assessor takes the chair and gives the president the opportunity to give his final address which is as follows:

Esteemed brethren, fellow-delegates of the Churches, brothers and sisters in the Lord!

The ninth Synod of our Churches is nearly finished.

It will be remembered by its members as the Synod of the long and tiresome sessions. We certainly have worked overtime.

However, we will soon forget the pain of sitting and sitting here for hours and hours, discussing one item of the agenda after the other.

It is like a woman after childbirth, who can talk about the pain which she had to suffer but no longer feels it. It is a good subject to talk about.

So we will no longer feel the stress of these long sessions, but only be able to talk about it at home.

At the same time - to go a bit further with this comparison - we also say that we hope that we really have produced something in these sessions. It is up to others now to judge this, according to the Scriptural rule

which is laid down in the wellknown Article 31 of our Church Order.

Looking back to what we have discussed in the course of this week I am of the opinion that it was not for nothing that our Churches came together by means of their delegates. It is a matter of fact that we as people of Reformed Confession do not like the closed sessions, which may put a sort of secret and mysterious veil upon the discussions. However, in our small confederation of Churches - wherein bodies like Classis and Particular Synod do not exist - we cannot avoid them. Therefore it is an essential part of our sessions - in which for example the reports regarding Church visitation are discussed - inaccessible to others. My feeling is this, that these discussions are often the most useful of all because exactly here the riches of living together in a bond of Churches, often living under the same circumstances, but in particular living from the same faith, comes to the fore very clearly.

During this week more was done, which - as we hope - may be to the wellbeing of the confederation of Churches. I take this term "confederation of Churches" in its widest sense. We have talked about certain very fine but also certain saddening aspects in the life of our sister-Churches overseas.

However, do not let me try to sum up all that has been done during this week. The Press Report may soon inform everyone about this, and later on the Acts will be published. All those who are interested will be able to get informed. Let me rather say something about the confederation of Churches itself. This is experienced and put into practice not only during our Synods.

I may remind you of the words which the chairman of the convening Church spoke during the opening ceremony. He read for us Jeremiah 32, and pointed to several aspects of this chapter. I would like to do the same, and refer you to the words which we read in verse 39 of this particular chapter, which says: "And I will give them one heart and one way that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them".

"One way" it says. Here I hear the word "Synod", which means something like that. "Synod", this word indicated the fact that we are en route, on our way, together, we are on the same way, going one way. This was the encouragement and comfort of this Synod that it was clearly proved that we, by the grace of the LORD are on one way - even in spite of some differences in a few details.

The LORD has also promised one heart to His people. This means, that they all will enjoy the same salvation, the same Word of God, the same blessings which are promised to them in the previous chapter, chapter 31 of the prophecies of Jeremiah, the most important one of them being the forgiveness of sins and of our iniquities, the salvation in Jesus Christ, as we would say in new testament language.

This is what binds us together.

This is exactly what did bind us together during this synodical week.

It must bind us together also as soon as the long, boring road between Armadale and Albany, and the Nullarbor and Bass Strait will separate us from each other again. It even seems to me that we could and should feel and practice this spiritual bond in a more intensive way, even apart from our official contacts like Synods, for example in answering letters more rapidly, either in the official or in the personal sphere.

But once again, do not let us go into details now. Let us rather ascertain that again we have tasted something of the riches of living together in a confederation of Churches which is dominated by the fact that we have been put under the blessing of the New Covenant which God has promised and which was fulfilled in Jesus Christ our Saviour. God's promise to Jeremiah 32:39 has been made true, as is proved by the apostle Paul when he writes in the epistle which we have read at the beginning of our sessions, the epistle to the Ephesians, chapter 4: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (4:4-6).

It is the same riches and enriching authority of the covenant unto which others must be called by the Church of Jesus Christ.

One of the essential points of this Synod's agenda was the mission-work among the natives, its continuance and even expansion. It is a real privilege that the Lord has given us that this Synod was able to appoint a full-time missionary worker. The Word of God may continuously live in our heart which says: Thou hast received it free, give it also freely! It is a great thing to be able to call others under the blessings of the New Covenant, and it is to be hoped - although we cannot see many positive fruits yet, since this could take a long, long time - that the word of Jeremiah 32 may be relevant to us together with many natives which says: "And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them".

Let us take this word with us, everyone to his own congregation.

Then we will continuously enjoy this aspect of living under God's covenant of grace and our unity in the Lord Jesus Christ will be shared even when the ninth Synod of our Churches will be finished indeed.

The assessor thanks the president for the good and calm presiding in the meetings of the Synod.

The president thanks for the good reception and the care of the Synod members.

Article 51

CLOSING OF THE SESSION

The president reads Ephesians 4:1-7, whereafter we sing Psalm 133 and the president closes in prayer.

The session is adjourned.

NORMING SESSION OF SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28th

Article 52

REOPENING

The president reopens the meeting. We sing Ps. 52:7, the president reads Philipians 1:1-11 and leads in prayer.

Article 53

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE DEPUTIES

The following instructions are given to the respective deputies:

Church keeping the Archives: instructions are given for the archivaris e.g. concerning giving certain pieces of importance for examination (see Art. 33 of these Acts).

Spiritual Support of military service men:

1. Taking care of the members that are in military service as well as possible.
2. reporting of the contacts with the home churches of these members, for example concerning "home visits" made.
3. take heed of the in article 25 stated words: the opinion was voiced at the meeting, that in the future the Churches should avoid opposing the sending out of our boys who are called to areas where the Australian forces are required.

It is remarked that financial support for travelling costs of military men to come to Launceston is the responsibility of the home Church.

Correspondence with the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia:

to continue with the contact with this Church and report to the Churches (see art. 26 of these Acts).

Churchbook in the English language:

to work for a responsible Churchbook in the English language, especially to change the hymn section as it is now set up in the proof collection in the manner indicated by previous synods. (see Art. 22 and 46 of these Acts).

Training for the Ministry of the Word:

1. to revise the rules for the examination of candidates in theology within six months and to come to the Churches with a proposal. (see Art. 19 of these Acts)
2. the execution of art. 12 of these Acts concerning setting up a fund for support to students after the rules of art. 19 Church Order.
3. the execution of the decisions made in art. 13 of these Acts.

Synod treasurer:

1. to table a written report at the next Synod.

2. to provide the Churches with an outline of receipts and expenditures as soon as possible.
3. to have his books and documents audited by the Church of Launceston which shall report to the next Synod.

Mission work in Albany:

to remain diligent regarding setting up foster homes (see art. 38 of these Acts).

Mission work in Armadale:

1. to act as calling and appointing Church for the missionwork
2. to act as the addressing Church for the missionwork in the Free Reformed Churches of Australia
3. to execute the decision made concerning the appointment of a fulltime missionworker in Pinjarra (see art. 34 of these Acts).

Correspondence with foreign sister-Churches:

1. to bring to the attention of the Churches those items from the correspondence with the foreign sister-Churches which are of importance to the Churches of Australia.
2. to forward two copies of the Acts of this Synod to the foreign sister-Churches.
3. to inform the foreign sister-Churches of the place and the time of the next Synod, and to send the preliminary agenda to them at least six weeks prior to the commencement of that Synod.
4. to inform the Dutch sister-Churches of the decision made under a. and b. in the beginning of article 42 of these Acts concerning correspondence with the Dutch Churches.
5. to continue the attempts to come to correspondence with the "Presbyterian Church in Korea".
6. to be diligent in seeking contact with those Churches which are faithful to the Scriptures, and to see if we can enter into correspondence with them (see also article 42, of these Acts).
7. to inform the foreign sister-Churches about the decision of Synod 1970 stated in art. 35 of the Acts of Synod 1970, "that it is desirable that foreign sister-Churches, when they enter into correspondence with other Churches, urge the latter to try - as a consequence of this correspondence - to contact those sister-Churches in the world that are living in a relation of correspondence with the first mentioned Churches."
8. to inform the sister-Churches of the request, named in art. 42 of these Acts, regarding keeping our Churches informed.
9. execution of the decision in art. 42 of these Acts concerning possible changes in the Church Order and Liturgical Forms in the Dutch sister-Churches.
10. to inform the Churches as soon as an invitation of announcement of a coming Synod of one of the sister-Churches comes in, so that the Churches may determine if one of the office bearers is able to represent our Churches there (see art. 18 of these Acts).

11. inform the Dutch Churches of the decision concerning the Church at Pretoria as mentioned in Article 45 of these Acts.
12. to report to the Churches three months before the next Synod and also to the Synod itself.

The c o n v e n i n g C h u r c h : the convening Church is asked to inform the deputies of the time limit of their reports at least one half year before the Synod is to be convened.

Multiple copies of all r e p o r t s are to be made and sent to the Churches in the Dutch and the English languages, at least three months before the start of the next Synod, unless otherwise stipulated in the instructions to the deputies.

Article 54

ACTS

The Acts are adopted

Article 55

APPENDICES

The insertion of the appendices are arranged.

Article 56

ARTICLE 41 C.O.

There is no business concerning art. 41 C.O.

In the personal question period one of the deputies asks after the withdrawal of the proposal-adoption from the agenda. Armadale answers that the Church Council was not able to come to a decision and wants to study information from the Netherlands.

An elder deputy from the Church of Launceston asks what to do in case of a request for baptism of an adopted child in that congregation.

Article 57

ARTICLE 43 C.O.

There is no business according to article 43 C.O.

Article 58

PRESS REPOPT

The press report is fixed

Article 59

CLOSING

The president speaks a few closing words, voices the prayer that the work of the Synod will be a blessing to the Churches; reads Phil.4:4-9. We sing Ps.135:12. Br. H. Terpstra leads in prayer. The president, Rev. G. van Rongen closes the Synod.

APPENDIX II

SYNOD ARMADALE 1972
OF
THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA

Armadale, 28th October, 1972.

To the Australian Council of Reformed Churches,
C/- Rev. W. R. McEwen B.A.,
2 Swindon Grove,
McKinnon, Victoria 3204.

Dear Sirs,

Synod 1972 of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia has received and discussed the letter written by your secretary Rev. W. R. McEwen on behalf of your Council.

In response we must indeed say, that our objections mainly concern the past correspondence between our Churches and the Reformed Churches of Australia, and the fact that the latter maintain a sister-relationship with the "Gereformeerde Kerken" of the Netherlands, and her membership of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, hereafter called the R.E.S.

We regret to say that we find that your Council appears to be misinformed. It seems to be unknown to you, that the "First Ecumenical Synod", which was held in the year 1946 at Grand Rapids, U.S.A. - contrary to what your secretary wrote to us - has indeed taken sides in the conflict that incurred in the Churches in the Netherlands. This Synod made a statement on the Church-political aspect of the conflict which condemned the actions of those who were liberated by the Lord from the sins which the said Churches committed, and also approved a certain formula, the so-called "Substitutionary Declaration of 1946", which played a prominent role in the conflict.

It also seems to be unknown to you that - contrary to what your secretary wrote us - the Christian Reformed Churches in the U.S.A. and also the "Die Gereformeerde Kerke" in South-Africa have taken sides indeed by opening correspondence with the "Synodical Churches" in the Netherlands and refusing to continue the relationship of sister-Churches with those Churches that were and remained the "Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland", which are today our sister-Churches in this country.

The issue of the conflict was not just a quarrel, but a very serious affair, which indeed concerns the fundamentals of faith. To make this clear to you we may refer you to article 7 of the Belgic Confession of Faith - which is accepted by many members of the R.E.S. and also by some members of your A.C.R.C. This article states, that man's writings should not be equal to the Godly Scriptures, because all men are liars from themselves and more vain than vanity itself. "Therefore we reject with all

our hearts whatsoever does not agree with the infallible rule which the apostles have taught us, saying: Prove the spirits, whether they are of God". In the Netherlands a very serious situation arose when the Synod of the said Churches issued certain doctrinal statements which were not in accordance with the Word of God and therefore to be rejected as "man's writings". You may understand now why we put a question mark behind the sentence in your letter which says: As far as we know, all our present member-Churches do this", namely basing themselves on the Reformed Confession and in practice adhering to them. When the Reformed Churches of Australia still consider the "synodical" churches of the Netherlands as faithful churches of the Lord they deviate from their own official Confession. And the R.E.S., having taken sides in the conflict, does the same thing as far as its basis is concerned.

We also once more like to stress the point as raised in the letter of Synod 1970 about the present development in the "synodical" churches in the Netherlands. They have deviated even further from the faithfulness to the Word of God. The last Synod of the said Churches did not even advise their Churches to call teachers like Dr. Kuitert, Dr. Augustijn, Dr. Wiersinga, etc. to order by way of Church-discipline, but decided to continue "the discussion" with them.

It is to be regretted that the R.E.S. of Sydney did not take a firm stand in this respect.

Which makes it clear to us that in the present situation there is no reason at all to join your Council, but on the contrary, there is reason to stay away from it for the sake of the true unity of the Churches of Christ.

As soon as your Council will open the way to this Scriptural Unity we will certainly seriously consider another invitation to join.

The LORD may guide you in considering this letter.

On behalf of Synod Armadale 1972:

Chairman: Rev. G. van Rongen

2nd Clerk: J.A. Diek

2nd Clerk:
J.A. Diek
22 Sinclair Street,
ALBANY..W.A..6330.