

ACTS OF THE 13TH SYNOD OF THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA  
HELD AT KELMSCOTT, WESTERN AUSTRALIA,  
FROM MAY 14TH TO MAY 24TH, 1983.

---

**Saturday 14th May - Evening Session**

Article 1

OPENING

On behalf of the convening Church of Kelmscott Rev. Dr S.G. Hur opens the meeting and requests those present to sing Psalm 16 : 1, 3 & 4, after which he reads Ephesians 4 : 1 - 13 and leads in prayer.

He then addresses the delegates with the following words:

"Dear brothers and sisters,

"I welcome you to the opening of the thirteenth Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia. I count it a privilege to welcome you, the brothers delegates, on behalf of the convening church. We are thankful that all the delegates have safely arrived in time, especially the delegates who had to come across the continent from as far as distant Launceston.

"As we gather here tonight, we thankfully notice God's rich blessings which were showered upon our churches in this country. Our churches have no more than thirty years' history, but the God of grace has richly blessed us, so that we could maintain our identity in the midst of changing circumstances and witness a steady growth in number. This Synod, I say in all modesty, will be the largest of the Synods we have ever had in this country. We are grateful for God's blessings on our churches. Of course, we realize that we have yet a comparatively small number of churches, but we know that the value of existence does not lie in quantity. The truth and Reformed heritage which we uphold makes the existence of our churches meaningful on this continent.

"As the people of God, we are going through a perilous time today. The churches of the Lord are continually threatened by many evil streams, and there are many who are doctrinally liberal. By these people God's infallible Word and historical Confessions are woefully ignored and abandoned. The seriousness of the time demands a close co-operation and mutual assistance between the churches more than ever. We are thankful to have the bond of sister churches and to manifest it by the means of this major assembly, the Synod.

"Our Reformed fathers have always emphasized the importance of the local church. Every local church is a manifestation of the body of Christ, and every local church is a complete church. She is fully responsible for keeping the church pure and true, warding off heresies and impure practices. On the other hand, however, our Reformed fathers have never ignored the importance of the unity of the true Churches. They have in all means endeavoured to manifest the unity of the churches of the Lord, so they have laid a great emphasis on the bond of churches. We are reminded of some

historical examples of how eagerly they have sought after the bond of the churches. Sojourning as refugees in foreign countries, our Reformed forefathers had called an ecclesiastical meeting in Emden in 1571. The Churches of England, Germany and Holland were invited, and the delegates laid the foundation of the bond of the sister churches. Under a great persecution and threat, the churches in France called for their first national Synod in 1559. The churches in Scotland also have convened their first General Synod in 1560 under extremely difficult circumstances.

"It is striking that the early Reformed fathers even had the idea of an ecumenical Synod (synodus oecumenica) which includes all the Reformed churches in the whole world. This idea was not realized because of the various difficulties in that time. Nevertheless, we notice from this exemplification how our Reformed fathers had stressed the importance of the bond between the churches, and thus of the unity of the churches of the Lord.

"We take our stand on the same historical line. This Synod is a clear manifestation of the bond of the sister churches in this country. There are many matters of common interest and concern for the churches. The delegates gather here to study, discuss and make decisions, if necessary, for the well-being of the churches. Although all the matters on the agenda are equally important, some of them are eagerly anticipated by the churches to come to a definite step. It is now high time to make a decision on which Bible version our churches should adopt officially. The matter of the revision of the Church Order is also to be rounded up in some way. Further important matters concerning Mission, the Book of Praise, the Church Book, the International Conference of Reformed Churches, etc., will be dealt with.

"It is a coincidence that this General Synod is held between the Ascension Day and Pentecost. Our Lord ascended into heaven in order to execute His authority by sending His Spirit and gathering His Church. From Pentecost until today He has been gathering His people into His Church by employing men's services. Our being together as churches in this Synod today is also a direct result of Christ's Ascension and a gift of our living Lord.

"Our Lord gives wisdom to all who ask. The delegates must realize that they are sent for the cause of His Church, and they must also be confident of His guidance. It is a pleasure for brothers to come together and discuss matters for the benefit of the Church of the Lord. Perhaps there will be some fiery discussions and tense moments. Brothers delegate, let us all be willing to listen and comprehend each other in all humility and patience in obedience to the Word of God's grace and to the guidance of His Spirit. We are certain that the Lord will provide all the delegates with necessary wisdom and strength to perform the task properly and in accordance with His Word, for the edification and welfare of the Church of Christ.

"May this Synod be a great blessing for the Churches of the Lord in this country. May the Lord guide us in all things by His Spirit and bless us in our work.

"With these words, I declare the thirteenth Synod of the Free Reformed Churches in Australia opened."

Rev. Hur then invites the meeting to sing Psalm 133 : 1 & 2.

## Article 2

### CREDENTIALS

Rev. Dr S. G. Hur calls upon the brothers S.H. Terpstra and J. Numan to examine the credentials. They report that the following delegates are present with proper credentials:

From the Church of Albany:

Elder J. Diek  
Elder L. 't Hart  
Rev. L.J. Joosse

From the Church of Armadale:

Rev. K. Bruning  
Elder W. Buist  
Elder A. Slobe

From the Church of Kelmscott:

Rev. Dr. S.G. Hur  
Elder J. Numan  
Elder S.H. Terpstra

From the Church of Launceston:

Elder J. Alberts  
Rev. K. Jonker  
Elder S. Reitsema

## Article 3

### MODERAMEN

The following officers are elected by ballot:

Chairman:	Rev. K. Bruning
Assessor:	Rev. L.J. Joosse
First Clerk:	Elder S.H. Terpstra
Second Clerk:	Rev. K. Jonker

Synod is then adjourned to give the Moderamen the opportunity to arrange a time schedule and set rules of procedure.

#### Article 4

##### CONSTITUTION OF SYNOD

The Chairman, Rev. K. Bruning, calls the meeting to order and declares the Synod constituted.

#### Article 5

##### AGREEMENT WITH THE THREE FORMS OF UNITY

The Chairman requests the delegates to testify to their agreement with the Three Forms of Unity by rising from their seats. All delegates comply with this request.

#### Article 6

##### RULES OF PROCEDURE

The following rules of Procedures are agreed to:

- (a) there will be no smoking during sessions;
- (b) incoming correspondence received after this declaration is made will not be dealt with by Synod;
- (c) daily closing of Synod will be conducted by delegates in alphabetical order;
- (d) deputies are requested to attend the sessions when their report is being discussed;
- (e) amendments, motions and proposals shall be submitted in writing.

#### Article 7

##### ADOPTION OF AGENDA OF SYNOD

The chairman advises the delegates that there are two items of incoming correspondence to be added to the list contained in their files:

- (a) letter from Rev. K. Jonker - re peremptoir exam;
- (b) letter from the Reformed Churches of Australia: Classis Western Australia.

This last letter was addressed to the Free Reformed Churches of Australia c/o Box 12 P.O. Armadale. Copies were sent to the four Churches.

Moderamen proposes not to admit this letter into the Agenda for Synod for the following reasons:

- (a) it is not addressed to the Synod;

- (b) it did not arrive early enough for the various Church councils to study and discuss it.

Synod decides to postpone a decision on whether or not to admit this letter to the Agenda till Monday.

Synod then adopts the Provisional Agenda submitted by the convening Church as the agenda for the Synod.

#### AGENDA

- 1) Opening.
- 2) Examination of Credentials.
- 3) Elections of Officers.
- 4) Consitution of Synod.
- 5) Agreement with the Three Forms of Unity.
- 6) Adoption of Agenda for Synod.
- 7) Adoption of Procedures (Schedule of Meetings).
- 8) Incoming correspondence:
  - (a) from Rev. L.J. Joosse re Church Visitation;
  - (b) from Rev. L. J. Joosse re Contact Reformed Churches of Australia;
  - (c) from Rev. L.J. Joosse re Acts of Synod 1980;
  - (d) from Rev. L.J. Joosse re Special Ecclesiastical Meeting of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia;
  - (e) Letter and Acts of Special Ecclesiastical Meeting of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia;
  - (f) from W. Dekker re Contact Reformed Churches;
  - (g) from Br. and Sr. Braam re Contact Reformed Churches;
  - (h) from M. Vermeulen re Contact Reformed Churches;
  - (i) from P. 't Hart re Future Mission Task;
  - (j) from J. Eikelboom re International Conference;
  - (k) from Church of Kelmscott re International Conference;
  - (l) from Church of Kelmscott re Appointment of Deputies;
  - (m) from Church of Albany re Decision of Armadale to cease Mission Activities;
  - (n) from J. Zuidema (Deputy for Correspondence of Abroad) re Conduct of fellow deputies;
  - (o) from Rev. K. Jonker re exam;
  - (p) from Reformed Churches of Australia: Classis Western Australia.
- 9) Reports:
  - (a) Church Visitation;

- (b) Deputies for Correspondence Abroad:
  - (i) Constituent Assembly of the International Conference of Reformed Churches;
  - (ii) General Report;
- (c) Deputies Church Book;
- (d) Deputies for English Bible Translation;
- (e) Revised Church Order for Free Reformed Churches of Australia;
- (f) Deputies for Ecclesiastical Ordinances;
- (g) Deputies for Training for the Ministry of the Word;
- (h) Deputies for Correspondence with the Government;
- (i) Deputies for Contact with the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia;
- (j) Archives of Synod;
- (k) Deputies Appeal to Presbyterian Reformed Church;
- (l) Librarian of Synod;
- (m) Deputies Study Mission Workers;
- (n) Mission (Armadale).

10) Proposals

From Albany:

- (a) Church Visitation.
- (b) Editing of Acts.
- (c) Formation of Classes.
- (d) Mission.
- (e) Subscription Form for ministers, elders and deacons.

From Kelmscott:

- (a) Synod Acts 1980 Article 21.
- (b) Synod Acts 1980 Article 39.

- 11) Auditing of the books and financial papers of the Treasurer.
- 12) Determination of the percentage figures<sup>a</sup> for the assessment of Synod expenditure among the Churches.
- 13) Appointment of deputies.
- 14) Appointment of the Convening Church and of the time and place of the next Synod.
- 15) Question according to Art. 41 of the Church Order.
- 16) Personal Question period.
- 17) Adoption of the Acts.
- 18) Adoption of the press release.
- 19) Censure according to Art. 43 of the Church Order.
- 20) Closure of the Synod.

## Article 8

### TIME SCHEDULE

The following schedule is adopted:

Morning Sessions	9.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon
Afternoon Sessions	2.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.
Evening Sessions	7.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m.

## Article 9

### SEQUENCE OF BUSINESS

In general the following sequence will be adhered to:

- 1) Matters pertaining to Doctrine.
- 2) Matters pertaining to Church Government.
- 3) Matters pertaining to the Churches and those with whom the Bond of Churches has contact.
- 4) Mission.

Some variation to this sequence may eventuate to allow matters of general interest to be dealt with in the evening sessions when congregation members are better able to attend.

The chairman invites the meeting to sing Psalm 79 : 5 and closes in prayer.

### **Monday 16th - Morning Session**

## Article 10

### OPENING

The chairman re-opens the meeting by inviting those present to sing Psalm 36 : 2 after which he leads in prayer and reads Isaiah 61.

All delegates are present.

## Article 11

The chairman suggests to invite Rev. van Rongen as Advisor to the Synod.

After some discussion the suggestion is voted on.

Decided is to verbally invite Rev. van Rongen as advisor to Synod.

## Article 12

### BIBLE TRANSLATION

The Report re English Bible Translation is tabled. Br. A. Plug, in his capacity as deputy, is invited to join in the discussion.

### Observations

- 1) The Committee on Bible Translation was given the mandate by Synod 1980 to concentrate on the collection of data.
- 2) The Committee was of the opinion that it should make a recommendation to the Synod as:
  - a) the language of the K.J.V. is outdated and is consequently difficult to understand by many church members;
  - b) among the congregation many different versions are used. Synod should give guidance on this matter.
- 3) Trinitarian Bible Society stays with the Greek text accepted by our churches in the 16th century.
- 4) The recommendations of the committee pertain to the 1971 edition of the R.S.V. only.
- 5) Due to lack of expertise and time the committee was unable to make a chapter to chapter examination. Instead they had to rely heavily on similar studies done by our Canadian Sister Churches during recent years.
- 6) The Canadian Sister Churches refer to the R.S.V. in their church book.
- 7) While the use of the words "You" and "Your" for God and Jesus Christ is not necessarily incorrect, there are many people in the churches who feel that this would be irreverent.
- 8) Deputies are not completely satisfied with any of the translations studied.

### Considerations

- 1) The Committee has fulfilled its mandate in that it has collected data from various sources on the various translations. It has gone somewhat beyond its mandate in recommending the R.S.V. for use in our own Churches.
- 2) During the course of its studies the Committee has made extensive use of the writings of Prof. J. van Bruggen. They conclude that, because some editions are translated by believing translators, this does not necessarily mean that those editions are the best editions.

- 3) While the Trinitarian Bible Society does adhere to the accepted original text its dogma has in some instances noticeably influenced the translation.
- 4) R.S.V. has made several changes in the 1791 edition as a result of advice given to the publishers by our sister churches.
- 5) As we use the Church Book produced by our Canadian Sister Churches it is advisable to use the same Bible Translation, if possible.
- 6) A decision by the Synod to recommend the R.S.V. does not necessarily mean that the K.J.V. can no longer be used in the Churches.

The chairman adjourns the meeting for lunch.

#### **Monday 16th - Afternoon Session**

##### Article 13

##### **BIBLE TRANSLATION**

The chairman re-opens the meeting.

After some discussion Synod charges a committee, consisting of the Deputies for Bible Translation, to reformulate the recommendations contained in the report and to present these to a later session.

##### Article 14

##### **ARTICLE 5 OF CHURCH ORDER**

- a) A proposal to change the word 'consistory' to 'church council' throughout the Church Order is tabled.

##### Motivation

- 1) In the English speaking world the word 'consistory' has a specific meaning which is not the same as Church Council. The latter denotes a specific form of church government which is only to be found in the Reformed Churches.
- 2) Article 30 of the Belgic Confession also speaks of 'Church Council'. This article refers to 1 Cor. 14 : 40. The use of the term 'consistory' breaks the tie between the Church Order, and Belgic Confession and this text.

Points raised

The word 'consistory' is used consistently throughout the forms contained in Canada's new church book.

DEFEATED

It is proposed to change the words 'church service' to 'public worship service'.

Motivation

In other articles the term 'public worship service' is used.

DEFEATED

The consequence of this decision is that the term 'church service' will be used consistently throughout the Church Order. Where 'public worship service' or 'worship service' has been used in the draft this will be changed.

Article 16

ARTICLE 18 OF CHURCH ORDER

This Article states that the churches shall maintain a Theological Seminary. It is proposed to amend this to read: "The Churches shall support and, if possible, maintain..."

Motivation

In its present form this Article compels the churches to carry out a duty which it is unable to do under the present circumstances. In the amended form it compels the churches to support the training for the Ministry of the Word while not removing the obligation to seek establishment of our own Theological Seminary when this becomes possible.

ADOPTED

The chairman adjourns the meeting.

**Monday 16th - Evening Session**

Article 17

The chairman re-opens the meeting and invites those present to sing Psalm 131.

He then announces that a telephone call to the secretary of the Western Australian Classis of the Reformed Churches has established that the letter

(see Article 7) was not addressed to this Synod. It was addressed and intended for the four local churches.

The chairman then reads two letters from the Canadian Sister Churches to the meeting:

- 1) a letter wishing the Lord's blessing over the work of this Synod;
- 2) a letter informing us of the time of their Synod and inviting us to attend their meetings if possible.

Decided is to write a reply from this Synod.

The chairman welcomes Br. J. Bruning, a Deputy for the Revision of the Church Order, and invites him to take part in the discussion.

#### Article 18

#### ARTICLE 22 OF CHURCH ORDER

It is proposed to add the word 'visit' to this Article to indicate that in their work in the congregation the deacons need to actually visit those who are in need.

ADOPTED

The chairman welcomes Br. H. Terpstra, the third deputy for the Revision of the Church Order, into the meeting.

#### Article 19

#### ARTICLE 26 OF CHURCH ORDER

This is a new article. In their deliberations the deputies could not reach agreement as to whether it should be included in the Church Order.

A lengthy discussion ensues.

#### Point raised

- 1) This article seems to bring a new element into the duty of the Church Council;
- 2) The wording of the Article is such that there are two very different interpretations of its meaning:
  - a) the first claims that the Church Council should see to it that any work of evangelization done by members of the congregation should be in accordance with the stated aim. This interpretation stresses the aim of evangelization;
  - b) the second view claims that the Article stresses that the

Church Council must see to it that the work of evangelization is actually done.

As the wording of the Article gave rise to a division of opinion it is proposed that:

- a) a decision as to its inclusion in the Church Order is postponed until the next Synod;
- b) deputies be charged to study this matter to determine
  - i) the aim of this article,
  - ii) the Scriptural basis for this article, and
  - iii) the use to which this Article is put by our sister churches;
- c) these deputies report to the next Synod.

ADOPTED

#### Article 20

#### ARTICLE 34 OF CHURCH ORDER

The proposal of the deputies to delete the words "his office shall cease when the Assembly is adjourned (or ends)" is tabled.

DEFEATED

The Article will read:

"... his task shall cease when the assembly ends."

#### Article 21

#### CLOSING

The chairman invites those present to sing Psalm 97 : 1 & 6 after which Brother J. Alberts leads in prayer.

The meeting is adjourned.

#### **Tuesday 17th - Morning Session**

#### Article 22

#### OPENING

The chairman invites those present to sing Psalm 96 : 1, 2 & 8 after which he leads in prayer. He then reads Ephesians 5 :15 - 33.

All delegates are present.

#### Article 23

##### ADOPTION OF ACTS AND PRESS REPORT

The Acts to Article 12 and the corresponding section of the Press Report are read and adopted.

Brother G. Brouwer, a deputy for the Church Book, is welcomed and invited to join in the discussion.

#### Article 24

##### NEW CHURCH BOOK - PSALM SECTION

In response to the question:

"To what extent have the Canadian Sister Churches accepted the New Psalm Section and Forms?"

brother Brouwer informs the meeting that:

- (a) the Psalm Section and Hymn Section have been completed;
- (b) the Liturgical Forms have not yet been completed;
- (c) no copies of the proposed new text of the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dordt have been received.

The proposal of the Deputies to accept the Psalm section is adopted.

#### Article 25

##### LITURGICAL FORMS

The chairman suggests:

- 1) to go through each form as listed in the report of the Deputies under point 'b' of their recommendation;
- 2) that brother Brouwer notes the points raised.

The following forms are then discussed:

- 1) Form for Baptism of Infants;
- 2) Form for Baptism of Adults;
- 3) Form for Public Profession of Faith;
- 4) Form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper;
- 5) Form for the Excommunication of Communicant Members;
- 6) Form for the Readmission into the Church of Christ;

- 7) Form for the Ordination of Ministers of the Word;
- 8) Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons;
- 9) Form for the Solemnization of Marriage.

The meeting is adjourned.

## **Tuesday 17th - Afternoon Session**

### Article 26

#### OPENING AND PRAYERS SECTION OF CHURCH BOOK

The chairman re-opens the meeting and asks brother Brouwer whether the deputies have considered the prayers as proposed for inclusion in the New Church Book. As this has not been done and some of the Church Councils have not discussed the prayers, a committee, consisting of the delegates from Albany, is appointed to study the Prayers and to report to a later session of Synod.

### Article 27

#### PROPOSAL RE LITURGICAL FORMS

Rev. Jonker tables the following proposal:

Synod:

observes that our deputies have thoroughly checked the forms (mentioned under b. and c. of the report) and that they recommend them for use in the churches;

considers that there are no compelling reasons to reject them;

decides

- 1) to adopt these forms on a provisional basis and to make a final decision after the next editions are available and leave it in the freedom of the churches for use;
- 2) to charge the deputies with the task to pass on the comments and proposed changes from our discussions at Synod to the deputies of the Canadian churches. If too late they are to be requested to consider them in their own report, to include our remarks as an appendix to their report to the forthcoming Synod of Cloverdale.

### Points raised

- 1) the wording of the proposal is not clear;

- 2) the proposal seems to contain an instruction to the Canadian deputies.

The proposal is DEFEATED

#### Article 28

##### PROPOSAL RE LITURGICAL FORMS

Rev. Bruning and Rev. Joesse table the following proposal:

To instruct our deputies:

- 1) to hand over our proposed amendments pertaining to the liturgical forms to the Canadian deputies and request them to consider our proposed amendments and pass them on to their forthcoming Synod;
- 2) to inform our churches about the decision of the Canadian Synod;
- 3) to serve our churches with advice about the tentative use of those liturgical forms;
- 4) to report to the next Synod.

ADOPTED

#### Article 29

##### AVAILABILITY OF CHURCH BOOK

The chairman reads the following note which has been passed to him during interval:

Revised Book of Praise will be available in 1985 according to letter from Canada (Mr. de Groot) to Albany Publication Committee.

#### Article 30

##### PROPOSAL OF THE ALBANY DELEGATES RE HYMN SECTION OF THE CHURCH BOOK

The Albany delegates table the following proposal:

Having dealt with the Hymn report of our deputies, who have thoroughly examined the Hymn section and have made their proposal in accordance to their mandate:

we observe

- 1) that the deputies are of the opinion that the hymns proposed by the Canadian deputies are not unscriptural;
- 2) that the deputies of Canada have established the number of Hymns;
- 3) that uniformity is desirable with the Canadian churches in regard to the Book of Praise;
- 4) that restrictions in the Hymn Section can cause confusion;

we consider

- 1) that all hymns can be sung in the worship service;
- 2) that there are no compelling reasons to differ from the Canadian churches pertaining to the Hymn section;
- 3) that sermons from Canadian churches are read in the public worship services;
- 4) that a guideline for restriction can cause subjective reasoning as for the melody and words;

we therefore propose

not to accept the deputies' recommendation and recommend the use of the new Hymn section in its entirety for the public worship service.

Points raised

- 1) In previous Synods the principle to emphasize the use of Psalms in preference to Hymns has been firmly established. This is because the Psalms are directly based on the inspired Word of God rather than on interpretation of God's Word.
- 2) This proposal does not necessarily mean that this balance is upset. The onus to ensure that it is maintained is up to the Ministers and the Church Councils of the local churches rather than the Synod.
- 3) While many Hymns may not be unscriptural, they may, nevertheless, be unsuitable for use in the Church services.
- 4) The mandate to the deputies was not to test all Hymns, but to select from those submitted.
- 5) The music should be based on Anglo-Genevan tunes in accordance with the title: Book of Praise -- Anglo-Genevan Psalter. Many Hymns do not comply with this criteria.

- 6) While many Hymns are not unscriptural, it has been recommended that they are deleted because they unnecessarily repeat the contents of the Psalms.

The proposal is DEFEATED

#### Article 31

##### PROPOSAL TO ADOPT HYMNS AS PER REPORT

It is proposed to adopt the recommendation of the Deputies pertaining to the acceptable list of Hymns to be sung in the Church services.

ADOPTED

#### Article 32

##### PROPOSAL TO ADD HYMNS TO THIS LIST

It is proposed to add Hymns 5, 10 and 46 to the list of Hymns acceptable for use in the church services.

The proposals for Hymns 5 and 46 are defeated and that for Hymn 10 is adopted.

#### Article 33

##### DISCHARGE OF DEPUTIES

The deputies are discharged. Synod commends them for the way they have fulfilled their mandate and have maintained contact with the churches throughout the period between the last and the present Synod.

#### Article 34

##### PROPOSAL TO INVESTIGATE POSSIBILITY OF A CHURCH BOOK FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CHURCHES

Br. S.H. Terpstra tables the following proposal:

#### Proposal

That deputies be charged with investigating:

- 1) the cost of producing a Church Book for the Free Reformed Churches of Australia;
- 2) whether Canada would give permission to produce parts of its Church Book with the alterations we deem necessary;

3) that they report to the next Synod.

That the decision to purchase the new Church Books be postponed until such information is available and a decision is made as to the necessity and desirability of pursuing this matter.

#### Motivation

The assumption that it is not possible is not sufficient basis to reject the possibility;

If necessary:

- 1) it would be possible to insert amendments;
- 2) it would free us from the obligation to automatically follow Canada's lead;
- 3) it would be possible to include our own Church Order instead of the Canadian one;
- 4) it would be possible to exclude those Hymns which are deemed undesirable for use in our churches.

#### Points raised

- 1) it could be an ideal situation but the possibility is doubtful;
- 2) it could be detrimental to the unity of the bond of Sister Churches which exists between the Canadian and Australian Churches to have a different Church Book;
- 3) it would be regrettable if it became necessary to reject all or parts of the Canadian Church Book to the extent that it became essential to compile a Church Book of our own.

The proposal is        **DEFEATED**

#### Article 35

##### PROPOSAL FOR BIBLE TRANSLATION TO ACCEPT R.S.V. (1971 EDITION)

The Deputies for Bible Translation table the following proposals:

The Deputies recommend that Synod, having received and considered the Report of the Deputies for Bible Translations:

#### Observes

- 1) that Synod 1956 of the Free Reformed Churches decided to adopt the King James Version (authorized) for use within the churches;

- 2) that later synods, having considered the outdated language of the King James Version, have appointed deputies to look for a suitable alternative translation;
- 3) that the Canadian sister churches have thoroughly evaluated the R.S.V. and have adopted it as the recommended version for use in their churches;
- 4) that the Canadian sister churches have decided to use it for scripture quotations for the creeds, confessions and liturgical forms used in their Church Book of which we make use;
- 5) that the R.S.V. is undergoing a process of revision, that the Translation Committee of the R.S.V. is receptive to suggestions for corrections, and that a new edition is planned for the future;

#### Considers

- 1) that the use of the King James Version in the churches is becoming increasingly problematic because of its outdated language;
- 2) that the R.S.V. (1971) is a reliable, accurate and acceptable translation of the Holy Scriptures, presented in clear, dignified, contemporary English, and suitable for use in public worship, instructional and family use;
- 3) that previous synods have voiced concern about the possibility of unreliable, modern translations being widely used within our congregations;

#### Decides

- 1) to rescind the decision of Synod 1956 (Acts, Art. 36) to recommend the K.J.V. for use in the churches;
- 2) to recommend to the churches the Revised Standard Version (1971 edition) for public worship, instruction, and family use;
- 3) that use of the K.J.V. be left to the freedom of the churches if acceptance of the R.S.V. meets with insurmountable objections, since the use of the one translation, while desirable, should not be compulsory;
- 4) to discharge present deputies and appoint new deputies to:
  - (a) monitor developments regarding the use of the R.S.V. within the churches and further work by the Translation Committee of the R.S.V.;

- (b) report developments to the next Synod;
- (c) maintain archives of relevant matter regarding Bible translations in order to facilitate the work of future deputies for Bible translations, should these be appointed.

UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED

Article 36

ARTICLE 40 OF CHURCH ORDER

The chairman re-opens the discussion. The translation of this Article in the Church Order is to be changed in such a way that the impression that the deacons are subordinate to the consistory is removed. Reference is made to the words in the Dutch original 'beleid' and 'beheer'.

The meeting is adjourned till 7.00 p.m.

**Tuesday 17th - Evening Session**

Article 37

ARTICLE 41 OF CHURCH ORDER

The chairman re-opens the meeting by inviting those present to sing Psalm 97 : 1 & 6.

It is decided to discuss the articles directly related to the classis in conjunction with the proposal from Albany pertaining to the same subject. Special attention will then be given to the note of the deputies which suggest that meetings of classes should be once per year rather than every three months.

Article 38

ARTICLE 43 OF CHURCH ORDER

It is noted that the deputies have deliberately chosen this wording in order to place the initiative for choosing a counsellor on the vacant church rather than in the classis.

ADOPTED

Article 39

ARTICLE 46 OF CHURCH ORDER

It is proposed to replace the term 'Reformed' by 'Three Forms of Unity'.

Motivation

- 1) While it is understood that for the purpose of this Church Order these two terms are synonymous, recent debates seem to have made the meaning of the term 'Reformed' when used in relation to other churches more obscure.
- 2) There are many other Creeds which originate from the period of the Reformation. While these creeds are undoubtedly Reformed in this sense, the fact that they are scriptural in every sense has never been established by the Synods of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia.

DEFEATED

Article 40

ARTICLE 47 OF CHURCH ORDER

The question is raised why censure should be exercised only at the end of a Synod meeting. It is pointed out that this does not preclude that censure is carried out during the meetings if and when necessary. This Article has definite value in times when there are difficulties in the Church.

The article is adopted as it has been presented.

Article 41

ARTICLE 60 OF CHURCH ORDER

It is proposed to delete the word "...after making the required announcement to the congregation".

Motivation

- 1) This practice has never been followed;
- 2) There seems to be no real necessity for its implementation.

Points raised

An attestation is given with the consent of all church members.

DEFEATED

.../22

Article 42

ARTICLE 63 OF CHURCH ORDER

Some discussion ensues on the recommendation of the deputies to insert the words "...preferably in the afternoon services".

It is pointed out that the second service on the Sunday has a different nature to the first one. In character it is basically a confession of faith.

The recommendation of the deputies is adopted.

Article 43

ARTICLE 66 OF CHURCH ORDER

The deputies' recommendations to delete the words "...by which churches are affected" is adopted.

Before it ends, Synod will appoint a Church to fulfil the requirements of this Article.

Those present are invited to sing Psalm 130 : 2 after which brother Buist closes in prayer.

The meeting is adjourned.

**Wednesday 18th - Morning Session**

Article 44

OPENING

The chairman opens the meeting and invites those present to sing Hymn 51 : 1 & 4 after which he leads in prayer. He then reads Psalm 87.

The Acts up to Article 35 and the relevant section of the Press Report are read and adopted.

It is decided to instruct Br. Brouwer, the deputy for the Church Book, to present Synod with the list of points raised under Article 25 for inclusion into these Acts as our Appendix. (See Appendix 2).

All delegates are present.

Article 45

ARTICLE 81 OF CHURCH ORDER

The chairman re-opens the discussion on the Church Order and invites

comments on Article 81.

Points raised

- 1) This article is worded too strongly because it does not allow any freedom to deviate from the Church Order where and when this becomes essential.
- 2) The Church Order should be diligently upheld by the Churches. The Spirit of each article must be carefully upheld in each of the Churches in its own situation.
- 3) The Church Order should be binding on the Churches. Any changes should only be done in the Bond of Churches and not by local churches on their own. Reference is made in this respect to Article 38 of Synod 1954. In this way it is ensured that churches cannot go their own way in an independent way.

Rev. Hur tables the following proposal as an amendment to Article 81:

The Churches are to diligently observe the articles of this Church Order as long as they have not been changed by a Synod.

ADOPTED

Article 46

ADOPTION OF REVISED CHURCH ORDER

Having adopted the articles 1 - 81, with the exception of Art. 26 on evangelism, of the proposed Church Order Revision, Synod instructs a committee to thoroughly examine the linguistic aspects of those articles incorporating the changes raised by Synod so as to be able to finalize its text.

Deputies are thanked and discharged.

Article 47

REPORT OF DEPUTIES FOR ECCLESIASTICAL CONTACT

After some discussion the proposals of the deputies are put to the vote.

- 1) That the appointed classes be reminded of the Rules for Correspondence with Foreign Sister Churches and in particular the rules relating to the admittance of Minister from outside the bond of Churches. That the classes be directed only to admit such ministers after submitting them to a colloquium doctum in accordance with the resolutions of the Dutch Sister Churches Synod

1893 Art. 165, Synod 1927, Art. 161, and Synod 1936, Art. 122 (1-4).

ADOPTED

- 2) The repeated calling of the same minister during the same vacancy will not occur without the prior advice of classis.

ADOPTED

The deputies are discharged and thanked for the work they have done.

#### Article 48

##### FORM OF SUBSCRIPTION FOR MINISTERS, ELDERS AND DEACONS

The chairman invites comment on the proposed form of subscription for Ministers, and second form for Elders and Deacons.

#### Points raised

- 1) At present the various churches do not have the same forms.
- 2) These forms are better because they differentiate between the task of the ministers and elders.
- 3) The basic content of the forms are the same as the existing ones. These forms are, however, more specific in that they stipulate what should be done in cases where there is a difference of opinion.
- 4) The Subscription forms enhance the ideas contained in the separate forms of the ordination for the different offices.
- 5) Voting should be confined to content and intent. If accepted the forms will be re-structured into contemporary English.
- 6) The word 'cheerfully' in both forms will be changed to 'willingly'.

The two Subscription Forms are put to the vote.

Both are adopted.

#### Article 49

##### ECCLESIASTICAL CERTIFICATES

It is proposed to appoint deputies to translate the Ecclesiastical Certificates as per Articles 5, 6 and 11 of the (old) Church Order.

ADOPTED

The meeting is adjourned for lunch.

**Wednesday 18th - Afternoon Session**

Article 50

**REPORT - TRAINING FOR MINISTRY OF THE WORD**

The chairman re-opens the meeting and tables the Report for Training for the Ministry of the Word.

Considerations

- 1) Article 70 point 9 of the Acts of Synod 1978 instructs the deputies to continue the fund for support of students.
- 2) Article 20 of the Acts of Synod 1980 instructs deputies to request the churches to provide funds when necessary.
- 3) The Churches should not accumulate funds for this type of purpose. The money should be raised when required.
- 4) As there are no students requiring funds at the present moment this need has not been established by the report.

The proposal of the deputies:

To instruct new deputies to charge the churches yearly \$5.00 (five dollars) per confessing member till next Synod to increase their fund for future demands.

is put to the vote.

DEFEATED

The second proposal of the deputies:

To instruct new deputies to draft guidelines, rules and regulations for executing financial aid, to be presented to next Synod for approval.

is then put to the vote.

UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED

Deputies are thanked for their work and discharged.

Article 51

CHURCH ORDER

The chairman reports that a sub-committee consisting of the brothers P. 't Hart and A. Terpstra has been set up to:

- 1) implement the decision of the Synod pertaining to the Draft of the Church Order;
- 2) examine the linguistic aspects of this draft;
- 3) report to a later session of Synod.

Article 52

DEPUTIES: ARTICLE 26 OF CHURCH ORDER

The instructions for Deputies to study Article 26 of the Church Order are tabled. These read:

- 1) The deputies will examine:
  - (a) the aim of the article;
  - (b) the scriptural basis for this article;
  - (c) the use to which this article is put by our sister churches.
- 2) Deputies will report to the next Synod.

ADOPTED

Article 53

DEPUTIES - REPORT FOR CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE GOVERNMENT

Considerations

- 1) Deputies should have clear instructions.
- 2) Having deputies for the same task who live so far apart makes the execution of their task difficult.

Synod decides to appoint a sub-committee consisting of the delegates from Launceston to:

- 1) construct clear instructions for deputies for this task;
- 2) report to a later session of Synod.

The deputies are thanked for their work and are discharged.

Article 54

SYNOD ACTS 1980

The chairman tables the following for discussion:

- 1) Letter from Rev. Joosse re Acts of Synod 1980.
- 2) Proposal from the Free Reformed Church of Kelmscott re Synod Acts 1980, Article 34.

In the discussion objection is raised against some statements contained in the second part of the letter from Rev. Joosse. In response to this the second half of the letter is withdrawn. This is noted with thankfulness.

The proposal of the Free Reformed Church of Kelmscott:

to appoint deputies to re-state and re-formulate the Rules thus providing them with greater clarity and statement of intent

is put to the vote.

ADOPTED

The second proposal:

to amend Article 1 of the Rules of Synod substituting 'May' for 'January'

is similarly dealt with.

ADOPTED

As the third proposal is associated with the proposal of Albany to form Classes, it is deferred until a later session of Synod when this subject will be dealt with.

Article 55

RULES OF SYNOD

The letter from the Free Reformed Church of Kelmscott re the failure to adhere to the rules of Synod, and the appointment of deputies, is tabled.

- 1) For these reasons the Church of Kelmscott requests Synod to:
  - (a) re-confirm its commitment to the Rules of Synod as published in Synod Acts 1980, Appendix II;

- (b) ensure adherence and compliance with the stipulations as stated in the Rules.

UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED

- 2) While it is conceded that Synods are limited in the selection of Deputies due to our relatively small numbers, we have resolved to request Synod to:
  - (a) strive to honour the spirit of Article 49 of the Church Order and delegate deputorial assignments and responsibilities over as wide a cross section of church members as possible;
  - (b) emphasize the requirement that Deputies must submit their required reports within the time limit imposed by the Rules for Synod;
  - (c) seek objectivity and fairness in the appointment of Deputies as indicated by Article 49 of the Church Order.

UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED

#### Article 56

#### EDITING OF ACTS 1980

The proposal from the Free Reformed Church of Albany is tabled.

#### Considerations

- 1) Many of the Articles contained in these Acts lack clarity in detail and intent.
- 2) That future Acts of Synod should contain more detail so that ambiguity is prevented.

ADOPTED

Brother S.H. Terpstra tables the following proposal:

That the request to:

revise the Acts 1980 (or) to make an addition to it in order that these acts will be acta synodalis

be declared inadmissible.

#### Motivation

The Acts of any previous Synod can never be rewritten because:

- 1) the Synod ceases to exist when it has completed its agenda;

- 2) each Synod adopts the Acts for that Synod.

ADOPTED

### Article 57

#### ACTS OF SYNOD 1980 - ARTICLE 21

The chairman tables the proposals of the Free Reformed Church of Kelmscott pertaining to Article 21 of Acts of Synod 1980.

#### Considerations

- 1) People who leave one of the local churches in Australia to live in the area designated to the care of another church should remain in the care of the church from which they come.
- 2) People who come from overseas to live in areas which are far from one of the local churches are just as remote for our churches as from the churches of their origin.
- 3) In The Netherlands some churches are appointed to care for scattered members who live in countries where there is no church.
- 4) Church Councils are able to judge each individual case on its merits. This is stated in Article 27 of Synod 1959 which states that Church Councils can determine whether or not to accept attestations of scattered members.

#### Points raised

- 1) The problem seems to be in the word 'borderlines'. This does not mean that the areas designated to a church are just another part of that church's area of normal supervision.
- 2) Attestations from sister churches should be received.
- 3) Supervision and church discipline are possible through correspondence.
- 4) Pastoral care can be exercised in the same manner.
- 5) It is our responsibility to look after our own country.

The proposal from the Free Reformed Church of Kelmscott:

to rescind Article 21, Subsection 3, which reads:

"Borderlines between congregations (Acts 1959, Art. 37):

Albany:	South Australia and the South Coast of W.A.
Armadale:	Queensland and the South West of W.A.

Kelmscott: North of W.A., Northern Territory, Papua  
New Guinea.  
Launceston: Victoria, New South Wales, A.C.T."

is put to the vote.

DEFEATED

The second proposal of the Church of Kelmscott is then put to the vote.  
This proposal reads:

that each of the Churches maintain contact with those of its  
members who decide to reside in areas which place them  
outside the effective fellowship of the communion of saints.

ADOPTED

Rev. Joesse tables the following proposal:

Proposal regarding the decision of Acts 1980, Article 21:

- 1) to have the name 'Papua New Guinea' deleted as it is  
another country;
- 2) to replace the word 'borderline' with the phrase 'areas  
under the care of'.

ADOPTED

The chairman adjourns the meeting.

## **May 18th - Evening Session**

### Article 58

#### RELATIONSHIP WITH SISTER CHURCHES AND OTHER CHURCHES

The chairman opens the meeting and invites those present to sing Psalm  
84 : 3 & 5.

As Rev. K. Bruning is a deputy for Contact with Churches Abroad, he  
invites Rev. L.J. Joesse to chair the meetings dealing with this subject.

Brother J. Bonker is invited to join in the discussion.

Rev. L.J. Joesse proposes:

not to admit the letter from the Church of Kelmscott.

### Motivation

- 1) The request of the Church Council of Kelmscott to defer coming to

a decision on whether or not to join in with an International Conference is based on the argument that there is insufficient material available to come to a decision on this matter.

- 2) This material is to be presented by the deputies to the Synod. Thus Synod should decide whether there is sufficient information to come to such a decision.

#### Points raised

- 1) The reason for the request of the Church Council of Kelmscott is not the fact that there is insufficient material but that there is much unrest and even division in that church over this matter. The unity in that church is at stake.
- 2) The Church Council should substantiate the claim that this is so.

This the delegates refuse to do on the grounds that such an evaluation is the task of the Church Council and not of the Synod. Synod must accept the evaluation of a Church Council of the local church of the situation in the church.

The proposal is ADOPTED

#### Article 59

THE PROCEDURE WHICH HAS LED TO THE MEETING OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

#### Points raised

- 1) Why was the information pertaining to this meeting not received until January 1982?

While it is regrettable that there was so much haste this was unavoidable because the deputies did not receive the information from their counterparts in The Netherlands any earlier.

- 2) Why did it take such a long time for the deputies to reply to Albany's request for information?

Some of the information had to be gained from other sources. The deputies acknowledge that it is regrettable that they did not reply earlier.

- 3) In the light of the information received how is it possible that the Rapport van de deputaten voor de Correspondentie met de buitenlandse kerken aan de generale Synode van de Gereformeerde Kerken Arnhem 1981 states (p. 26) that the Australian deputies have at that date already

received this proposal and have responded positively to their request to send delegates to the meeting?

This information is not correct. The only information deputies had received prior to January 1982 was a brief outline which was submitted to Synod 1980 (Art. 30 : 3). This outline spoke only of sister churches.

A proposal to endorse the actions of the deputies will be tabled at a later session.

#### Article 60

#### REPORT RE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY (C.A.) OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES (I.C.R.C.)

The report of the deputies pertaining to their visit to the Constituent Assembly of the International Conference and the letter of brother J. Eikelboom about the same subject is tabled.

#### Points raised

The report of the deputies is very brief and omits to mention several items which require clarification. For example:

- 1) the reasons why the Dutch Reformed Church of Sri Lanka and The Reformed Church of Japan did not attend;
- 2) the criteria which are used by the churches present to recognize each other as true and faithful churches;
- 3) the fact that a closed session was held and the reasons for it.

In answer the deputies acknowledge that their report was very brief due to lack of time. They state that:

- 1) the Reformed Church of Japan was absent because it had to deal with the invitation at its forthcoming Synod;
- 2) the reason for the absence of the Dutch Reformed Church of Sri Lanka is not known;
- 3) they had no problems coming to the recognition that churches are true and faithful if they are based on Reformed Confession. Other reports which are not tabled here indicate that those churches which were present are faithful to their Confessions.
- 4) Synod deems the explanation pertaining to the Closed Session to be satisfactory.

As the time for adjournment is drawing near, some further questions are tabled for the consideration by the deputies.

The chairman then invites those present to sing Psalm 89 : 7 after which brother J. Diek closes in prayer.

The meeting is adjourned.

#### **Thursday 19th May - Morning Session**

##### Article 61

##### **OPENING**

The chairman, Rev. L.J. Joosse, invites those present to sing Psalm 138 : 1 and leads in prayer. He then reads 2 Peter 1 : 16 - 21 after which he welcomes brother J. Bonker, one of the deputies for Correspondence with Foreign Sister Churches, into the meeting.

He declares that the Synod is in closed session.

##### Article 62

##### **REPORT - RE C.A. OF I.C.R.C. continued**

The meeting is declared open to visitors.

The chairman makes the following declaration:

Synod acknowledges the letter of brother J. Zuidema and has dealt with it.

He then re-opens the discussion on the report of the deputies for Correspondence with Foreign Sister Churches pertaining to the C.A. of the I.C.R.C.

The deputies answer the questions posed at the end of the previous session.

##### Points raised

- 1) The road to coming to the acknowledgement of the church as a sister church is a long one. At the beginning of this road the deputies acknowledge that the church with which they are corresponding is a true church. This forms the basis for further correspondence.
- 2) The churches which attended the meeting in Groningen-Suid had left the R.E.S. and subscribed to all or some of the Reformed Creeds mentioned in the basis.
- 3) Membership of the R.E.S. by a church has never been an impediment for entering into provisional ecclesiastical contact. Even this type of ecclesiastical fellowship will not be offered to any church which refuses to discuss leaving this organisation.

- 4) Deputies attended this meeting on behalf of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia.
- 5) The problem of double correspondence is indeed a major one. As a guideline the deputies suggest that it would be impossible to establish a sister church relationship with any church which has close ties to a church which is directly opposed to our churches.
- 6) At the conference the churches were in an equal position.
- 7) The I.C.R.C. will not have any authority over the local churches. It will be an advisory body only.

The chairman adjourns the meeting.

#### **Thursday 19th - Afternoon Session**

##### Article 63

REPORT RE C.A. OF I.C.R.C. continued

The chairman re-opens the meeting by inviting those present to sing Psalm 119 : 13.

The discussion on the C.A. of the I.C.R.C. is continued.

##### Points raised

- 1) By subscribing to the basis contained in the report the deputies have committed the churches to the Westminster Confession.
- 2) When the church of Korea became our sister church the Westminster Confession was accepted as a base for contact with other churches.

##### Article 64

THE PURPOSE OF THE I.C.R.C. - ARTICLE 3 OF CONSTITUTION

The chairman invites comment on the purpose as stated in the report. A lengthy discussion ensues.

##### Points raised

- 1) The purpose of a Conference should be to seek unity by examining differences in the light of the Scriptures.
- 2) Is it possible to co-operate in the mission mandate with churches who are not sister churches?
- 3) The I.C.R.C. will consist only of churches who were present at the Constituent Assembly.

- 4) Discussion about membership of the R.E.S. would eventuate in cases where churches are members of this organisation.

The statement (Article 3, Pt. 5):

"to present a Reformed testimony to the world"

is not clear.

#### Article 65

##### THE REGULATIONS AND INTERIM RULES OF THE I.C.R.C.

The chairman tables the Regulations and Interim Rules of the I.C.R.C. for discussion.

#### Points raised

- 1) Period of time between meetings should be longer because of:
  - a) cost involved;
  - b) amount of time involved in preparation and meeting which can be detrimental to the work of Church Councils in the local church.
- 2) An Interim Committee can easily become a permanent one.

The proposed date of the first meeting falls in the same year as our next Synod. This could be detrimental to the work in the local churches.

#### Article 66

##### GENERAL REPORT RE INTERNATIONAL CONTACT - CORRESPONDENCE WITH CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES: (SISTER CHURCHES)

The chairman tables the General Report of the deputies for Correspondence with Foreign Sister Churches for discussion.

The deputies propose to:

continue the correspondence with the Canadian Reformed Churches.

ADOPTED

The deputies will send a copy of the revised Apostles' Creed to the Deputies for Revision of the Church Book.

Article 67

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE GEREFORMEERDE KERKEN IN NEDERLAND (SISTER CHURCHES)

Points raised

- 1) The Report of Synod Arnhem 1981 states that the sister churches of the Netherlands have requested information from our deputies about the Reformed Churches of New Zealand. It would be beneficial for deputies to gather information to come to an own opinion of these churches.
- 2) While this report is very brief it contains the essence of all correspondence entered into since the last Synod.
- 3) The deputies contact only those churches which are placed on our road. They make extensive use of information available from The Netherlands.

Synod will consider whether to change the name of our Deputies to Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad.

The deputies propose:

to continue the correspondence with the Gereformeerde Kerken in The Netherlands.

ADOPTED

The chairman adjourns the meeting.

**Thursday 19th - Evening Session**

Article 68

CORRESPONDENCE WITH DIE VRIJE GEREFORMEERDE KERKE IN SUID AFRICA (SISTER CHURCHES)

The chairman invites all present to sing Psalm 86 : 3 and declares the meeting opened.

The deputies' recommendation:

to continue the correspondence with Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Africa

is ADOPTED

Article 69

THE REFORMED CHURCH OF JAPAN

The deputies propose:

to continue the contact.

ADOPTED

Article 70

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE KOREAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (SISTER CHURCHES)

The deputies propose:

to continue correspondence with the Korean Presbyterian Church.

ADOPTED

Article 71

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE SISTER CHURCHES OF SUMBA-SAVU

The deputies propose:

to continue correspondence with the sister churches of Sumba-Savu.

ADOPTED

Furthermore it is decided to instruct deputies to investigate the possibility of visiting these sister churches.

Article 72

THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF TAIWAN

It is proposed to:

recognize the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Taiwan as a true and faithful church.

ADOPTED

Article 74

GENERAL PROCEDURE RE CORRESPONDENCE

Brother S.H. Terpstra tables the following proposal:

That Synod declare the procedure followed by the Deputies for Correspondence with Foreign Sister Churches, to declare Churches true and faithful at the beginning of contact, to be incorrect.

DEFEATED

The chairman invites those present to sing Psalm 86 : 2 after which brother L. 't Hart closes the meeting in prayer.

The meeting is adjourned.

**Friday 20th - Afternoon Session**

Article 75

REPORT OF DEPUTIES FOR CORRESPONDENCE WITH FOREIGN SISTER CHURCHES continued

The chairman, Rev. L.J. Joosse, invites those present to sing Psalm 25 : 2 and leads in prayer. He then reads Acts 1 : 1 - 11.

The deputies table the following proposal:

That Synod, having heard the oral report of deputies regarding the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland and the Free Church of Scotland:

Observes

- 1) that those churches are based on the Reformed Westminster Standards of Faith;
- 2) the information received:
  - a) in the written report of the deputies of Synod 1980;
  - b) the reports on the Conference (C.A.) in Groningen 1982 from its own deputies;
  - c) the official reports of our Dutch sister churches, Acts Arnhem 1981;

Considers

- 1) that those churches are faithful in the ministry of the Word, of the Sacraments and of the Church discipline;

- 2) have proven in their own church history obedience to the command of the Lord to separate themselves from apostate churches;
- 3) have terminated their membership of the R.E.S. because of the fact that apostate churches are tolerated in that organisation causing disunity of faith;
- 4) have expressed their willingness and desire to have fellowship in unity of faith with other faithful churches in the world, while the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland has already established full sister church relationships with our sister churches of the Netherland;
- 5) have given full support to and co-operation with our sister churches in the Constituent Assembly, Groningen 1982, and have testified of their willingness to discuss some existing differences between the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches.

#### Decides

- 1) to confirm that those Churches are faithful Churches of the Lord;
- 2) to instruct the deputies:
  - a) to inform those Churches of this decision;
  - b) to intensify the correspondence with those Churches with the aim to establish full sister relationship with them;
  - c) report to the next Synod.

#### Points raised

- 1) The report of the deputies contains little information to substantiate this proposal. This lack of information is the cause of much confusion. Deputies express regret that their report is so brief.
- 2) Indirect information, such as that contained in the official reports of deputies from the sister churches, can be used by the deputies to come to their proposals.
- 3) Synod must make the decision based on the report of the deputies.

The proposal is ADOPTED

#### Article 76

##### CORRESPONDENCE WITH CHURCHES WITH WHOM CONTACT HAS ALREADY BEEN ESTABLISHED

Deputies table their second proposal pertaining to contact with those churches with which they have already established contact.

Synod:

Observes

that there are contacts with the Reformed Church of Japan and the Dutch Reformed Church of Sri Lanka;

Considers

the command of the Lord to seek unity with faithful churches;

Decides

to instruct deputies to investigate those possibilities.

Brother S.H. Terpstra tables the following counter proposal:

That Synod declare that it is the aim of contact with other churches to gather information to enable Synod to recognize that church as a true Church, rather than the initial declaration from which continued contact originates.

This means that the following procedure would be followed:

- 1) contact with another church to gather information and discuss important issues;
- 2) deputies report to Synod;
- 3) Synod decides whether or not that church is true and faithful on the basis of the information supplied.

Both proposals are put to the vote.

The proposal of the deputies is   DEFEATED

The proposal put by brother S.H. Terpstra is   ADOPTED

This means that Synod has decided to instruct deputies to investigate whether those churches can be recognised as true and faithful churches and present possible proposals to the next Synod. Synod is to decide whether these churches can be acknowledged as true and faithful churches.

Deputies are discharged from their task.

Article 77

NEW CONTACTS

The deputies' third proposal is tabled.

Synod:

Observes

that there are possibilities to seek new contacts with other churches;

Considers

the command of the Lord to seek unity with faithful churches;

Decides

to instruct deputies to investigate those possibilities.

The following amendments are moved:

- 1) to append to the end of the instruction to deputies the words "and report to Synod".

ADOPTED

- 2) ...in close contact with deputies from our sister churches, especially with those of the Netherlands.

ADOPTED

The proposal of the deputies with the amendments added, which now reads: "to instruct deputies to investigate those possibilities in close contact with deputies from our sister churches, especially with those of the Netherlands, and report to Synod...", is

UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED

Article 78

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

In the previous instructions for deputies it states:

- 1) Synod also decides to instruct the deputies to supply the churches with the Acts of the Synods of corresponding sisterchurches;

This has not been done because deputies receive insufficient copies of these acts for distribution in the local churches.

.../42

- 2) to inform the Churches as soon as an invitation or announcement of a coming Synod of one of the sister churches comes in, so that Churches may determine if one of the officebearers is able to represent our Churches there;

This also has not been done. Future deputies will again receive the same instruction.

The chairman makes the following statement:

After a lengthy discussion in which the general report from deputies for correspondence with Foreign Sister Churches was dealt with, Synod decided to continue the sister relationship with the:

- 1) Canadian Reformed Churches;
- 2) The Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland;
- 3) Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Africa;
- 4) The Korean Presbyterian Church;
- 5) The sister churches of Sumba-Savu.

It is also decided to acknowledge that the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Taiwan is a true and faithful church of our Lord.

Furthermore, it is decided to instruct deputies to investigate the possibility of visiting the sister churches in Sumba and Savu.

The chairman adjourns the meeting.

#### Article 79

#### PROCEDURE RE INVITATION TO C.A. OF I.C.R.C.

The chairman, Rev. L.J. Joosse, invites those present to sing Psalm 103 : 1 and 4.

He then tables the following proposal:

Synod, having dealt with the procedure pertaining to the acceptance of the invitation from the deputies from The Netherlands for Correspondence with Foreign Sister Churches to attend the Constituent Assembly for the International Conference of Reformed Churches regrets the way deputies have handled this invitation.

ADOPTED

Article 80

ARTICLE 3 ITEM 1 OF CONSTITUTION OF I.C.R.C.

The brothers L. 't Hart and J. Diek table the following proposal:

Proposal as to Art. 3 item 1 of Purpose of the I.C.R.C. - Constitution.

Considering that

1) The Bond of Churches do not have official correspondence with some of the proposed member churches;

2) This article states:

To express and promote the unity of faith that member churches have in Christ.

3) This article gives the impression that the member churches have already accepted one another fully as official sister churches.

Propose

1) to amend this article;

2) amendments to read:

To express and promote the unity of faith in Christ.

DEFEATED

Article 81

ARTICLE 3 ITEM 3 OF CONSTITUTION OF I.C.R.C.

The brothers L. 't Hart and J. Diek table the following proposal:

Proposal as to Art. 3 Item 3

Considerations

1) that the stated aim of the conference is merely to confer together in an effort to come to the fullest ecclesiastical unity;

2) that the mission command as found in Matthew 28 : 19 has been given to the church;

3) that mission activities and the fulfilment of other mandates is not the concern of a conference of this nature;

.../44

Recommend

that Art. 3 Item 3 of the Constitution of I.C.R.C. be deleted.

DEFEATED

Article 82

ARTICLE 4 - MEMBERSHIP OF I.C.R.C.

Brother A. Slobe tables the following proposal:

Amendments to Constitution of the I.C.R.C.

Amend Art. 4 Membership

pt. d. Add after W.C.C., "R.E.S."

Reason

All churches, which were members of the R.E.S. have been fully informed by G.K.N. about the R.E.S. in the booklet "For the sake of True Ecumenity".

ADOPTED

Article 83

ARTICLE 3 ITEM 5 OF CONSTITUTION OF I.C.R.C.

The brothers L. 't Hart and J. Diek table the following proposal:

Proposal to have item 5 of Art. 3 - Purpose of Conference deleted:

Reason

- 1) Not enough clarification as to the meaning of this point.
- 2) The Conference does not have a task in this respect.

DEFEATED

Article 84

ARTICLE 4 OF CONSTITUTION OF I.C.R.C.

Rev. L.J. Joosse tables the following proposal:

Proposal to have inserted in Art. 4 of the constitution of the I.C.R.C. after point (d) the following:

(e) (members which)

show willingness to strive for unity with member churches of the Conference in their own country.

Considerations

- Since (a) member churches are bound to show adherence to John 17 which reveals the command for unity in Christ;  
(b) members of a Reformed international community of cooperation ought to show purity in mutual contacts which implies that member churches should strive for unity internationally and nationally.

ADOPTED

Article 85

ARTICLE 1 OF REGULATIONS of I.C.R.C.

Brother A. Slobe tables the following proposal:

Amendment to Regulations

Article 1 - change "four years" to "five years".

Reason

Preparation for Synods and Conferences take up too much time and the costs involved may become too much of a burden for the churches.

DEFEATED

Article 86

INTERIM RULES

Brother A. Slobe tables the following proposal:

Amendment to Interim Rules

Change the date of the first Conference to September 1986.

Reason

As per Article 85.

DEFEATED

If the membership of the I.C.R.C. for our churches be decided upon, deputies will table the decisions listed above.

Article 87

MEMBERSHIP OF I.C.R.C.

The deputies' proposal to:

Adopt the proposal of the Conference and to contribute as much as possible to a fruitful functioning of this International Conference

is tabled.

Brother J. Numan tables the following counter proposal:

Considering

- 1) that the suggestion to hold an 'international conference' of churches was first made by our own Deputies for correspondence with churches abroad (in 1977);
- 2) that this suggestion stated that the conference was to be a meeting of sisterchurches;
- 3) that the Dutch sister churches adopted the suggestion, but unilaterally changed the qualification for invitation to attend the conference to include also churches with whom 'temporary ecclesiastical contact' has been established;
- 4) that as a consequence, at the Constituent Assembly of the I.C.R.C., churches were invited with whom the Free Reformed Churches of Australia have neither ecclesiastical fellowship nor ecclesiastical contact;
- 5) that to the same Constituent Assembly churches have been invited who are still members of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod;
- 6) that at the meetings of the Constituent Assembly a proposal to exclude from membership any church which held membership of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod was rejected;
- 7) that Purposes 1, 3, 4 and 5 of the conference cannot be implemented until the unity of faith, whereof Purpose 1 speaks, has first been established by an official recognition of each other as sister churches;

and further considering

that the degree of knowledge about what actually happened at the Constituent Assembly, among church members as well as among church councils, is absolutely minimal;

concludes

- 1) that there is insufficient information available to Synod to make a responsible decision in the matter;
- 2) that the churches would be well served by a thorough discussion of all relevant matters, whereby also any doubts could be cleared up;

and decides

- 1) to defer a decision on the proposals by deputies to the next Synod;
- 2) to request deputies to write a more detailed report about the Constituent Assembly;
- 3) to appoint additional deputies with the instruction to study and evaluate the idea of an I.C.R.C. in the light of God's Word, the Three Forms of Unity and the Church Order, and to consider also the questions and criticisms raised both in the meetings of the Constituent Assembly (such as enumerated by prof. Douma in De Reformatie:)
  - the unreserved acceptance of the Westminster Confession into the basis of the I.C.R.C., next to the Three Forms of Unity;
  - the promotion of a unity which would not at the same time implicate the fullest ecclesiastical fellowship;
  - the admitting of new member churches which possibly could still maintain ties with the R.E.S.;
  - the possible acceptance of two churches which in their own country lead a separate church life;
  - the creation of an interim committee which handles business in between two successive I.C.R.C. Conferences; with the risk that this would become a permanent and self-regulating committee; etc.

as well as the questions and criticisms raised in the correspondence received by Synod, and that which has been voiced in the churches at various meetings;

- 4) to encourage a general discussion of all relevant matters within the churches.

To this proposal brother S.H. Terpstra adds a further consideration, being part of the letter from the Church Council of Kelmscott which was earlier declared inadmissible. This reads:

"Brothers, there is much confusion in this congregation over this issue and many questions have been posed which the Church Council cannot satisfactorily answer from the information available in the report of the deputies. As a result there is much unrest and even division in the church.

"The Church Council is of the opinion that to come to a decision at this Synod to join in with the International Conference would be detrimental to the unity and peace in this congregation. Acknowledgement of other churches as being true and faithful, the establishment of bonds with these churches, and the membership of this conference should not be at the cost of the unity of the local churches."

The proposal of the deputies is put to the vote.

ADOPTED

With this the counter proposal of brother J. Numan is defeated.

A letter will be sent to brother J. Eikelboom to advise him that Synod does not share the opinion expressed in his letter.

The chairman Rev. L.J. Joosse, tables the following proposal:

Having adopted the proposals of the deputies regarding the I.C.R.C., its Constitution, Regulations and Interim Rules, Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia decides to join the I.C.R.C.

ADOPTED

The business with the Deputies for Correspondence with Foreign Sister Churches being dealt with, the chairman, Rev. L.J. Joosse, hands the chair back to Rev. K. Bruning.

#### Article 88

#### FORMATION OF CLASSES

The letter from Albany pertaining to the formation of Classes is tabled.

Points raised

- 1) In essence there are two proposals:
  - a) to have classis churches with the powers of the Classis;
  - b) to establish two Classes of two churches each.
- 2) As there are three churches in Western Australia and one in Tasmania the establishment of Classes would be difficult.
- 3) The need to enlarge on and lay down carefully the duties of a Classis Church is evident. It is suggested to appoint a church with the combined responsibilities of a classis church and an appeal church.
- 4) If a church is vacant elders could do the necessary church visitations.
- 5) The rules have worked in the past. It would be helpful to have these rules clarified, collected and collated in one publication.

Rev. L.J. Joosse tables the following proposals:

- 1) Collect Synod decisions as for Art. 4, 5, 9, 12, 14, 15, 30, 39, 41, 43, 44, 77, 82, in respect to the task of a classis church.

UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED

- 2) Proposed to investigate the possibility to establish two classes.

DEFEATED

Article 89

CONTACT WITH THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

The chairman tables the report of the Deputies for Contact with the Presbyterian Churches of Eastern Australia.

It is noted that, while Br. A.H. Terpstra, one of the deputies, is in the vicinity, he is not present in the meeting.

Some points and questions will be noted now but will be dealt with when he is able to be present.

When these questions have been tabled, the chairman invites those present to sing Psalm 105 : 3.

Rev. Dr S.G. Hur closes the meeting with prayer.

The chairman adjourns the meeting.

## Saturday 21st - Morning Session

### Article 90

#### PROCEDURE RE CLOSING OF MISSION FIELD

The chairman invites those present to sing Psalm 145 : 4 and leads in prayer. He then reads The Acts 16 : 1 - 15.

He states that it is good to discuss the mission work in Australia today in the light of the fact that tomorrow it is Pentecost. Missionwork is often disappointing yet God works also through this toward the establishment of His eternal kingdom.

Brother P. 't Hart is welcomed and invited to participate in the discussion.

#### Points raised

- 1) Objections is raised to the sentence in the report:

'Correspondence to and from this church (Albany) delayed the final adoption of the report.'

Discussion should not be regarded as delay but as a process which leads to clarification and decision.

- 2) The Free Reformed Church of Albany is of the opinion that a decision of this nature and magnitude should have been taken by the Synod and not through correspondence. While many minor differences have been made in the past through correspondence between the local churches, major decisions have always been taken by a Synod.
- 3) The status of the missionworker caused separation between the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments.
- 4) The aim of mission work must be clearly defined.
- 5) Once a missionfield has been established, it is not the amount of people which is important but the response to the preaching of those who do continue to show interest.
- 6) The report gives no real analysis to the effect of the population movement during the past years.
- 7) The report was prepared by a sub-committee who had to report to the Church of Armadale, not the the Synod.

After some discussion the first two proposals of the Church of Armadale are put to the vote:

- 1) Synod takes note of the actions taken by the churches in regard to the report submitted by the sub-committee that the Mission field in Western Australia had to be abandoned.

ADOPTED

- 2) Synod takes note that the employment of the full-time Mission worker, br. P. 't Hart, was terminated at 31st March, 1983.

ADOPTED

#### Article 91

##### CLOSING

The Acts to Article 60 are read and adopted.

Brother J. Diek will not be able to be present for the remaining sessions of Synod. The chairman expresses his thankfulness that the working relationship at the Synod has been good and fruitful and wishes him God's protection for the long journey home.

Brother J. Diek responds by thanking the chairman for his words and wishing the meeting God's blessing over the remaining sessions of Synod so that they may bear fruit in the local churches and be of benefit to the Church of all ages.

After the meeting has sung Hymn 43 : 3 and 5, Rev. K. Jonker closes in prayer.

The meeting is adjourned.

#### **Monday 23rd - Morning Session**

#### Article 92

##### OPENING

The chairman invites those present to sing Psalm 89 : 11 and leads in prayer. He reads Jeremiah 32 : 6 - 25.

He then welcomes all the delegates to Synod at the beginning of this new week. Many may wonder if the work we are doing is worth all the effort. But we know, also from Jeremiah, that the Church has a glorious future. This has again been preached in the gospel of Pentecost. This work we are doing is valuable in the kingdom of Christ.

Brother T. Mostert, secundus for Br. J. Diek, is welcomed to the meeting and asked to testify to his agreement with the Three Forms of Unity. When he has done this, the chairman declares that Synod is now in closed session.

### Article 93

The session is declared open and the chairman makes known that Synod has dealt with:

- a) Church visitation;
- b) some details concerning the position of the Mission Worker;

and has heard:

- a) the letter to br. J. Zuidema ;
- b) the minutes of the previous closed session.

### **Monday 23rd - Afternoon Session**

### Article 94

#### **CHURCH VISITATION - LAUNCESTON**

The chairman tables the proposal from the Free Reformed Church of Albany to do church visitation in Launceston verbally rather than by mail as is the present practice.

#### Points raised

- 1) The idea is plausible but unless there are special circumstances the cost of sending two ministers to Launceston for this purpose seems to be hardly warranted.
- 2) The intention of the Acts to do it verbally as much as possible is already clear. While Synod fully supports the intention, it is, however, difficult to arrange.
- 3) It may be possible to arrange church visitation in conjunction with minister exchange. This would substantially reduce the cost.

The following is proposed:

to replace the words 'all' with the words 'every 2 years'.

ADOPTED

## Article 95

### CHURCH VISITATION

The chairman tables the letter from the Free Reformed Church of Albany for discussion. This letter proposes that Synod appoint not only ministers to do church visitation but appoints an elder from the classis church to accompany the minister.

#### Points raised

- 1) This proposal seems to open up a whole new situation because that could mean that church visitation reports will go to the classis church rather than the Synod.
- 2) The practice has been that Synod appoints the church visitors. In accordance with the Church Order the most experienced ministers should do this task.

It is decided to defer a decision on this matter until the next Synod when the task of a Classis Church will be reported on.

## Article 96

### CONTACT WITH THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

The chairman welcomes brother A.H. Terpstra, a deputy for contact with this church, to the meeting.

The questions tabled at the previous session of Synod are put and discussed. After some discussion, Rev. L.J. Joesse proposes:

#### Having dealt with

- 1) the reports of deputies for contact with the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia;
- 2) proposals of our Deputies for Correspondence with Sister Churches Abroad in respect to conditions for recognition of churches as true and faithful churches of the Lord;
- 3) decisions of the General Synod of the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands, Arnhem 1981, regarding their relationship with the Free Church of Scotland;

#### Synod observes

- A.1) that our deputies consider the "International Conference of Reformed Churches has been held in the meantime and its workings will undoubtedly influence both churches" by which is meant the Constituent Assembly;

- 2) that our deputies wholeheartedly endorse the view that "some years of testing the waters would be best" in regard to possible relationship to our churches;
  - 3) reports and Acts of Synod 1982 of the P.C.E.A. have been received;
- B. that churches have been recognized as true and faithful churches when they are:
- 1) faithful in the ministry of the Word, of the sacraments, and of the church discipline;
  - 2) have proven in their own church history obedience to the command of the Lord to separate themselves from apostate churches;
  - 3) have terminated their membership of the R.E.S. because of the fact that apostate churches are tolerated in that organization causing disunity of faith;
  - 4) have expressed their willingness and desire to have fellowship in unity of faith with other faithful churches in the world;
- C.1) that our sister churches in the Netherlands have provisional ecclesiastical contact with the Free Church of Scotland;
- 2) that the P.C.E.C. is a sister church of the Free Church of Scotland;

Considers

- A.1) that the Catholic church of Christ is spread and dispersed over the whole world and yet is joined and united in one and the same Spirit and in the unity of the true faith by means of preserving the true doctrine and administration of the sacraments and the discipline in accordance to the ordinances of Jesus Christ as the only Head. This is so according to the Word of God (John 17:11, 20, 21; Ephesians 3:14-4:16; 2 Tim. 3:15, 16) and the confessional documents based on the Word of God (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 21 and Belgic Confession, Art. 27-29);
- 2) that it is the calling of the true believers and of the true churches to strive for unity in every place and every country with those who profess the same faith and maintain the pure preaching of the Word, the pure administration of the sacraments and the pure exercise of church discipline;
- 3) that true believers and true churches ought diligently and circumspectly to discuss from the Word of God which is the true church so to practise unity of faith and ecclesiastical

fellowship with churches which publicly and continuously dispise the Word of God and the true faith;

- 4) that churches ought to consider that the Lord Jesus congregates His church in other countries along other roads of historical progress so that differences become manifest in the way other churches profess their faith and practise ecclesiastical fellowship, e.g. as to liturgy and church government whereas they do not deviate from the Word of God and maintain the true doctrine;
- B.1) that our deputies do not propose to offer them sisterchurch relationship but a time of testing so as to achieve sister church relationship;
- 2) that our deputies expect the influence of a search for unity internationally;
- 3) that the P.C.E.A. are based on the Westminster Standards as is the Free Church of Scotland;
- 4) that the P.C.E.A. have separated themselves from the apostate Presbyterian Church in 1846 whereby they did not adopt the authority of the government over the churches;
- 5) that those churches have terminated their membership of the R.E.S. some months before the Free Church of Scotland so acted in 1981 because of the membership of the Synodical Reformed Churches in the Netherlands;
- 6) that those churches have expressed their willingness to intensify the contacts with our deputies;
- 7) that purity in mutual relationship ought to exist and be shown, since our sister churches in the Netherlands have ecclesiastical contact, preliminary church fellowship with their sister churches in Scotland;

Decides

to instruct deputies to further investigate whether those churches can be acknowledged as true and faithful churches of our Lord Jesus Christ and report their findings to the next Synod so that this contact can be clarified, if possible, before the establishing of the International Conference in 1985.

ADOPTED

The deputies are thanked and discharged.

Article 97

APPENDICES TO ACTS

Brother S.H. Terpstra tables the following proposal:

Proposal to include in the Acts of Synod as appendices the following reports:

- 1) from Deputies for Correspondence Abroad:
  - a) letter from Deputies;
  - b) Official Communique;  
Constitution and Regulations;
- 2) Report from deputies Churchbook;
- 3) Report from deputies English Bible Translation;
- 4) Report of Library Content;
- 5) Report Mission (excluding report on Superannuation and final mission report of P. 't Hart).

ADOPTED

**Monday 24th - Evening Session**

Article 98

CHURCH BOOK

The chairman invites those present to sing Psalm 19 : 3.

The following proposal of the Synod Committee for Prayer Section of the Book of Praise is put:

Having perused the proposed revision of the Prayer Section of the Book of Praise, we find that these are well formulated with useful minor additions and recommend that they be used for the Church services and pastoral work.

ADOPTED

Article 99

CHURCH ORDER

The chairman welcomes brother P. 't Hart, one of the members of the Linguistic Committee appointed by Synod, to the meeting. The revised Church Order is tabled.

Brother P. 't Hart reports on the changes which the Committee has made. A few minor changes are still to be made.

The following proposal is tabled:

to produce the Church Order in a separate booklet the same size as the Book of Praise.

ADOPTED

It is decided to instruct the Printing Committee to produce 500 copies for sale in our churches.

### Article 100

#### MISSION

The chairman tables:

- 1) the letter from br. P. 't Hart re the future mission task in Australia;
- 2) the Mission Report from the Church of Armadale.

After some discussion the following proposals from the Church of Armadale are put:

- 1) Synod appoints deputies to investigate our future Mission task in or outside Australia. Deputies to report to next Synod.

UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED

- 2) Synod takes note of this report and discharges the Church of Armadale as Mission Committee.

ADOPTED

It is decided to pass the following letters to the deputies:

- 1) Letter from Albany dated 19 October 1981;
- 2) Letter from P. 't Hart.

Proposal 3 of the Church of Armadale will be dealt with in closed session.

### Article 101

#### REPORT - STUDY MISSION WORKER

The chairman tables this report and proposes to adopt it as tabled.

ADOPTED

## Article 102

### CONTACT REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA

The chairman invites discussion on the correspondence pertaining to contact with the Reformed Churches of Australia.

The question is raised as to whether these letters are admissable because:

- 1) this subject has not been dealt with on a minor assembly;
- 2) the subject has not been placed on the agenda by a minor assembly;
- 3) these letters are not an appeal by the individual authors against a decision of a minor assembly.

### Considerations

The authors did approach their Church Council for advice on how to have this subject included on the agenda of Synod. In response the Church Council advised them to submit their letters to Synod.

It is proposed to admit the letters to Synod.

ADOPTED

The letter by Rev. L.J. Jooisse is then tabled for discussion.

### Points raised

- 1) The proposal to establish contact with these churches is based on their decision to break off their sister church relationships with the Synodical Churches of The Netherlands.
- 2) The relationship with the Synodical Churches of The Netherlands has changed but has not been broken.
- 3) This change is based on a divergence of theological thought, rather than on a reformation within the Churches in Australia. They speak of uncertainty but not of apostasy within the churches in The Netherlands.
- 4) The Australian Reformed Churches have not rescinded the decisions of the 1940's which led to the 'Vrijmaking' neither have they come to the recognition that this was a work of Reformation worked by God.
- 5) The Reformed Churches have taken no action to contact us to inform us of the change in their relationship with the Synodical Churches. They have evinced no desire to join themselves to the true Church.
- 6) It is not possible to ignore almost forty years of church history.
- 7) Our dealings as Synod are with churches, not with individuals.

- 8) The situation is different than it is for the various Presbyterian Churches with whom we have contact because we have had dealings with these churches. It was their decision to break contact and to ignore our call for repentance.
- 9) The decision in Adelaide is not a ground for us to renew contact with them. The manner for renewing contact has been clearly established in our previous correspondence.
- 10) The context of the request is emphasized to be proof that 30 years of church history are not neglected at all.
- 11) The aim of establishing contact could be to clarify the differences that exist after the decision of the Reformed Church in 1982 to break off the sister church relationship with the G.K.N. This clarification is necessary for future generations.
- 12) The question raised is whether the Australian Reformed Churches are still responsible for Synodical decisions after the severing of sister church relationships.

The chairman invites those present to sing Psalm 78 : 1 & 2 after which Rev. L.J. Joosse closes in prayer.

The meeting is adjourned.

## **Tuesday 24th - Morning Session**

### Article 103

#### **CONTACT REFORMED CHURCH continued**

The chairman invites those present to sing Psalm 56 : 4 after which he leads in prayer. He then reads Revelations 22 : 8 - 21.

After some discussion the following proposal of Rev. L.J. Joosse is tabled:

to appoint deputies to organize a meeting with deputies of the Reformed Churches dealing with the binding decision of their Synod 1942/43 and its consequences, especially the Act of Liberation. After having organized a meeting and discussed this confessional matter of regeneration, baptism and the Synodical binding involved including its consequences, these deputies are charged to report to the next synod.

DEFEATED

A letter will be drafted to brother M. Vermeulen to inform him of this decision.

Article 104

CONTACT REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA

The chairman tables the letter of brother W. Dekker for discussion.

After some discussion it is decided that the second clerk will draft a reply to be read before Synod.

A copy of this letter will be sent to brother and sister H. Braam who submitted a letter supporting that of br. W. Dekker to Synod.

Article 105

CONTACT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The chairman invites discussion on the report of deputies.

Rev. L.J. Joosse proposes to:

appoint deputies to investigate the possibility to re-establish the contact with the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

DEFEATED

Synod regrets that no appeal was made to these churches as instructed.

Article 106

ARCHIVES OF SYNOD

The brothers from Albany report that they have inspected the Archives and found them as reported. They recommend that:

- 1) when the Archives have been put in order, the Church of Kelmscott advises the appointed church, so that their work can be verified;
- 2) all matters pertaining to the secret sections be segregated from the general archives and be placed in a separate section of the archives;
- 3) Synod expresses its appreciation for the manner in which the Church of Kelmscott has commenced this task.

ADOPTED

The chairman then tables the Report of the Archives for discussion.

Points raised

- 1) It is regretable that it took so long before the Archives were taken over and that when they were this was not done in consultation with the Armadale Church Council.

.../61

- 2) The delegates are asked to inquire as to the whereabouts of the missing minutes of closed sessions.

The report is adopted and the Church of Kelmscott is discharged.

The chairman then declares the session closed.

#### Article 107

##### MISSION

The chairman declares the session open and announces that the position of brother P. 't Hart has been decided upon.

The following proposal is put:

That Synod instructs the Church of Armadale to realize the assets and to invest the proceeds in an Authorized Trustee Investment Account.

ADOPTED

#### Article 108

##### RULES OF SYNOD

The Church of Kelmscott proposes to:

Amend Article 2 of the Rules of Synod to cause the churches to each send three delegates to Synod meetings after the formation of Classes.

DEFEATED

#### Article 109

##### SPECIAL ECCLESIASTICAL MEETING

The letter requesting Synod to publish the acts of the Special Ecclesiastical Meeting is read. The request is agreed to.

The letter of Rev. K. Jonker re the certificate relating to his Peremptoir Exam is read. It is decided that the Albany delegates will translate the form during the lunch recess and present it to the afternoon session.

Article 110

COST PERCENTAGES

Synod costs will be divided in accordance with the following arrangement:

- |    |            |     |
|----|------------|-----|
| 1) | Albany     | 20% |
| 2) | Armadale   | 30% |
| 3) | Kelmscott  | 30% |
| 4) | Launceston | 20% |

Article 111

CONVENING CHURCH NEXT SYNOD

The next Synod will, D.V., be convened in May 1985 by the Free Reformed Church of Launceston.

**Tuesday 24th - Afternoon Session**

Article 112

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTIES

The chairman re-opens the meeting and deputies are appointed to the following portfolios:

- 1) Archives of Synod

The Church of Kelmscott

Instructions

- a) The Church Council of the Church keeping the Archives, is in charge of the Archives of Synod.
- b) The Church Council will appoint an archivist.
- c) The archivist reports to the Church Council concerning the condition of the Archives, contents, who has received or seen items and which items have been involved.
- d) The Church Council reports to Synod.
- e) The archivist will carefully record everything, using files which will be placed in the filing cabinet, taking care that everything is clearly catalogued.
- f) Only with permission of the Church Council is he authorized to lend or to give for perusal items from the general Archives.
- g) Items from the secret Archives can only be lent or given for perusal after two Churches, or Synod, have given permission.

- h) The borrowing time is limited to three months. The receiver will sign a document which contains:
- i) name of the item or items received,
  - ii) date of borrowing,
  - iii) signature,
  - iv) date of return.
- This signed document will take the place of the borrowed item until it is returned and will further be used by the archivist for his report.

2) Supervision of Archives

The Church of Albany

Instructions

To inspect the Archives and report to Synod 1985.

3) Treasurer of Synod

Brother J. Kroeze

Instructions

- a) To provide churches with an outline of expenditure and revenue of Synod as early as possible.
- b) To have books and documents audited by the Church of Launceston which is to report to Synod 1985.
- c) To table a written report to Synod 1985.

4) Deputies add Art. 49 and 79 of Church Order

Rev. K. Bruning and Rev. S.G. Hur.  
Brs. J. Kroeze and P. Dingemanse.

5) Deputies for Correspondence with Foreign Sister Churches

Rev. K. Bruning (convenor)  
Rev. Dr S.G. Hur  
Br L. van Burgel  
Rev. L.J. Joosse

Instructions

The instructions of Deputies Correspondence with Foreign Sister Churches are:

- a) to consider the name of your deputies, Acts 1983 Art. 67; and to draft rules for the correspondence with sister churches;

- b) to continue the sister relationship with:
  - Canadian Reformed Churches
  - De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland
  - Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Africa
  - The Presbyterian Church in Korea  
(See Acts 1978, Art. 30 and 38)
  - The sisterchurches of Sumba-Savu  
(See Acts 1983, Art. 78);
- c) to inform the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland and the Free Church of Scotland of Synod's decision that it has confirmed those Churches to be faithful Churches of the Word; to intensify the correspondence with those Churches with the aim to establish full sister relationship with them  
(See Acts 1983, Art. 75);
- d) to inform the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Taiwan of Synod's decision that it has recognized that Church as a true and faithful Church; and to make every effort to intensify the contacts with this Church which does not yet belong to sisterchurches in order to come to full correspondence  
(See Acts 1983, Art. 73 and 74);
- e) to investigate whether the Reformed Church of Japan and the Dutch Reformed Church of Sri Lanka can be recognized as true and faithful churches  
(See Acts 1983, Art. 76);
- f) to investigate the possibilities to seek new contacts with other churches, in close contact with deputies from our sister churches, especially with those of the Netherlands  
(See Acts 1983, Art. 77);
- g) to investigate the possibility of visiting the sister churches in Sumba and Savu  
(See Acts 1983, Art. 78);
- h) to ask in Korea for more information about Church life in general and about the College and Seminary in particular  
(See Acts 1978, Art. 30);  
Synod 1978 decided to adopt the rules for correspondence with The Presbyterian Church of Korea:
  - i) to take care for each other that the doctrine, church services, church government and discipline do not deviate from the Reformed confession;
  - ii) to send each other the Agendum and Decisions (Acts) of the General Synods and the receiving of subsequent delegates from these other churches as advisors;
  - iii) to consult each other previous to making any amendments or additions to confessional standards, church orders or liturgical forms;

- iv) to accept each other's attestations and admit each other's ministers of the Word to preach the Word and administer the sacraments, applying what was determined at the Synod of Dordrecht in 1893, in Article 165, which was further detailed at the Synod of Groningen in 1927 in Article 161 (which includes the closer definition made in Amsterdam in 1936, Article 122, decision I, 4);
- v) to be responsible to each other concerning correspondence with third parties.

Synod 1978 also decided to instruct the deputies for Correspondence with Foreign Churches:

- i) to make sure that the Korean Presbyterian Church agrees with the rules for Correspondence as they were proposed and accepted by our Churches;
  - ii) to do all that is possible to make the relationship between the Free Reformed Churches and the Korean Presbyterian Church as effective as possible.
- i) to formulate rules for temporary contact with Churches which do not yet belong to the sister churches;
  - j) to inform the Interim Committee of the International Conference of Reformed Churches of our decision to join this International Conference (Acts 1983, Art. 87), and to propose to the next meeting of the I.C.R.C. Synod's amendments to the Constitution:
    - i) Art. 4 - Membership, pt. d.: Add after W.C.C., R.E.S. (Acts 1983, Art. 82);
    - ii) Art. 4 - to have inserted after d. the following:
      - e. (members which): show willingness to strive for unity with member churches of the Conference in their own country;  
(Acts 1983, Art. 84);
  - k) to ask the Churches for items which the deputies have to propose for the agenda of the forthcoming meeting of the I.C.R.C. in 1985;
  - l) to bring to the attention of the Churches those items from the correspondence with foreign sister churches which are of importance to the Churches  
(See Acts 1978, Art. 70);
  - m) to forward copies of the Acts of Synod 1983 to the Foreign sister churches;

- n) 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;
- o) to inform the churches as soon as an invitation or 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;
- p) to supply the churches with the Acts of Synods of corresponding sister churches;
- q) to report to the churches three months before the next Synod and also to the Synod itself.

6. Deputies for I.C.R.C.

Rev. G. van Rongen and Rev. L.J. Joosse.

Instructions

Acts 1983, Articles 82, 84, 86 and 87.

7. Deputies Church Book

Brs G. Brouwer, G. Groenewold and J. van der Ros (convenor)

Instructions

These deputies Church Book have the following instructions:

- a) to hand over our proposed amendments pertaining to the liturgical forms to the Canadian deputies and request them to consider our proposed amendments and pass them on to their forthcoming Synod;
- b) to inform our churches about the decision of the Canadian Synod;
- c) to serve our churches with advice about the tentative use of those liturgical forms;
- d) to report to the next Synod.

8. Deputies for Bible Translation

Brs J. Numan (convenor) and A. Plug

Instructions

- a) to monitor developments regarding the use of the RSV within the churches and further work by Translation Committee of the RSV;
- b) to report developments to the next Synod;

- c) to maintain archives of relevant matter regarding Bible translations in order to facilitate the work of future deputies for Bible translations, should these be appointed.

9. Deputies for Training for the Ministry

Brs J. Alberts and K. Salomons (convenor)

Instructions

- a) to collect and publish more information about the possibilities, conditions, required qualifications for study in Theology, either in the Netherlands or in Canada;
- b) to ask the churches to provide funds when necessary;
- c) to draft guidelines, rules and regulations for executing financial aid, to be presented to next Synod for approval;
- d) to have the books and documents audited by the Church of Launceston;
- e) to report to the next Synod.

10. Deputies for Ecclesiastical Ordinances

Br. L. 't Hart (convenor)

Br. W.S. Fokkema

Br. A.H. Terpsta

Instructions

- a) to re-structure the accepted Subscription Forms for Ministers, Elders and Deacons into contemporary English  
(See Acts 1983, Art. 48);
- b) to translate the Ecclesiastical Certificates as per Articles 5, 6, and 11 of the (old) Church Order  
(See Acts 1983, Art. 49);
- c) to report to the next Synod.

11. Publishing Committee

The Church of Armadale

Instructions

- a) To publish a booklet containing:
  - i) the Revised Church Order (Acts 1983, Art. 99);
  - ii) ecclesiastical certificates (Acts 1983, Art. 49);
  - iii) all Synod decisions.
- b) To collect, collate and consider all Synod decisions re Classis Church and to report to the next Synod (Acts 1983, Art. 88).

12. Deputies Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia

Rev. K. Jonker (convenor)  
Br. J. Kroeze  
Br. S. Reitsema

Instructions

Acts 1983, Article 96.

13. Deputies for Future Mission Task

The Church of Albany

Instructions

Acts 1983, Article 100.

14. Deputies for Disposal of Assets of Mission

The Church of Armadale

Instructions

Acts 1983, Articles 107 and 114.

15. Deputies for Church Visitation

In 1983 and 1985

For the Church of Albany:	Rev. K. Bruning Rev. Dr S.G. Hur
For the Church of Armadale:	Rev. Dr S.G. Hur Rev. L.J. Joesse
For the Church of Kelmscott:	Rev. K. Bruning Rev. L.J. Joesse
For the Church of Launceston:	Rev. K. Bruning Rev. Dr S.G. Hur

In 1984

For the Church of Albany:	Rev. K. Bruning Rev. K. Jonker
For the Church of Armadale:	Rev. K. Jonker Rev. L.J. Joesse

For the Church of Kelmscott:      Rev. K. Jonker  
   Rev. L.J. Joosse

For the Church of Launceston:      Rev. K. Bruning  
   Rev. Dr S.G. Hur

Secundi for

Rev. K. Bruning      -      br W. Buist  
Rev. Dr S.G. Hur      -      br P. Postuma  
Rev. K. Jonker        -      br J. Plug  
Rev. L.J. Joosse      -      br J. Plug

Instructions

- a) The visit in Launceston to be done verbally in 1985 to coincide with the Synod to be held, D.V.
- b) It is proposed to report to Synod 1985, only after having written the report during the visitation.

ADOPTED

16. Librarian of Synod

Church of Kelmscott

Instructions

Acts 1983, Article 114.

17. Deputies re Audit Synod Books

Church of Launceston

18. Appeal Church

For the Church of Albany      -      Armadale  
For the Church of Armadale      -      Kelmscott  
For the Church of Kelmscott      -      Launceston  
For the Church of Launceston      -      Albany

19. Deputies re Art. 26 of (New) Church Order

Rev. K. Jonker (convenor)  
Br J. Alberts  
Br A Hidding

Instructions

Acts 1983, Articles 12 and 52.

20. Deputies Synod Rules

Church of Kelmscott

Instructions

Acts 1983, Article 54.

21. Deputies ad Art. 66 (Old) Church Order

Church of Launceston

Article 113

DEPUTIES CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE GOVERNMENT

The Synod Committee tables the following proposal:

Proposal not to appoint new deputies.

Reason In our particular circumstances we cannot simply follow the Dutch Church Order, due to the structure of government in Australia. As pointed out in br M. Vermeulen's letter to the Synod, each state is sovereign, hence it is our opinion that the local church is in a better position to correspond with the state government. If there is a need to correspond with the Federal Government the opinion is that the approach should be made through the local member of Federal Parliament who can take it up on behalf of the local church.

ADOPTED

Article 114

REPORT - LIBRARY OF SYNOD

The Report of the Librarian is tabled. After some discussion:

- 1) the report is taken note of;
- 2) the following proposals are adopted:

Proposals

- 1) that the Library be transferred to the care of Church of Kelmscott who will appoint a librarian in the same manner as for the Archives of Synod (see Acts of Synod 1975: Article 53, No. 1, 2, 3(a), 4 and 8(a). These read:

"The Church Council of the Church keeping the Archives,  
is in charge of the Archives of the Synod.

.../71

"The Church Council will appoint an archivist.

"The archivist reports to the Church Council concerning the condition of the Archives.

"The Church Council reports to Synod.

"The borrowing time is limited to 3 months. The receiver will sign a document which contains:

- a) name of item or items received;
- b) date of borrowing;
- c) signature;
- d) date of return.

"This signed document will take the place of the borrowed item until it is returned and will further be used by the archivist for his report.

Suggest to replace the word 'Archives' with 'Library'.

- 2) That the Library be housed in the church building of Kelmscott together with the Archives.
- 3) That a suitable cupboard be purchased.
- 4) That the Church of Kelmscott, on behalf of the Bond of Churches, purchases relevant materials to bring and keep the library up to date and functional.
- 5) That relevant materials such as out of date books are discarded when new ones arrive.

ADOPTED

The meeting moves into closed session.

#### Article 115

#### POSITION MISSION WORKER AND CORRESPONDENCE

After having declared the session open the chairman announces:

Synod considers that, as brother P. 't Hart has been employed as missionworker for many years, it has the moral obligation to help him to resettle. For this reason it has unanimously decided to:

- 1) pay brother P. 't Hart the sum of \$10 000 to be paid out in a manner most beneficial to his resettlement;
- 2) acknowledge that any Superannuation, payment being monies set aside for retirement, forms no part of this sum;
- 3) transfer ownership of the Toyota Mission vehicle to brother P. 't Hart.

Rev. K. Jonker, the second clerk, then reads some outgoing correspondence which is adopted.

Article 116

REPORT ON APPROBATION REV. L.J. JOOSSE

The chairman reports that all necessary documents were received from the Rev. L.J. Joosse upon his arrival. This has been reported to the Free Reformed Church of Albany which has noted that it was correctly announced.

The chairman adjourns the meeting.

**Tuesday 24th - Evening Session**

Article 117

CERTIFICATE OF REV. K. JONKER

The chairman re-opens the meeting by inviting those present to sing Psalm 72 : 3 and 4 after which he reads John 17 : 15 - 26.

The certificate for Rev. K. Jonker in response to his completing his Peremptoir exam and his acceptance as Minister to the Australian Bond of Churches is tabled, adopted and signed.

Article 118

GENERAL QUESTION PERIOD

The delegates of the churches are asked if they have anything to ask at this meeting.

The only issue raised was by the Free Reformed Church of Launceston in relation to Art. 11, Acts 1978. This article states that the ministers are to be diligent in making English sermons available to the Churches. The message of this article is again heavily underlined.

Article 119

PERSONAL QUESTION PERIOD

Each delegate is asked whether he wishes to make use of this opportunity.

The following delegates do so:

- 1) Rev. L.J. Joosse expresses the appreciation of the meeting for the way by which the chairman has fulfilled his task.

- 2) Rev. K. Jonker raises the letter from the W.A. Classis of Reformed Church which has been received by the Church Councils. It is suggested to refer this letter to the next Synod and to advise the Reformed Churches to address themselves to the Bond of Churches rather than individual churches.

#### Article 120

On behalf of the sisterchurches of the Netherlands the Rev. van Rongen addresses the meeting. During his address, he reads a letter from The Netherlands addressed to this Synod.

The deputies are to reply to this letter.

#### Article 121

The Acts of Synod are read and adopted.

On behalf of Synod, the chairman expresses the appreciation of Synod for the Kitchen staff and thanks them for their excellent effort.

During the reading of the Acts the following proposal is put:

to delete from Article 87 the words: For 8, Against 3, Abstain 1, being the results of the voting.

ADOPTED

#### Article 122

##### PRESS REPORT

The Press Release is read and adopted.

#### Article 123

##### CENSURE

It is noted with thankfulness that no censure needs to be exercised over any member of the Synod.

#### Article 124

##### Closing address of Chairman

"Brothers delegates,

"The 13th Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia has

almost finished its task. Soon it will belong to the history of our Churches in this country.

"The fact, however, that the major Assembly of the Churches quickly belongs to the past, does not mean that it is stowed away into a forgotten corner, because it is not only the calling of the Churches to remember and respect their own history, but it is also the responsibility of the Churches, in accordance with the Church Order which has had broad attention at the meetings of this Synod, to strictly execute the decision of the major Assemblies. In other words: the Free Reformed Churches have now the task and obligation to seriously deal with all the decisions of this Synod, and to adopt them as settled and binding in accordance with Art. 31 of the Church Order. The Churches cannot take this lightly.

"For this reason it may be to the point to mention some of those decisions, and to underline that this Synod can be characterized as the major Assembly which was responsible not only for the internal well-being of the churches, but also for their external calling and relationship. Full emphasis was put on the intrinsic functioning of the Churches, and on the extrinsic and ecumenical mandates as well.

"These two aspects bring the Churches close to the Lord, Who not only defends and preserves, but also gathers His Church in the world.

"Related to these two aspects the Synod had to deal on the one side with items such as the Bible translation, the Book of Praise, the Church Order and ecclesiastical rules, and on the other hand with topics such as Mission, relationship with sister churches and other faithful churches in the Lord's worldwide work.

"It can be stated that the Synod was richly blessed by the opportunity to discuss and to decide on most of those subjects.

"It is now of great importance that the local Churches do the utmost to study, test and use the Synod-results for the internal strengthening and well-being of the congregations, and for the increase and intensification of the relationships and contacts with foreign churches, and for the further propagation of the gospel as well!

"As people and Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ we must be really thankful that He, as the King of His congregations, has not only kept us in His grace close to His Word, to the true Confession and the Reformed Church Order, but that He has also helped us to look at His great work in the gathering of a universal Church in many places and in several countries.

"It is our dearest desire that the work which the Lord gave us to do, may be richly blessed, and that all its weaknesses and infirmities may be forgiven for Christ's sake only.

"At this moment I must give special attention to the fact that the Mission task of the Free Reformed Churches must be reconsidered.

"It means also that the Churches must bid farewell to br P. 't Hart as missionworker.

"I am incapable of summarizing in a few words all the work he has done on behalf of the churches and for the benefit of the Aboriginal people. It is also impossible to analyse all the hardship and disappointments which had to be carried by our brother and his family; neither can I fully appraise the abundancy of God's blessings and care which became manifest during more than ten years.

"As far as human activities are concerned, I say: the Churches thank you, brother 't Hart, and may His care and grace be with you all the time; and as far as our faith is concerned, I say: let us thank the Lord God alone, for He is the giver of all goods.

"It is not a custom among us to make long speeches about human performances; and I feel that I as chairman of this Synod might have raised my voice too often.

"However, I cannot omit the opportunity to express my sincere appreciation of the co-operation and support of my fellow deputies. Especially the Scribae and assessor - to use the Latin words for these functions - did a tremendous job. Several hours during the night and early morning were sacrificed for the sake of the Synod and the Churches.

"It was a pleasure to be in your midst, brothers.

"And now, the Synod must be closed, and must belong to the past.

"The Churches remain, and they have the promises.

"The road which the Churches have to go is narrow, sometimes hard and dangerous.

"It is very evident from the history that the Churches are always between the danger of sectarianism on the one side, and the danger of the false Church on the other hand. However, the Church which is faithful to her Scriptural Confession, and faithful to her ecumenical calling can always go to her Lord in heaven, the Good Shepherd of the flock.

"He hears her voice and supplication.

"And he fully provides His Church with all her needs for her internal and external responsibilities, because He, and He alone gathers, defends and preserves His Church, also in this, our country Australia."

The chairman, Rev. K. Bruning, invites those present to sing Psalm 150 and closes in prayer.

The chairman then declares the 13th Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia closed.

APPENDIX 1

ACTS

Of the special ecclesiastical meeting of  
the Free Reformed Churches of Australia  
held in the Free Reformed Church building  
at Armadale, W.A., on Saturday, June 13th, 1891,  
for the purpose to examining brother K. Jonker,  
Candidate for the ministry called by the  
Free Reformed Church of Launceston.

Article 1

OPENING

On behalf of the convening Church of Albany, brother J. Plug opens the meeting at 10.00 a.m. and requests those present to join in the singing of Psalm 48 verses 1 and 4 before leading in prayer and reading Ephesians 4:1-16. He then addresses the meeting with the following words:

"Brothers delegates, examiners, candidate Jonker, brothers and sisters,

"It is my pleasure on behalf of the Church of Albany, to welcome you here this morning at the opening of this ecclesiastical meeting, which I feel we could only define as a special interim meeting, at which the peremptorial examination of candidate Jonker will take place.

"We are thankful that we are safely here, especially for the brothers from faraway Launceston and particularly for you, brother Jonker, who came all the way from our old mother-country, Holland. You may have arrived at the place of destination a number of weeks ago already, but you are still on your way to your real destination, namely: as Minister of the Word of the Church of Launceston. Therefore you may consider your being in the "West" as a necessary interim stop. And we here in the "West" are very glad about that for two reasons. In the first and most important place, the Church of Launceston which has principally the right and duty to this examination, acknowledges, in accordance with our Church Order, the bond of churches. Not only the calling Church, but also the other congregations have an interest in who are admitted to the Ministry of the Word. We, as bond of Churches belong together, need each other and we help each other. The second reason for which we are glad is, that we now have the opportunity to meet you, brother Jonker, so soon. We may even hear you this morning.

"We wish you and also the brothers Hidding and Streefland, whom we also meet here for the first time in the "West" a happy stay here. But as for today, candidate Jonker, you are completely at the mercy of the examiners. Feel at ease, however, they are not as merciless as they may look!

"Furthermore, it would not be fitting if we today would not mention the fact that for the first time in history four Australian Churches

are represented. We are grateful to the King of the Church that we now may say that the Church of Armadale became the Church of Armadale and the Lord willing, very soon each have their own shepherd and teacher. We have many reasons to thank Him.

"May then this meeting be to His glory and honour, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

"With these words I declare the meeting opened."

## Article 2

### CREDENTIALS

The attendance roll is signed by the delegates of the four congregations. The credentials of candidate K. Jonker and of the delegates are checked by the two delegates of Kelmscott who report that all is in order.

The Churches are lawfully presented by their primary delegates as follows:

From the Church of Albany:	Elder J. Plug Elder J.A. Diek
From the Church of Armadale:	Rev. K. Bruning Elder J.A. Swarts
From the Church of Kelmscott:	Rev. Dr. S.G. Hur Elder H. Terpstra
From the Church of Launceston:	Elder A. Hidding Elder F. Streefland.

## Article 3

### MODERAMEN

The following delegates are elected by ballot:

Brother J. Plug as chairman,  
Brother H. Terpstra as assessor, and  
Brother J.A. Swarts as clerk.

## Article 4

### CONSTITUTION OF MEETING

The chairman called the meeting to order and declared it constituted.

#### Article 5

##### AGREEMENT WITH THREE FORMS OF UNITY

The chairman requests the delegates to testify to their agreement with the Three Forms of Unity by rising from their seats. All delegates rise to express their agreement.

#### Article 6

##### ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda is adopted as follows:

- i) sermon by candidate K. Jonker;
- ii) examination of brother Jonker by the examiners Rev.K. Bruning and Rev. Dr S.G. Hur;
- iii) announcement regarding result of examination;
- iv) censure after Article 43 of the Church Order;
- v) close.

#### Article 7

##### SERMON BY CANDIDATE BROTHER K. JONKER

The chairman invites the meeting and guests to reassemble in the church building where he invites brother Jonker to deliver his sermon. Brother Jonker reads his chosen text from 1 Timothy chapter 6 the verses 6 to 8 inclusive, and then preaches on the theme:

##### FESTIVE CONTENTMENT IN SPIRITUAL HEALTH.

He considers three aspects of this theme, namely:

- i) this contentment is included in godliness,
- ii) this contentment included sobriety, and
- iii) this contentment expects the everlasting feast.

#### Article 8

##### ADJOURNMENT

The chairman invites all present to join in the singing of Psalm 119 the verses 1 and 39 before adjourning the meeting for luncheon.

Article 9

EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATE K. JONKER

The chairman advises that the examination will be conducted in the following order:

- i) Discussion of Sermon;
- ii) Exegesis of the Old Testament;
- iii) Exegesis of the New Testament;
- iv) Bible Knowledge;
- v) Doctrinal Knowledge;
- vi) Ethics;
- vii) Church History;
- viii) Practical Theology (Pastoral Subjects);
- ix) Church Order.

Article 10

EXAMINATION - SERMON (Closed Session)

The meeting proceeds in closed session to discuss the sermon delivered by brother Jonker prior to the luncheon adjournment. The meeting expresses its satisfaction and there are no objections against proceeding with the examination.

Article 11

EXAMINATION - EXEGESIS OF OLD TESTAMENT (Examiner - Rev. Bruning)

Brother Jonker is asked to read, translate and explain Hosea 4 the verses 1 to 3 and parts of Judges chapter 3 from the original Hebrew text.

Article 12

EXAMINATION - EXEGESIS OF NEW TESTAMENT (Examiner - Rev. Dr Hur)

Brother Jonker is questioned concerning the meaning of John chapter 17 and is asked to read, translate and explain from the original Greek verse 20 to 22 and also Ephesians 1 the verses 3 to 6.

Article 13

EXAMINATION - BIBLE KNOWLEDGE (Examiner - Rev. Bruning)

Brother Jonker is questioned concerning the general significance and meaning of the book of Judges and particularly regarding several events described in this book.

Article 14

EXAMINATION - DOGMATICS (Examiner - Rev. Bruning)

Questions put to brother Jonker relate to

- a) modern criticisms against the authority of Scripture, especially at and since ASSEN 1926;
- b) the meaning of the glory and the grace of God; and
- c) the significance of the fact that man is "image bearer" of God, also with regard to Roman Catholic theology.

Article 15

EXAMINATION - DISCUSSION

The chairman gives delegates the opportunity to ask supplementary questions relating to the examination as conducted so far. With reference to John 17, brother Jonker is asked to comment further with regard the unity between the apostles and the Church of today. Brother Jonker is also asked to explain whether the claim that God was gracious before the fall into sin supports the doctrine of common grace.

Article 16

EXAMINATION - ETHICS (Examiner - Rev. Dr Hur)

Brother Jonker is asked to defend the Christian standpoint regarding abortion and family planning.

Article 17

EXAMINATION - CHURCH HISTORY (Examiner - Rev. Dr Hur)

Brother Jonker is questioned about the beginning of the Reformation Period, covering such subjects as

- a) the people who influenced Luther,

- b) Luther and his writings,
- c) the influence and teachings of the Anabaptists,
- d) Calvin's Institutes, and
- e) the origin of the Anglican Church.

Questions were also asked concerning 19th century Church History in The Netherlands.

#### Article 18

EXAMINATION - PASTORAL SUBJECTS (Examiner - Rev. Bruning)

The examination deals with the Scriptural meaning of the office of the "Ministry of the Word" and relates to the meaning and role of the liturgy, homiletics, catechetic instruction and the diaconal office in our Churches.

#### Article 19

EXAMINATION - CHURCH ORDER (Examiner - Rev. Bruning)

Brother Jonker is asked about nature and about the importance of the Church Order, with special reference to the Australian bond of Churches and to the revised Church Order recently introduced in The Netherlands.

#### Article 20

EXAMINATION - DISCUSSION (Closed Session)

The meeting concludes that brother K. Jonker proved to have a thorough knowledge and true understanding of God's Word and thankfully decides that brother Jonker may be admitted to the ministry of the Word and sacraments.

After inviting the visitors and brother Jonker to rejoin the meeting the chairman announces the successful outcome of the examination.

#### Article 21

QUESTION TIME

There were no questions.

Brother Streefland and Rev. K. Bruning request and are given the opportunity to say a few words in which they express their joy and gratitude for the Lord's care of His people, also in the events of this day. It is hoped that brother Jonker may work faithfully for the Church of Launceston and also for the bond of Australian Churches.

Brother Jonker replies with a few words of appreciation.

Article 22

ADOPTION OF ACTS

The meeting adopts the Acts as read and authorizes the clerk to prepare and issue a press release.

The meeting decides that these Acts be published forthwith and that the next Synod be requested to include these Acts with the Acts of Synod.

Article 23

AGREEMENT WITH THREE FORMS OF UNITY - BROTHER JONKER

Brother Jonker stands and testifies that he accepts and agrees with the Three Forms of Unity.

Article 24

CENSURE AFTER ARTICLE 43 OF CHURCH ORDER

There is no business with respect to Article 43 of the Church Order.

Article 25

CLOSE

In closing the meeting, the chairman thanks the sexton and the sisters for their care before and during the meeting and wishes all the brothers a safe journey home and brother Jonker the Lord's blessing for his task within the Church of Launceston.

Following the singing of Psalm 134 the verses 1 and 3, Rev. Bruning concludes with prayer and thanksgiving.

APPENDIX 2

Synod-Session on the Church Book  
held at Kelmscott Church on May 17th, 1983.

Remarks re the revised forms (to be taken up in the Acts Synod):

Re: Form Baptism of Infants

"Baptism signifies and seals to us the promise of the cleansing from our sins."

"The promise of the cleansing" - is this correct?

The old version is preferred to this new one.

Re: Form Baptism of Adults

It is noted that "God" in "God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" has been omitted one time only. Probably a printing error.

Re: Form Public Profession of Faith

Why has in the first question: "True and complete doctrine of salvation" (old version) not been taken up in the new version?

Re: Form Holy Supper

1. Concerning the passage 'communion': the long form renders: "The body of Christ was broken" and the new short form: "the body of Christ was given" - Any reason for this change or just a slip of the pen?

2. List of sins: It would have been better if the sins listed followed the line of the ten commandments.

Re: Form Solemnization of Marriage

"Shall live together happily in sinless love and holiness" - Too much emphasis on "happily" rather than on "love".

APPENDIX 4a

GENERAL REPORT FROM DEPUTIES FOR  
CORRESPONDENCE WITH CHURCHES ABROAD

To the Synod of the Free Reformed Churches,  
Kelmscott, 1983.

Dear Brothers,

The Synod of the Free Reformed Churches, Armadale 1980, appointed the above mentioned deputies and instructed them to report at the Synod 1983.

The deputies have continued their contact and correspondence with Churches in several countries and places of the world.

The following details ask for attention.

1. Canadian Reformed Churches

The Acts of the General Synod of Smithville, Ont., 1980, were received. Some items have importance for the Free Reformed Churches.

a) the Synod dealt with the revision of the Church Order; and decided not to adopt at the present time any articles of the Church Order in its revised form; the committee-work will be continued;

b) concerning a new translation of the Heidelberg Catechism the Synod decided to continue the committee with the instruction to complete the 'draft translation 1979', and to submit it to a panel of three English language experts and to report to the Synod 1983; Acts Art. 60.

c) the Synod had to deal with appeals in connection with the relationship with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Synod decided:

2. To continue the Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, with the mandate:

- a) to continue contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, while taking into account the rules for 'Ecclesiastical Contact';
- b) to publish, for the benefit of our Churches, a detailed evaluation of the confessional and church-political divergencies as decided by this Synod (see: Acts 1980, Article 97, II, C, 3);
- c) to evaluate the reaction of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Inter-church Relations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church regarding the divergencies, and to come to the next Synod with recommendations (cf. Consideration 5);

- d) to complete the discussion and evaluation of the relationships which the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has with other parties, especially the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, the Christian Reformed Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church - Evangelical Synod, and the Presbyterian Church of America;
- e) to inform the Churches about the progress made by means of press releases;
- f) to report on its activities and findings to the next General Synod.

(Acts Art. 152.)

d) the Synod decided on the 'revised Committee Proposal' of the Apostles' Creed as amended by Synod. The adopted revision reads as follows:

- "I. I believe in God the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth;
- II. I believe in Jesus Christ,  
His only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
and born of the virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead and buried;  
He descended into hell.  
On the third day He arose from the dead;  
He ascended into heaven,  
and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty;  
from there He will come to judge the living and the  
dead.
- III. I believe in the Holy Spirit;  
I believe a holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting."

(Acts Art. 107.)

e) Synod decided on the point of Bible translations:

- 1. To thank the Committee on Bible Translations for its faithful labours.
- 2.
  - a) To use the Revised Standard Version for the Scripture quotations in the linguistic modernization of the Creeds and the Liturgical Forms as much as possible.
  - b) To recommend to the Churches to use this translation in the worship services and for catechism instruction in order to come to uniformity of practice.
- 3. To leave it in the freedom of the Churches to use the KJV and the NASB, if the acceptance of the Revised Standard Version meets with insurmountable objections.

4. To re-appoint the Committee on Bible Translations with the mandate:

- a) To continue to make recommendations to the Standard Bible Committee for changes necessary in the Revised Standard Version translation;
- b) To keep the Churches posted as to the developments in new editions of the Revised Standard Version;
- c) To report to the next Synod.

(Acts, Art. 111.)

f) decision about Book of Praise is reported in Acts Art. 122.

g) correspondence with the churches abroad: Synod decided to continue the correspondence with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia.

(Acts, Art. 153.)

Recommendation:

The deputies recommend the Synod to continue the correspondence with the Canadian Reformed Churches.

2. The Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland.

The deputies received the Acta of the Generale Synode van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, Arnhem 1981.

The following points of importance ask for attention and consideration:

I. Chapter VI of the Acta deals with the correspondence with Churches abroad.

- a) Synod decided on the proposal concerning a Reformed International Synod. An invitation would be sent to the corresponding Churches and Churches with which a temporary ecclesiastical contact exists; Art. 118.
- b) Synod decided to continue the correspondence with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, and to be informed about their contact with the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia; Art. 119.
- c) continuation of the correspondence with the sisterchurches in Canada, Korea, East Sumba-Savu, South Africa; and contact with the Churches of Sao Paulo, Ireland (Evangelical Presbyterian Church), Scotland (Free Church), Sri Lanka (Dutch Reformed Church), Taiwan (Reformed Presbyterian Church), Japan (Reformed Church), New Zealand (Reformed and Orthodox Presbyterian Churches), America (Presbyterian Church and Orthodox Presbyterian Church), Chile (Presbyterian Church),

South Africa (Die Gereformeerde Kerk), and Sudan (Kerk of Christ). Acta, Art's 120 - 140.

II. The Synod decided to change the name of the deputies for correspondence. It is now: Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad.

The deputies also received two reports:

- a) report from the deputies for correspondence with Churches abroad;
- b) report revision Church book, directed to Synod 1981.

Recommendation:

To continue the correspondence with the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands.

### 3. Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Africa.

The deputies received:

#### I. Sinodehandelinge, Pretoria 1980.

The Synod had to deal with the relationship with the Gereformeerde Kerk of South Africa (Art. 31, 33, 35). The Synod decided to continue the correspondence with the Free Reformed Church of Australia.

#### II. Sinodehandelinge, Johannesburg 1982.

The Synod decided to instruct deputies for contact with the Gereformeerde Kerk in South Africa to table those points which are essential for further discussions, and to report at the next Synod; Art. 16.

It is also decided to continue the correspondence with the Australian Sisterchurches.

Both Acta contain the most important reports which were discussed at the Synod meetings.

III. Some correspondence in connection with the so-called 14-de Laan-gemeenschap. The deputies were informed that the community of the 14-de Laan has not returned to die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Pretoria.

Recommendation:

To continue the correspondence with Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Africa.

#### 4. Sri Lanka

The deputies were informed by a letter 20-03-81 that the Dutch Reformed Church in Sri Lanka accepts and maintains the Three Forms of Unity, has full correspondence with the Christian Reformed Church in North America and the Reformed Church of Australia, and is member of the R.E.S. and the World Presbyterian Alliance.

#### 5. The Reformed Church of Japan

It was said in a letter dated May 1, 1981, that a Synod was planned from 20th to 23rd October, 1981; that 61 congregations form the bond of Churches, with 107 ministers and a total membership of 7173; unorganized Churches 35; and ministers-candidate 18.

The Reformed Church of Japan has fellowship with the member churches of the R.E.S.

Follows a quotation from the letter:

##### Ecumenical Relations

"The Synod had the privilege of receiving fraternal delegates from churches in ecclesiastical fellowship. The Rev. E.A. van Baak represented the Christian Reformed Church in North America, the Rev. De Berdt represented the CRC Japan Mission, the Rev. Young Son represented the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and its Japan Mission, the Rev. V.G. Stubbs represented the Presbyterian Church in the United States, the Rev. W. Sterrett the Reformed Presbyterian Church North America Japan Mission, the Rev. Kwang Chen the Chinese Presbyterian in Japan, and the Rev. Han Dong Seok the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Koryupa). Each delegate brought greetings from his church and the floor greatly appreciated them and praised the Lord for the fellowship in Him.

"Liaison Committee presented each summary on the deliberations of 1980 assemblies of CRC, OPC, PCUS and PCA. And a detailed report on the RES Nimes 1980 was also presented to the floor by Rev. H. Suzuki. In this connection the following motions were carried.

1. To formulate our views on the dual membership in both the RES and the WCC with particular reference to the GKN second report, and to send it to RES by December in 1980. And also to study a RES report expected to receive in 1983 and send RCJ's comments and recommendations to the RES by the 1st April in 1984.  
(Action was taken by Liaison Committee.)
2. To translate the RES study report "Church and its Social Calling", to prepare RCJ's comments on it and to present it to the Synod of 1982.  
(Action to be taken by Committee on World and Church.)"

6. The Korean Presbyterian Church

Information was received by letter dated 2nd November 1981 as follows:

"I am enclosing herewith a copy of the Minutes of the Assembly but as they are in Korean I will outline the main decisions here for your information.

- One more presbytery was established in Pusan so that we now have 13 presbyteries.
- The Junior grade local seminary (Kyong Buk Sin Hak Won) at Taegu was approved by the Assembly. Students study for 4 years at this seminary but then must go to Seoul for an additional year of study before they can be ordained as pastors.
- In the past year 27 new churches have been added to our denomination. This includes both new churches that have been commenced during the year and also established churches that have requested admission to our denomination.
- A five member committee was established to write the official church history of our denomination.
- 1984 will be the 100th Anniversary of the beginning of mission work in Korea and a committee was formed to work out special celebrations to mark this occasion.
- It was decided that we should try to establish relations with the Reformed Church in Japan at the level of mission co-operation. This relationship means exchange of delegates or mutual communication to the largest assembly, exchange of the acts of assembly, and exchange of information on church activities. As yet we have not received a reply from Japan but we await news of the decision made at their Synodical Meeting in October. We wish to give you advance notice of this action and will inform you further when we have a reply from Japan.

"In addition to decisions made at the Assembly we would also like to share with you some items of church news.

- Four of our Theological Seminary graduates from last February became military chaplains and are now ministering to men in the armed forces.
- A new 7 story building at Kosin College was dedicated in August. The degrees offered by Kosin College are B.A. in Theology, Christian Education, and Church Music, and also M.D. (Doctor of Medicine). The Korean Theological Seminary offers a Master of Divinity, while the Graduate Section offers an M.A. in Christian Education and Master of Theology.

"We thank you for your continued interest in our work and for your prayer on our behalf. May the Lord continue to bless you in your work for Him in Australia."

And by letter dated February, 1983:

"Our cordial greetings to you in the name of Jesus Christ. We are very grateful to inform you some of recent happenings of our Churches in 1982-1983.

#### The 32nd General Assembly

The Assembly has been set at Tong Kwang Church in Masan during the period of September 23-28th, 1982.

1. Rev. Seu Wan Sun, pastor of Busan North Church, was elected moderator, voting delegates were 194 (97 ministers and 97 ruling elders).
2. The Assembly accepted our separated brothers after 8 years. The reunion welcome worship service was held in November, 1982. By this reunion about 150 Churches are added.
3. The Assembly decided that all Churches should support Kosin College and Seminary with one percent of Church budget every month.
4. All seminary graduates should serve for two years, whether unorganized Church or starting a new Church before ordination.
5. One more presbytery (Taegu) was organized and the number of presbyteries is now 14.

#### Ecumenical Relations

1. Relations already made with:
  - Free Reformed Churches in the Netherlands
  - Free Reformed Churches in Australia
  - Reformed Churches in South Africa
  - Orthodox Presbyterian Church
  - Reformed Presbyterian Church (Evangelical Synod)
  - Overseas Missionary Fellowship
2. Relations newly made with:
  - Reformed Church in Japan
  - Free Reformed Churches in South Africa
3. Dr. Kun Sam Lee was sent to the Constituent Assembly of the International Conference of Reformed Churches, held in the Rafajah Church at Groningen, the Netherlands, from October 26 - November 4, 1982.

### Building Projects

1. Kosin Medical College Hospital (Gospel Hospital) will furnish a new 10 story building within a few years, which is under construction now.
2. Kosin College will open another new campus in Busan this year and the 3 story buildings will be completed by the end of April, 1983, except Music Hall, which will be finished at the end of August.

### Statistics (Sept. 1982)

Church	:	369
Unorganized Church	:	367
Ministers	:	438
Chaplains	:	4
Evangelists, Man	:	514
Evangelists, Woman	:	110
Ruling Elders	:	1 037
Communicant Members	:	54 621
Total Members	:	153 862

(The Reunited Churches are not included.)

### Missionary Works

1. Taiwan mission,  
2 missionary families are working among Chinese people and mission tribes.
2. Korean Immigrants mission,  
Missionaries are working among the Korean immigrants in Brazil, Spain, France, West-Germany, Canada, Japan and U.S.A.
3. South-East Asian Mission,  
The mission board of the Assembly has planned a new project of 10 missionaries to South-East Asian countries for the native peoples.

### 7. Korea Presbyterian Reformed Church in Taiwan

Letters were received with information that this Church wants to have correspondence with the Free Reformed Churches, and a word of welcome for Rev. Hur who was planning to visit Taiwan.

8. The deputies wrote a letter to Rev. G.A. McKenzie in New Zealand, minister of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in that country. Information was passed on, and requested. However, no official answer has been received.

9. The correspondence with the Sister churches of Sumba-Savu is difficult because of the language problems. It may be recommendable to consider improvement at this point.

Conclusion and recommendation

The deputies are of the opinion that efforts must be made to intensify the contacts with those Churches which do not yet belong to sister churches with full correspondence; to increase contacts with Churches which can be accepted as faithful Churches of the Lord and to instruct the new deputies accordingly.

On behalf of the deputies,

K. Bruning.

March 1983.

APPENDIX 4b

TO THE SYNOD OF THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES  
TO BE HELD, THE LORD WILLING,  
MAY 1983 IN KELMSCOTT, W.A.

REPORT ON THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES

---

The Constituent Assembly of the International Conference of Reformed Churches was held from October 26 till November 4, 1982, in Groningen, the Netherlands.

The Free Reformed Churches of Australia were represented by two members of the deputies for correspondence with Churches Abroad, the ministers Rev. Dr S.G. Hur and Rev. K. Bruning.

This report has been written to inform the Churches about the results and decisions of the Assembly, and to prepare discussion and decisions at the Synod of the Free Reformed Churches to be held, the Lord willing, in May 1983.

\* \* \* \* \*

The official assembly was preceded by a prayer meeting which was opened by Rev. G. van Rongen, and during which Rev. K. Bruning held a meditation and Rev. D.W.H. Thomas of Northern Ireland led the attendance in prayer.

\* \* \* \* \*

After the official opening on Tuesday morning, October 26, Rev. G. van Rongen delivered his opening address.

A Dutch proposal concerning the Moderamen for the Conference was adopted (Proceedings Art. 2).

The delegates received the opportunity to introduce the Churches which they represented.

Nine Churches from five continents were present (Proceedings, Art. 4).

From the invited Churches a number of four was unable to attend the Assembly.

It must be noticed that the Churches which were represented had already been in contact with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia for a certain period of time.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was noticeable at the Conference that the Reformed Churches and the Presbyterian Churches have a different background and went through a different historical development. However, the delegates of the Reformed Churches with the Three Forms of Unity, and of the Presbyterian Churches with the Westminster Standards, had no problem to recognize each other as true and faithful Churches of the Lord.

An important aspect is that in the past the diverse Churches of the Conference have been involved in one and the same struggle against Deformation, and have understood the necessity to be liberated from the false Church.

This spiritual background and unity were the most prominent and stimulating motivations to seek closer contact with each other and to promote unity and co-operation as much as possible, in accordance with the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

\* \* \* \* \*

The proposed agenda were adopted by the delegates.

The official proceedings of the Conference report about the dealings and decisions of the meetings.

Prof. Dr L. Doekes addressed the meeting on "Harmony and Variety in Reformed Confessions".

Prof. D. Deddens introduced the topic "The Unity of Faith as Gift and Mandate, and its Significance for Having Various Forms of Church Government".

Rev. P. van Gurp held a speech on the subject "The Unity of Faith as Gift and Mandate, and its Significance for the Reflection on Contacts and Rules with Other Churches".

Rev. M.K. Drost addressed the meeting on "Reformed Mission Work in the Eighties".

The most important and far reaching decisions of the Conference can be listed as follows:

- A. Constitution and Regulations of the International Conference of Reformed Churches;
- B. Interim Rules.

The Churches are advised to study these documents to understand the principles of the new organization and its practical functioning.

At the end of the Conference an official communique was adopted. The last point of this communique declares that confessional unity exists among the participating Churches. Gratitude is expressed to the Lord Who has established His world-wide Church and is faithful in the ingathering, the defence and the preservation of His people until the end of ages.

The delegates from the Free Reformed Churches have richly experienced at the Conference that there was a growing unity and understanding between the delegates of the Churches. Minor differences concerning doctrinal and ecclesiastical matters were no impediment to accept each other as faithful Churches of the Lord, with the intention and desire to stimulate and increase the unity and fellowship, and to start brotherly discussion on those matters which are able to edify one another in the faith of the saints.

Finally, the deputies advise the Synod to adopt the proposals of the Conference and to contribute as much as possible to a fruitful functioning of this International Conference.

On behalf of the Deputies  
Correspondence with  
Churches Abroad

Rev. K. Bruning.

APPENDIX 4c

CONSTITUTION AND REGULATIONS  
OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name shall be The International Conference of Reformed Churches.

ARTICLE II - BASIS

The basis of the Conference shall be the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity (the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort) and the Westminster Standards (the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms).

ARTICLE III - PURPOSE

The purpose of the Conference shall be:

1. to express and promote the unity of faith that the member churches have in Christ;
2. to encourage the fullest ecclesiastical fellowship among the member churches;
3. to encourage cooperation among the member churches in the fulfilment of the missionary and other mandates;
4. to study the common problems and issues that confront the member churches and to aim for recommendations with respect to these matters;
5. to present a Reformed testimony to the world.

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP

1. Those churches shall be admitted as members which:
  - a. adhere and are faithful to the confessional standards stated in the Basis;
  - b. furnish
    - i. their confessional standards;
    - ii. their form of government;
    - iii. their form of subscription;
    - iv. their declaratory acts (if applicable);
  - c. are accepted by a two-thirds majority vote of the member churches, every member church having one vote;
  - d. are not members of the World Council of Churches or any other organization whose aims and practices are deemed to be in conflict with the Basis.

2. Termination of membership shall be by a two-thirds majority whenever the Conference is of the opinion that the member church in its doctrine and/or practice is no longer in agreement with the Basis.

#### ARTICLE V - AUTHORITY

The conclusions of the Conference shall be advisory in character. Member churches are urged to receive the decisions of the Conference and are recommended to work towards their implementation.

#### ARTICLE VI - AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the member churches. The proposed amendment(s) shall be sent to the Corresponding Secretary two years before the meeting of the Conference. He shall send it to the member churches immediately.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### REGULATIONS

##### ARTICLE I - MEETINGS OF THE CONFERENCE

1. The Conference shall convene every four years.
2. Each meeting of the Conference shall determine the time, place and convening church of the next Conference.

##### ARTICLE II - EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

The Conference shall elect the following officers: a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a Recording Secretary and a Corresponding Secretary.

1. The Chairman shall:
  - a. call the meeting to order at the appointed time and see to it that each session is properly opened and closed;
  - b. ensure that the matters on the agenda are dealt with as expeditiously as possible;
  - c. put to the meeting every motion that is made and duly seconded, as well as take the vote;
  - d. rule on all points of order, subject always to an appeal from two voting delegates.
2. The Vice-Chairman shall:
  - a. take the chair when the Chairman desires to express himself on any question before the meeting;
  - b. assume the duties and privileges of the Chairman in his absence;
  - c. render all possible assistance to the Chairman.

3. The Recording Secretary shall:

- a. call the roll every day once the devotions have concluded;
- b. keep an accurate record of all of the proceedings of the meeting;
- c. insure that all documents are properly cared for;
- d. forward three copies of the proceedings to the member churches as soon as possible after compilation.

4. The Corresponding Secretary shall:

- a. during the meeting of the Conference, assist the Recording Secretary whenever and wherever possible;
- b. in between the meeting of the Conference:
  - i. attend to all the correspondence;
  - ii. receive all reports from committees of the Conference and distribute them;
  - iii. assist the convening church;
  - iv. publish materials, reports or other publications as authorized by the Conference;
  - v. report to the next meeting of the Conference on his activities and in the interim be responsible to the Interim Committee.

5. The Executive shall manage the proceedings of the meetings, arrange and propose the business to be transacted in every session and make recommendations concerning the committee.

ARTICLE III - INTERIM COMMITTEE

The Interim Committee shall consist of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman and the Recording Secretary.

It shall:

1. oversee the work of the Corresponding Secretary;
2. invite one of the alternative committee members to serve when necessary;
3. report to the next meeting of the Conference;
4. be dismissed subsequent to its report to the next meeting of the Conference.

ARTICLE IV - COMMITTEES

1. The Conference may appoint a committee to study any matter that is deemed to be of mutual concern to the member churches;
2. Every attempt shall be made to make the members of these committees as representative as possible;
3. Committee reports shall be in the hands of the Corresponding Secretary at least two years prior to the next meeting of the Conference.

#### ARTICLE V - PARTICIPANTS

The following are to be seated at the meetings of the Conference:

1. Voting delegates from the member churches. Each member church shall be entitled to send two voting delegates to the meeting.
2. Advisory delegates from the member churches. Each member church may appoint two advisors, but they shall have no vote.
3. Observer delegates from churches that have made application for membership in the Conference. They may be invited to take part in all discussions but will not be accorded the right to vote nor be present at closed sessions.
4. Visiting delegates from churches which have not yet applied for membership. They shall be granted the right to attend the open meetings of the Conference and have extended to them the usual courtesies for such occasions.

#### ARTICLE VI - CONVOCATION OF THE CONFERENCE

1. The convening church shall organize a prayer service prior to the opening session of the Conference.
2. The convening church shall appoint one of its members to preside at the opening of the Conference.
3. The convenor shall designate three delegates who will collect, examine and report on the credentials of each delegation.
4. The convenor shall supervise the election of the Executive Officers.

#### ARTICLE VII - AGENDA MATERIAL

1. The Conference shall place on its agenda:
  - a. correspondence from member churches;
  - b. applications for membership from other churches;
  - c. reports from its special committees and Corresponding Secretary;
  - d. reports from its Interim Committee;
  - e. recommendations from any two member churches to extend an invitation to another church to send observers to the Conference.
2. Materials received for the agenda should be received by the Corresponding Secretary one year in advance. Material received less than one year before the opening of the next meeting of the Conference shall only be considered if the Conference so decides.
3. The agenda must be finalized three months in advance and a copy sent to all member churches.

#### ARTICLE VIII - RULES OF ORDER

1. To obtain the floor each speaker must be recognized by the chair. He shall address himself to the Chairman with decorum and respect.

2. If a delegate fails to adhere to the point under discussion or becomes unnecessarily lengthy in his remarks, the Chairman shall call him to order.
3. If any delegate has spoken twice on a given issue, others who have not yet spoken shall be given priority by the Chairman.
4. When the Chairman believes that a motion has been sufficiently discussed, he may propose that debate be drawn to a close. Any delegate convinced of the same may move to close the discussion.
5. Decisions shall be taken on the basis of a simple majority of the votes cast, with the exception of Articles IV, 1.c., IV, 2., and VI of the Constitution and Article X of the Regulations.

#### ARTICLE IX - FINANCES

(remains to be determined by the Conference)

#### ARTICLE X - AMENDMENTS TO THE REGULATIONS

The Regulations may be amended by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast. The proposed amendment(s) shall be sent to the Corresponding Secretary one year prior to the meeting of the Conference.

APPENDIX 4d

COMMUNIQUE OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY  
FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES

The Constituent Assembly for the International Conference of Reformed Churches was held in Groningen, The Netherlands, from October 26 to November 4, 1982.

The delegates can look back at a fruitful series of meetings which resulted in important decisions.

One of the most significant items of the agenda was the proposed draft Constitution. The Assembly agreed on the following conclusions laid down in the Constitution:

Article I. The Name shall be the **International Conference of Reformed Churches.**

Article II. The Basis of the Conference shall be the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity (the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dort) and the Westminster Standards (the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms).

Article III. The Purpose of the Conference shall be:

1. to express and promote the unity of faith that the member churches have in Christ;
2. to encourage the fullest ecclesiastical fellowship among the member churches;
3. to encourage cooperation among the member churches in the fulfilment of the missionary and other mandates;
4. to study the common problems and issues that confront the member churches and to aim for recommendations with respect to these matters;
5. to present a Reformed testimony to the world.

Article IV.

1. Those churches shall be admitted as members which
  - a. adhere and are faithful to the confessional standards stated in the Basis;
  - b. furnish
    - i. their confessional standards;
    - ii. their form of government;
    - iii. their form of subscription;
    - iv. their declaratory acts (if applicable);
  - c. are accepted by a two-thirds majority vote of the member churches, every member church having one vote;
  - d. are not members of the World Council of Churches of any other organization whose aims and practices are deemed to be in conflict with the Basis.
2. Termination of membership shall be by a two-thirds majority whenever the Conference is of the opinion that the member church in its doctrine and/or practice is no longer in agreement with the Basis.

During the sessions of the Assembly much time and energy were devoted to matters which are deemed of great value for the present and future ecclesiastical relationship between the member churches. Close attention was given to matters of doctrine and church polity together with missionary mandates and practices.

It was agreed that the Conference be convened every four years and that the first meeting be in Edinburgh, Scotland, in September 1985, the Lord willing. A provisional Secretary was appointed in accordance with the Interim Rules, namely, Rev. M. van Beveren, 13904 - 86 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T5E 3C1.

5. The confessional unity that exists among the participating churches was reaffirmed and promoted. Gratitude is expressed to the Lord Who has established His worldwide church and is faithful in the ingathering, the defence and the preservation of His people until the end of the ages.

APPENDIX 5

DEPUTIES CHURCH BOOK

Appointed by Synod 1980  
of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia

REPORT

to Synod 1983

---

Esteemed Brothers,

1. Synod 1980 gave your deputies this instruction (Acts, Art. 53/7):
  - "a) To continue the efforts aimed at achieving a Scripturally based church book;
  - b) To continue the contact with the Canadian Committee for Church Book, with particular emphasis on joint consultation concerning the hymns and the revised texts of the Ecumenical and the Reformed Creeds, the Liturgical Forms and the Prayers, so that soundly based uniformity be achieved;
  - c) To report to synod 1983."
2. Our interim report dated July 1982 and forwarded to the Councils of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia dealt, in the main, with the Liturgical Forms and the Hymn Section 1979 as adopted by Synod Smithville 1980 of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Recent correspondence with the various Canadian committees, appointed at Smithville, has borne out our expectation that, as our own Synod will D.V. precede the next Synod of the Canadian Churches by six months, time works against us in the evaluation of material produced by the brothers in Canada. In fact, advice has been received that new work on the Belgic Confession, the errors and refutations added to the Canons, and the Prayers, should be on its way to us early in 1983, and that the continuing work on the Heidelberg Catechism should be finished by May 1983.

If at all possible, we hope to forward any material which arrives during February/March to Synod for its information, even though it will be beyond the reporting deadline.

- 3.1. A direct consequence of the events reported under 2) is that this report can only present an assessment of the Revision of the Psalm Section of the Book of Praise, no other Canadian material being available as yet.

It is our considered opinion that solid progress has been made in this

Revision. Most of the changes have produced rhymings closer to the Scripture text; by and large, contemporary English has been used to advantage, whilst the prosody has not suffered. Pronouns referring to the Deity consistently begin with capital letters.

It is unfortunate that only one copy of the Revision could be obtained from Canada. We had to resort to photocopying for our own studies as well as for the Church Councils and the Synod - a costly and tedious process. Each Church Council will be sent three copies of the book, and further copies will be sent to Synod for its use.

Our studies concentrated on those Psalms which had been changed to a considerable degree, as compared with the 1972 version. We selected 27 of these, and the brief comments which follow are the result of our evaluation.

Kindly note: when our remarks refer to:

- "text" - we mean the unrhymed Bible text;
- "verse" - a verse from the unrhymed Bible text;
- "stanza" - part of the rhymed version (Dutch: couplet).

PSALM	COMMENTS
-------	----------

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 20 | Only stanza 4 has been changed drastically; it is now slightly closer to the text, more fluent and less confusing. Other stanzas have been improved by minor alterations.   |
| 23 | This is now much closer to the text, there is less "padding", and the language is more fluent.  |
| 27 | Revision sticks very closely to the text.<br>e.g. Stanza 1: "Whom should I fear" replacing "Why should I fear" ;<br>Stanza 2: "to view the beauty of the LORD"; and<br>Stanza 3: "in His tent", better than "vicinity".   |
| 32 | New version is generally an improvement. In stanza 1, "shriven" has been dropped; a little more padding has taken its place: "in the sight of heaven".  |
| 34 | Shortening 10.5 stanzas to 9 has resulted in more efficient language use, though there is some padding still in st. 3 and 4. In st. 8 "keeps his bones from injury" can be accepted.  |
| 49 | Verse 11 does not come out: "their inner thought: or alt. translation "their houses are tombs" may have been employed for st. 3 line 3.<br>Similarly, v. 14 "the upright shall have dominion..." is not accounted for.<br>V. 19: "he shall go to the generation of his fathers" has been rendered very freely.<br>Prosody is difficult in st. 2 l. 8.<br>English: st. 5: "render you dismayed" is questionable. |

- 57 Clumsy terms and expressions have been replaced; linguistically, this version is a vast improvement. However, the refrain in vs. 5 and 11 is still unrecognizable as such, and rhyming is still poor. Some padding in evidence, but it is acceptable.  
Amendments are generally close to the text.
- 62 Revision consists solely of linguistic improvements.  
St. 2 favours modern translations of v. 3.  
There is room for further improvements in rhyming.
- 63 Revision is much more concise - now 4 stanzas.  
It follows the text more closely.  
The language is more modern, more fluent.
- 64 Poor rhyming is still found in st. 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7.  
Prosody is awkward with st. 3 l. 2 "conspiracy".  
Padding is greatly reduced in this version.
- 65 Closer to the text than 1972.  
St. 4 is new, represents vs. 6 - 8.
- 66 Completely new, an almost word-for-word rendition of the text. Highly commended.
- 67 Follows the R.S.V. fairly closely.  
e.g. use of "may" in st. 1 denotes a humble petition. This is an improvement.  
St. 3 l. 4 is questionable. We would prefer "...harvest will provide". Difference in translation!
- 72 Vs. 8 and 9, not found in the 1972 version, are now included in the new st. 5.  
"May" in st. 2 l. 5 and 6 improves structure and meaning.  
Very few changes occur in the remainder.
- 73 Revision follows the text very closely.  
Expansion to 9 stanzas has not resulted in obvious padding.  
There is noticeable improvement in language use.
- 84 Revision appears to be a rewritten version of that in the Psalter Hymnal. This new version is quite acceptable, but in some places there is no improvement.  
e.g. St. 1 l. 5: "faints" is poor English and unclear;  
St. 1 l. 7: a wrong rendering of "crieth out" in KJV vs. 2; compare also "sing for joy" in RSV;  
St. 4 l. 7: does not render KJV v. 9 correctly.
- 99 Revision is close to Scripture, in spite of extra padding to accommodate the 24 verse lines.  
Unclear is st. 5 l. 4 "kept": preserved or obeyed?

- 100 The rhyming is completely rewritten. The new rhyme scheme AABB is a great improvement. The words are simple and closer to Scripture.
- 101 Sequences of some verses has been changed. This version is closer to the text and linguistically improved.
- 107 Many minor changes are in evidence, most of them bringing this version closer to the text.  
Drastic change occurs e.g. in st. 14, where the ideas are better organized and the language is more fluent.  
There is still much padding, e.g. in st. 17.  
Verse 39 has been omitted.
- 113 Revision shows many changes for the better. It is much closer to Scripture. Padding has been eliminated.
- 117 Revision seems closer to the text, shows no padding.
- 126 St. 2 l. 1 follows the RSV.  
In st. 1 l. 2 we would prefer "brought back from bondage" to the new "brought out of bondage".
- 135 Revision is a considerable improvement on 1972. It is very close to the text and presents no problems.  
Printing error: comma missed behind "You" in st. 1 l. 5.
- 140 Changes have been effected in language use and order.  
As in 1972, some padding occurs in st. 9 and 10.
- 142 "Crying out" has been lost in st. 4 (text v. 5).  
St. 4 could read in l. 1:  
"I cry, my Saviour, unto Thee", - or (l. 1 and 2)  
"O Lord, I cry out unto Thee,  
my refuge and my sanctuary";  
this would neatly eliminate the "without a hope besides" which, in Australia, is considered hopeless English.  
Many improvements have been made to other stanzas.
- 146 Language is much improved in this version.  
St. 5 l. 1: "protects" is better than "watches"  
Query st. 5 l. 2 "waifs": is this contemporary English?

3.2. Although it may be seen that there is still room for improvement of the rhymed Psalms, we are thankful that considerable headway has been made in the Revision. Many of the weaknesses of the 1972 version have been overcome. The improvements are of such calibre that we are pleased to recommend to Synod that the Revision be adopted for use in the Free Reformed Churches of Australia.

3.3. This section of our report would not be complete without an expression of our appreciation to four brothers and sisters from the Launceston congregation who, when the task of evaluating the Revision in the

prescribed time assumed awesome proportions, served gladly as "hewers of wood and drawers of water". Their assistance was invaluable to us.

- 4.1. Useful feedback was received from br. W.L. Dekker of Albany. He supplied us with an improved version of Psalm 4.
- 4.2. We received a letter from the Church Council of Kelmscott which helped us to re-think certain elements of our July interim report. In response to Kelmscott's constructive comments we offer the following remarks:

ad 1.1 and 1.2 -

Shortening of sentences has, in our view, resulted in greater clarity. The twice repeated "When..." in the Form for the Baptism of Infants is an apt illustration. There is a strong element of unity in the repetition. The old connective words may conveniently be omitted here, without damaging the teaching on baptism. The abrupt changes enumerated are not so abrupt as to interrupt the flow of ideas presented in the Form.

questions ad 1.2 -

The words "by nature" are not essential, but they are fully the teaching of Scripture.

We can agree with "signifies" as the visual element in the teaching of baptism is indispensable. Taking into account the muddled sentence construction in the old form, the new sentence is a conspicuous improvement.

We agree that "forsake" is an accepted and Scriptural expression.

The word "because" is the equivalent of "since". It sounds much better in this instance.

ad 1.3

The minister first addresses the congregation, then refers to those professing their faith, and then addresses those professing. This paragraph could be "tidied up" in a concise way by inserting some words between brackets, preceding the words "Now that..." e.g. (the minister now addresses those professing their faith).

The suggestion to improve the wording of the blessing is commended.

ad 1.4

We agree that the words of the Lord's Prayer and the Creed could be omitted.

ad 2

The suggestion re the use of italics will be conveyed to Canada. We realize, however, that in several cases it will not be practicable, considering the tunes employed.

5. We refer briefly to the "particular emphasis on joint consultations concerning the hymns..." etc., in the context of the contact with the Canadian Committee for Church Book.

Synod Smithville considered the work on the Psalms and on the Hymn Section as concluded, and a new Committee was appointed which has to prepare the contents of the definitive Book of Praise, to arrange for printing and distribution, etc. The possibility of joint consultations was therefore limited to peripheral matters.

The situation is quite different in the case of the other committees still operating in Canada: the committee on the Heidelberg Catechism, the committee on the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dordt, and the committee on translation and revision of the Prayers and Forms. They are wide open for our suggestions. However, the Synod timetable in Canada will probably make it impossible for us to evaluate the work of those committees in time to regard any feedback as "joint consultations".

6. In conclusion, your deputies propose the following to Synod:
  - a. adopt the Revision of the Psalm Section of Book of Praise for use in our Churches;
  - b. to adopt the new text of the following Liturgical Forms:

Form for the Baptism of Infants;  
Form for the Baptism of Adults;  
Form for the Public Profession of Faith;  
Form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper;  
Form for the Excommunication of Communicant Members;  
Form for the Readmission into the Church of Christ;  
Form for the Ordination of Ministers of the Word;  
Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons;
  - c. to consider the use of the new Liturgical Forms:

Form for the Excommunication of Non-communicant Members;  
Form for the Ordination of Missionaries;  
Abbreviated Form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper;

- d. to adopt the following Hymns from the Hymn Section 1979 of Book of Praise for use in our churches:  
  
1 - 2 - 6 - 7 - 11 - 13 - 14 - 15 - 16 - 18 - 19 - 21 -  
24 - 26 - 26 - 27 - 29 - 32 - 34 - 36 - 39 (with reservations as reported) - 40 - 41 - 44 - 47 - 49 - 50 - 53 -  
58 - 59 - 63;
- e. to discharge deputies appointed by Synod 1980;
- f. to appoint new deputies with the mandate to report to the churches as soon as the remaining elements of the Church Book are available for scrutiny.

With brotherly greeting,

Your deputies:

G. Brouwer

G. Groenwold

J. Vander Ros

Launceston, January 1982

APPENDIX 6

REPORT RE ENGLISH BIBLE TRANSLATION

TO: Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, Kelmscott, W.A., 1983.

FROM: Deputies for English Bible Translation, appointed by Synod, 1980, Armadale, W.A.

---

MANDATE:

Synod 1980 of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia appointed Deputies charged with the task of gathering information concerning English Bible Translations for use in the Free Reformed Churches. "Deputies will concentrate on the collection of data since this will speed up the process of evaluation considerably."

Deputies recognise that no specific mandate was given to come to any recommendations, but in the light of previous decisions of Synods (1972 and 1975) they felt that they were able to make some recommendations at this time.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

The Synods of the Free Reformed Churches have attempted to deal with this matter from the beginning.

Synod 1954 expressed the desirability of unity of practice with the Canadian sister Churches (Acts, Art. 16).

Synod 1956 decided to adopt the King James Version (KJV) for use in the Churches since there was no doubt as to its fidelity to Scriptural truth. At the same time the Revised Standard Version (RSV) was rejected because of serious doubts as to its reliability (Acts, Art. 36, and Report).

Synod 1966 recognised the need for a "usable English translation". This indicated that Synod was dissatisfied with the decision of Synod 1956 that the KJV was a "usable English translation" (Acts, Art. 50).

At Synod 1972 objections were again voiced about the RSV and deputies were appointed to find a "good English translation" (Acts, Art. 47). They were to concentrate on the KJV II translation and the New American Standard Bible (NASB).

Synod 1975 decided to reject the New International Version (NIV) because of its so-called "dynamic equivalent" method of translation, and the KJV II translation because of serious deficiencies. New deputies were to assess the KJV, the RSV and the NASB and recommend one of these for use in the Churches (Acts, Art. 52).

Synod 1978 decided to abandon evaluation of the NASB and to concentrate on the RSV and a new, updated KJV (Acts, Art. 42).

In the meantime, Synod 1972 of the Canadian Reformed Churches decided to leave the use of the RSV in the freedom of the churches and to continue evaluation of this translation. Deputies of this and following Synods carried out this evaluation, until 1980. Synod 1980 decided to recommend the RSV as the designated version for use within the churches, in worship services and catechism instruction, as well as for Scripture quotations in the Creeds and liturgical forms.

From the foregoing the following is clear:

- 1) The KJV is not considered to be a satisfactory translation for use in the Churches today;
- 2) Unity of practice with the Canadian sister churches is deemed desirable;
- 3) The RSV, in spite of earlier objections, keeps returning as a possible replacement for the KJV.

In the light of these historical developments, and in line with the research carried out by the Canadian sister Churches, Deputies decided to limit their investigations to the following 3 Bible translations:

- 1) The Revised Standard Version;
- 2) The New International Version;
- 3) The New American Standard Bible.

Deputies did not consider any other translations, because of various reasons of practice and principle: for instance, the New (updated) KJV by Nelson was omitted because it shared many of the deficiencies of Jay Green's KJV II. Also, its attempt to fit 20th century word usage into 17th century style and sentence structure creates more difficulties than it solves. It cannot be considered a real improvement over the (old) KJV.

#### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The Deputies used the following sources of information:

- 1) The various Acts of, and Reports to, Synods of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, from 1956 to the present;
- 2) Acts of, and Reports to, Synods of the Canadian Reformed Churches, from 1968 to the present;
- 3) Various books, articles and other materials.

An attempt was made to obtain information from the Deputies of the Canadian Reformed Churches, but to date this has been unsuccessful. In spite of this, Deputies are of the opinion that there is enough information available for them to make a recommendation, and for Synod to come to a decision concerning this matter.

## EVALUATION

What follows is an evaluation, based on information available, of the three translations which were the object of the Deputies investigations.

(NOTE: re Methods of translation)

At this point it may be valuable to insert a few remarks on the two different methods of translation as they are used in Bible Translation work.

(a) The Formal Equivalent Method (F.E.). This method concentrates almost exclusively on the literal text of the original. It results in a word-for-word translation, retaining the sentence structure and typical idiom of the original language, Greek or Hebrew.

(b) The Dynamic Equivalent Method (D.E.). This method concentrates on the meaning of the original, and attempts to express in another language the thought expressed in the original. This method is, by definition, fairly interpretative. It does not, as a rule, bind itself closely to the sentence structure of the original, but places a greater priority on clarity and good sentence sense.

In practice, a pure F.E. translation does not exist. It would be virtually unreadable. Nor would pure formal equivalence be able to do justice to the numerous shades of meaning supplied by the context in the original. The translations considered can best be placed on a scale, with the NASB offering the most literal F.E. translation, the RSV close to it, still basically F.E. but less rigidly so (as also, incidentally, the KJV), and the NIV tending more towards D.E.)

### I. The REVISED STANDARD VERSION

#### Basis and Aims

To provide a thorough revision of the Scriptures in the English language which will stay as close to the KJV as possible in the light of present knowledge of the original texts. Translators aimed at a good, formal, up-to-date English. Translators are not, as a whole, known to be conservatives regarding their view of Scripture.

#### Sources

The RSV is a revision of the American Standard Version (ASV) of 1901, which in turn was a revision of the KJV, taking into account new developments and discoveries in the study of ancient languages and manuscripts.

The Old Testament translation is basically a translation of the Masoretic text. The New Testament translation is generally based on the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament, although in numerous places alternate readings from different manuscripts were used, if, in the judgement of the translators, this gave a more accurate rendering of the original text.

### Method of Translation

Basically Formal Equivalent, though less rigidly so than, for instance, the NASB.

### Advantages

- 1) The RSV is a scholarly, word-for-word translation, based on a large body of reliable research in ancient texts and manuscripts. Where its rendering departs from the accepted manuscript, this is carefully footnoted. Where alternate readings are possible, these are also included in the footnotes.
- 2) The English is formal and dignified, and well suited for liturgical use.
- 3) The RSV follows the tradition of the KJV in its language use and sentence structure.
- 4) An objective reading of the RSV will lead to an accurate formulation and a sound defence of all points of Reformed Doctrine (as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity).
- 5) The Translation Committee of the RSV has proved to be receptive to suggestions for improvements and corrections. Deputies reporting to the Canadian Reformed Synod of 1977 stated that: "... (we) have come up with some recommendations for the Standard Bible Committee. These recommendations are taken seriously and are appreciated." Similar remarks can be found in Reports to the 1974 and 1980 Synods.
- 6) The RSV has been accepted by the Canadian sister churches for use in the worship services and in catechism instruction, and is the designated source for Scripture quotations in the Creeds and liturgical forms in the forthcoming Book of Praise.
- 7) The RSV is available in a large variety of formats and prices.

### Disadvantages

- 1) The translators of the RSV are not, as a whole, committed to the Divine Inspiration or infallibility of Scripture.
- 2) Certain passages contain ambiguities or omissions in translation e.g.
  - a) Sometimes (e.g. Romans 5 : 5) though not always (e.g. Romans 8 : 16) the Holy Spirit is referred to with "which";
  - b) Some inconsistency in referring to Christ variously as "you" and "thou";
  - c) Luke 22 : 43 - 44 has been placed in a footnote;
  - d) An unacceptable rendering of Romans 9 : 5.

In some cases also the translation departs from the generally accepted reading of the original, without this being strictly necessary. This

may be a reflection of liberal bias on the part of the translators, but this cannot be conclusively shown. More information on this point can be found in Reports to the 1974, 1977 and 1980 Synods of the Canadian Reformed Churches, and in the Report to the 1975 Synod of the Free Reformed Churches.

## II. The NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

### Basis and Aims

The translators are committed to the belief that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, and to the authority of Scripture as confessed in a.o. the Belgic Confession and the Westminster Confession. Their aim in translation is to provide in clear, up-to-date English, as accurate as possible a rendering of what is said in the original texts.

### Sources

The NIV is an entirely new translation. While building on historical developments, it is not a revision of any previous translations.

The Old Testament is taken from the Masoretic Text, with occasional variations, usually footnoted, based on other ancient texts. The New Testament translation is an eclectic one, with choices made from all available manuscripts. It generally agrees with the Westcott-Hort Greek text.

### Method of Translation

Tending toward Dynamic Equivalent.

### Advantages

- 1) The NIV proceeds from conservative assumptions regarding the Divine authority of Scripture.
- 2) Full account is taken of contextual meaning in translation.
- 3) It is generally an accurate rendering of the meaning of the original text.
- 4) It is an extremely clear and readable translation, in fluent contemporary English, with a sensitivity for literary style.
- 5) An objective reading of this translation will lead to an accurate formulation and a sound defence of all points of Reformed doctrine, as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity. (The Report to the 1975 Synod of the Free Reformed Churches states: "The NIV is a faithful version, and in no part detrimental to Reformed teaching..." and the Report to the 1980 Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches states that it cannot be considered unscriptural, and recommends its use be left in the freedom of the churches.)

### Disadvantages

- 1) The translation is at times quite free, and fairly interpretative. Sometimes the priority given to clarity interferes with a strictly reliable rendering of original detail, especially as regards sentence structure, e.g.:
  - a) Exodus 20 : 5 - "punishing the children for the sins of their fathers" instead of "visiting..."
  - b) The translation usually rendered by "the Lord of Hosts" as in Isaiah 1 : 9 is given as "the Lord Almighty".
  - c) Philippians 4 : 17 (and other places) - "dear friends" instead of "beloved".
  - d) Isaiah 8 : 7 - "to put my trust in Him" instead of "to wait for".
- 2) The NIV is a fairly new translation. Its general acceptance is not (yet) assured.
- 3) There may be considerable resistance to the use of "You" and "Your" when addressing God and Christ, even though this is a faithful translation.
- 4) The RSV is the designated source for Scripture quotations in the forthcoming Book of Praise of the Canadian sister churches.
- 5) The English used in the NIV tends to be less formal than e.g. the RSV or the NASB, is therefore likely to be less suited for use in worship, and is also likely to date faster than a translation in more formal English.
- 6) There is a limited number of formats available, all of which are rather large and bulky, as well as being relatively expensive.

### III. The NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE

#### Basis and Aims

The translators are committed to the belief that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Their aim was to provide as close as possible to a word-for-word translation from the original texts, retaining original word order and sentence structure wherever possible.

#### Sources

The NASB is basically an update of the American Standard Version (ASV) of 1901. This (ASV) was a revision of the KJV, taking into account new developments and discoveries in the study of ancient texts and languages. The ASV was a very literal translation in (for 1901) outdated English. It was an excellent translation for study purposes, but unsatisfactory for worship or family use. The NASB continues in this tradition.

As in the RSV and the NIV, the NASB translation of the Old Testament is based on the Masoretic Text, and the New Testament translation on developments of the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament, rather than the Textus Receptus which was used for the KJV.

#### Method of Translation

Basically Formal Equivalent.

#### Advantages

- 1) Translators have proceeded from conservative assumptions regarding the authority of Scripture.
- 2) It generally provides an accurate literal rendering of the original text.
- 3) An objective reading of this translation will lead to an accurate formulation and a sound defense of all points of Reformed Doctrine (as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity).

#### Disadvantages

- 1) In translation, insufficient account is taken of contextual meaning. Often, this translation is more of a transliteration. The excessively literal rendering of the original frequently obscures the exact meaning of the text. The translation is often lacking in clarity. Some example:
  - a) Philippians 1 : 27 - 30 is, in its entirety, stilted, awkward and unclear.
  - b) Hebrews 1 : 1 - "in many portions" - what does that mean?
  - c) A little further - "if indeed God is one" (a literal rendering which suggests that this is open to question) rather than the more correct "since God is one".
  - d) A consistent use of verb forms which are not a part of normal English usage.

Holwerda, in Populair Wetenschappelijke Schetsen (Goes, 1962, p.77) says: "a literal translation is often literal, but no translation. After all, the latter is what we are after."

- 2) The English language and style is often awkward and unnatural.
- 3) The RSV is the designated source for Scripture quotations in the forthcoming Book of Praise of the Canadian Reformed Churches.
- 4) The NASB is available in a limited number of formats, all of which are rather large, bulky, and relatively expensive.

## THE PRESENT USE OF THE KING JAMES VERSION

1) The language of the KJV is so outdated as to form a definite barrier to the clear understanding of Scripture. This is especially true for children and younger members of the Churches, for those who became members at an adult age, and for those for whom English is not their native language. Even those who by years of reading and study are 'at home' in the KJV miss many nuances of meaning. Many words and expressions used in the KJV are no longer a part of the normal English language. More seriously, many words or expressions have entirely different meanings now to what they had when the KJV first appeared. This can and does lead to numerous instances where the Scriptures are unwittingly misunderstood or misapplied. For our time, the clarity of the KJV falls far short of what is desirable and possible.

2) The KJV does not, as a whole, provide the most reliable rendering of the original text. It contains a number of mistranslations, and progress in the availability and study of ancient manuscripts, as well as advances in the knowledge of ancient languages has shown a need for a more accurate translation. We refer to the Report submitted to the 1980 Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches, which stated as one of its conclusions: "the KJV cannot function any longer as a translation in contemporary English or as the best rendering of the original text." J.P. Lewis in The English Bible from KJV to NIV (Baker Book House) pp. 44 ff. cites numerous inaccuracies and mistranslations present in the KJV. The Report to Synod 1974 of the Canadian Reformed Churches quotes (with agreement) a dissertation by J.L. Goddard which concludes that the RSV is statistically more accurate than the KJV.

3) It is becoming increasingly apparent to parents as well as teachers that the language of the KJV is often difficult, if not impossible, for the children of the Church to comprehend. One of the major tasks of Christian parents and teachers is to instruct covenant children to read and understand God's Word for themselves. Clarity ought therefore to be a major factor in deciding which Bible translation is to be used. Deputies are of the opinion that it ought not to be necessary to instruct the children of the Church in a language other than their own in order to enable them to hear what their Father wishes to say to them.

## MODERN TRANSLATIONS CONSIDERED

1) It ought to be stressed that none of the three translations evaluated can, taken as a whole, be considered unacceptable. All have their weaknesses, but in no case are these of such a nature as to remove the translation from consideration.

2) All three versions have based their translations on the same sources, representing the current level of knowledge regarding ancient manuscripts and languages.

3) In spite of their respective shortcomings or weaknesses, none of the three versions evaluated can be called unscriptural. For each translation it is true that there are passages or phrases of which the translation is incorrect or questionable, and which, when considered in isolation may cause

doubts or objections. But this is true of every translation, including the KJV. And to this may be remarked that the Church has never read Scripture passages in isolation. We cite a few examples:

- a) In Genesis 12 : 3 and other O.T. places the RSV has: "By you all nations of the earth shall bless themselves." This rendering does not do justice to the Messianic promise contained in this verse: "in you all nations of the earth will be blessed." Granted. But we also find this promise quoted in Galatians 3 : 8, where it is correctly rendered, and placed in its full Messianic perspective. As in so many other instances, the reading of the Old Testament Gospel in the light of its New Testament fulfilment resolves any uncertainty.
- b) In the RSV Psalm 2 : 7 is given as: "you are my son, today I have begotten you." The failure to capitalize 'son' leaves out the Messianic import of this text. However, its full Messianic significance becomes immediately obvious when we read it quoted in Acts 13 : 33 and Hebrews 1 : 5 and 5 : 5.
- c) Isaiah 7 : 14 is given as: "behold, a young woman shall conceive..." This rendering has been cited as evidence of an attempt to deny the virgin birth of our Saviour. Holwerda, amongst others, shows that "young woman" is a better translation than "virgin". The prophecy most immediately points to an event during the lifetime of king Ahaz, possibly the birth of Hezekiah. It refers indirectly to the birth of Christ. Again, a reading of the text as it is quoted in the New Testament (Matt. 1 : 23) gives the Old Testament prophecy its full Messianic meaning.

## CONCLUSION

The Deputies are of the opinion that of the three versions considered the RSV is the one to be preferred, and make the following observations:

1) Over the past 15 years, Deputies of the Synods of the Canadian Reformed Churches have made a detailed study of these three versions, most particularly of the RSV. In reports submitted to the various Synods during that period, the consistent conclusion has been that the RSV is a reliable translation of the Holy Scriptures, and that no conclusive evidence to the contrary has been brought forward. We quote from the Acts of Synod (1974) of the Canadian Reformed Churches (Art. 182):

"Synod declares: That the committee has not adduced valid reasons to state that the RSV is unacceptable."

"Synod decides: In accordance with the decision of the General Synod New Westminster 1972 Art. 33 to leave the use of the RSV in the freedom of the Churches."

For over ten years the use of the RSV has been left in the freedom of the Canadian sister Churches, and this has been a period of testing and review. At the end of this period, the original conclusion as to the reliability and suitability of the RSV still stood.

At the 1980 Synod, the Canadian sister churches chose the RSV as the preferred translation for worship and catechism instruction, and decided to use it in the linguistic revisions of the Creeds and Liturgical Forms. They did so after lengthy and detailed consideration of the issues involved, and have come to the conclusion that the RSV is the most suitable version for use in the Churches. We quote from the Acts of the Canadian Reformed Synod 1980, Art. 111:

"The Majority Report bases its preference (for the RSV) on the fact that the RSV is a 'scholarly word-for-word translation', that the English of the RSV is 'dignified and best suited for liturgical use', and that the future offers good hope for improvements. Furthermore ... the RSV lends itself best 'for the Scripture quotations in the linguistic modernisations of the Creeds and the Liturgical Forms' and ... the use of the RSV should be recommended to the Churches."

2) Synod 1956 of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia rejected the RSV on the grounds that it was 'modernistic and unscriptural'. They did so mainly because marked differences were seen between the RSV on the one hand and the KJV and the Dutch Staten-vertaling on the other. The Trinitarian Bible Society also largely bases its objections to the RSV on its difference from the KJV. Such criticism is of limited validity, since the reliability of a particular translation is to be determined with reference to the original texts, and not to another Bible translation.

3) It is true that a number of translators of the RSV do not hold conservative views regarding the authority of Scripture. A number of them are theological 'liberals'. This, however, need not, and in fact does not, imply that the translation itself is a liberal one. If anything the RSV has been criticised as being 'too conservative' in its use of the original texts, its method of translation, and its presentation in English. Synod 1974 of the Canadian Reformed Churches remarks that the RSV was chosen for evaluation because it is one of the most conservative translations presently available.

A telling example is provided by the RSV's rendering of 2 Tim. 3 : 16, which upholds the Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures: "All Scripture is inspired by God, and is profitable..." etc. The translators could easily have chosen the rendering more suitable to 'liberal' thinking, as the Dutch NGB-vertaling does: "Every Scripture inspired by God is also profitable..." etc. But they did not do so.

4) The main criticism levelled at the RSV is that it downplays the Divine nature of Christ, and as such, has become a vehicle for liberal theology, which denies the Deity of Christ. This objection to the RSV was also the thrust of the Report to the 1956 Synod of the Free Reformed Churches. And there are places where the rendering of the RSV does not give the same expression to the Divinity of Christ as does the KJV, as e.g. Romans 9 : 5, Psalm 45 : 6 & 7, Luke 24 : 51b & 52a in notes instead of in the text, 1 Tim. 3 : 16. But it has not, and cannot be shown, conclusively that these differences are a reflection or a result of a modernistic viewpoint. In most cases they simply reflect the fact that choices had to be made, out of a number of ancient texts, and a number of possible translations. The argument

cannot be sustained that these alterations and/or omissions detract from or cast doubt on the Scriptural confession concerning the Divinity of our Saviour. In fact the RSV, in a number of places, upholds the Deity of Christ even more than the KJV does, as e.g. in Titus 2 : 13 and 2 Peter 1 : 1.

On reading the RSV, the only conclusion one could possibly come to is that the Bible speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Christ of the Scriptures, the Son of God, that is, God Himself. This conclusion comes through loud and clear, and is as inescapable in the RSV as it is in any other translation of the Holy Scriptures.

5) The translators of the NASB proceeded from the conviction that the Bible is the infallible, inspired Word of God, and based their translation work on this conviction. The results, however, do not differ markedly from the RSV. Both versions use the same sources, and both use the same method of translation. Both are derived from the KJV via the ASV. The only major differences between the RSV and the NASB (clarity, readability and good use of English) clearly favours the RSV.

6) Like the NASB, the NIV was translated by scholars who proceeded from Scriptural convictions regarding the authority of Scripture as the inspired Word of God. It has already been noted in this report that the method of translation differs from that of the RSV and the NASB. This translation is freer and more interpretive. (The Report for the 1975 Synod of the Free Reformed Churches deals with this aspect at some length.) The freer method of translation of the NIV makes it somewhat less suitable for study purposes than the other versions. On the other hand, because of its great clarity and excellent readability, it might well be the most suitable of the three versions for family or private reading.

7) To summarise:

The RSV is a sound, scholarly word-for-word translation, generally accurate and reliable, presented in good dignified English, and is suitable for church worship, instructional use, and family, personal and study reading.

The NASB is a similar translation to the RSV, but falls short in clarity and readability. It is therefore less suited for worship, instructional or family use.

The NIV has strong appeal because of its clarity and readability, but is less suitable for worship or study purposes because of its method of translation.

The Canadian sister Churches have adopted the RSV as the preferred translation after lengthy evaluation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Deputies recommend to Synod:

- 1) That the use of the Revised Standard Version be recommended to the Churches, for public worship, instructional purposes (e.g. catechism instruction and schools) and family use.
- 2) That Synod appoint Deputies to report to the next Synod with their evaluations and findings regarding the use of the RSV. Further, that these Deputies are instructed to set up and maintain adequate archives of relevant matter, in order to facilitate the work of any future Deputies dealing with Bible translation matters, should these be appointed.

The Deputies:

S.G. Hur (convenor)  
K. Bruning  
J. Numan  
A. Plug (secretary)

APPENDIX 7

REPORT OF LIBRARIAN OF THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA  
TO SYNOD 1983 AT KELMSCOTT

Contents of Library

- 1) Una Sancta Volumes XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX, XX, XXI, XXII, XXIII, XXIV, XXV, XXVI, XXVII, XXVIII, XXIX.  
- Each issue added to library as it appears.
- 2) Acts of Synod - transferred to Archives as instructed by Synod 1980 Article 26.  
- Library contains 1 copy of Acts 56, 59, 62, 64, 66, 68, 70, 72, 75, 78, 80.
- 3) Acts of Synod 1962 Reformed Churches of Australia. 1 copy.
- 4) Acts of Reformed Churches of Holland (Liberated).

1 copy:	Burschoten/Spakenburg	1958/59
1 copy:	Assen	1961
1 copy:	Rotterdam/Delfshaven	1964/65
2 copies:	Hoogeveen	1969/70
1 copy:	Amersfoort/West	1966/67
1 copy:	Hattem	1972
1 copy:	Kampen	1975.

\* No further copies of Synods of later years.
- 5) Rapport Inzake Correspondentie met Buitenlandse Kerken aan Synode van Kampen  
2 copies: 1975  
1 copy: 1978
- 6) Rapport Inzake Herziening van Kerkorder aan de Synode van Kampen - 1975  
1 copy.
- 7) Rapport Inzake Enige Artikelen van de Kerkorde in Opdracht van Kampen 1975 - 2 copies.
- 8) Rapport Inzake de Herziening van het Kerkboek aan de Generale Synode te Kampen 1975 - 2 copies.
- 9) Rapport Inzake de Psalm berijming aan de Generale Synode te Kampen 1975 - 2 copies.
- 10) Gereformeerde Kerkboek - uitgegeven in Opdracht van Kampen 1975.
- 11) Handboek Gereformeerde Kerken Holland 1975 & 1978.
- 12) Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika.

13) Acta van de Synode van:

- a) Pretoria: 1963.
- b) Pretoria: 1966.
- c) Kaapstad: 1968.
- d) Acta van Voortsetting 1969 (Pretoria).

14) Handelinge van die Synode van die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerken in Suid-Afrika.

Pretoria	1971	2 copies
Pretoria	Dec. 1972	2 copies
Kaapstad	Feb. 1972	2 copies
Kaapstad	1974	1 copy
Pretoria	1975	1 copy
Pretoria	1976	3 copies
Pretoria	Feb. 1977	1 copy
Kaapstad	1978	2 copies

15) Canadian Yearbooks

(a)	1954	1 copy
(b)	1974	1 copy
(c)	1975	2 copies
(d)	1976	1 copy
(e)	1977	1 copy
(f)	1978	3 copies
(g)	1979	1 copy
(h)	1980	2 copies.

15) Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches - 2 copies.

16) Acts of Synods Canada

Hamilton	1962	2 copies
Edmonton	1965	1 copy
Orangeville	1968	1 copy
New Westminster	1971	1 copy
Toronto	1974	1 copy
Coaldale	1977	3 copies
Smithville	1980	1 copy.

The Librarian  
26-04-83  
H. Terpstra.

APPENDIX 8a

REPORT ON MISSION ACTIVITIES IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

To the Church Council  
Free Reformed Church of Armadale

3rd December, 1981

Dear Brothers,

In accordance with your instructions this committee is pleased to report to you regarding the mission work in West Australia, the Churches may be properly advised, as is defined in Article 34 of the Acts of Synod 1980.

The committee wishes you God's invaluable guidance in dealing with this report, so that His divine Will in this matter may be fulfilled to the praise of His Name.

The committee trusts that with the presentation of this report, it is discharged of the task given to it.

With brotherly greetings,

Chairman - (Br. A. Slobe)

Secretary - (Br. S.C. Fokkema)

FOR THE MISSION SUB-COMMITTEE

## 1. PRELIMINARIES

In accordance with Acts of Synod 1980, Article 34 (2) the Church Council of the Church of Armadale appointed the following as members of a Sub-Committee: Rev. K. Bruning, Rev. S.G. Hur, Br. A. Slobe (Chairman), Br. L. Schoof (jnr), Br. S.C. Fokkema (Secretary).

This committee was appointed in March 1981 and commenced its work on April 2nd, 1981. It has convened (14) meetings, some of which were with members of the Mission Committee. Much consultation has taken place with the mission worker Br. P. 't Hart. At the outset the committee felt it essential to acquaint itself thoroughly with the present activities of the mission work. Pinjarra Sunday and Wednesday activities were visited on a number of occasions by various members of the committee, as also the work at Wandering, the purpose of this being to gain up to date, first hand knowledge of the work. These visits were discussed and certain observations made. The "Draft Instructions and Guidelines" issued by the Church Council of Armadale have been discussed by the Committee and consideration has been given to points 1 to 4 of Part B. The Committee believes that the answering of many of the points referred to may be found in the body of the report. The Committee felt it to be unwarranted to answer each of the points in detail.

## 2. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MISSION WORK IN WEST AUSTRALIA

For a proper understanding of this report on the mission work in West Australia, a short history of the work is essential.

1966

Synod instructs the Church of Armadale to investigate the possibilities of starting Mission work in the immediate vicinity of Armadale and to report to the next Synod.

1968

Investigations lead to finding a suitable area at Pinjarra as a result of contact with a Mr Ben Mason, who is an aboriginal 'lay preacher' of no particular church, who had been conducting occasional meetings at Pinjarra, and who urged members of the Mission Committee to start there. The mission committee visits Mr Ben Mason's meetings in East Perth and observe his methods. With Church Council approval a group is formed. After some 4 weeks of visiting Aboriginal people in Pinjarra, the first meeting is held in the R.S.L. Hall. (April) A small group of adults and children attend. The work group is composed of Br. G.J. Bosveld, Br. P. 't Hart, Br. L. Schoof (Jnr), and Br. J. de Vos. Meetings are held on Sundays and on Wednesday evenings. 'Home' visits are brought on Saturday afternoons.

Synod instructs the Church of Armadale to continue according to ability.

1968 - 1971

A time of steady growth in attendance to a peak of about sixty, of whom about half are adult. Meetings are often disorderly because of drink affected adults. Disturbances both inside and outside the hall make work difficult. The Mission Area is enlarged to include Armadale, Medina and Mandurah. Two V.W. Mini-buses are purchased to provide transport to and from the meetings. During 1969 meetings are started in Pinjarra on Saturday afternoons specifically for children. 'Home' visit work on Saturday afternoons also continued during this period.

Some people who shift to Perth suburb of Coolbellup ask for meetings to be conducted there. This is agreed to, and meetings are started on Thursday evenings (later Tuesdays), which attract some adults and large numbers of children. 'Home' visits are extended into the Coolbellup Area. The workgroup is enlarged to cope with the additional workload. At Coolbellup there is a steady decrease in the number of adults attending meetings, due, in part, to the growing numbers of children who are often boisterous.

1972

Br. P. 't Hart is appointed by Synod as full-time mission worker to consolidate and intensify the work (Acts of Synod, Art. 45).

1973

Br. P. 't Hart commences full-time work, 1-07-73. The desirability is expressed that Br. P. 't Hart live in the central 'hub' of the work, namely Pinjarra.

The decision is taken to build a hall in Pinjarra. It is felt necessary because of uncertainty of a suitable hall being available.

1974

A house is purchased in Pinjarra for Br. P. 't Hart and his family who move there in June 1974. Together with Br. J. de Vos who already lives in Pinjarra, good regular contact is maintained with many Aborigines.

However attendance at the meetings gradually decrease during the years 1972 - 1979 to approximately 12 adults and 16 children who attend fairly regularly.

An influx of people into Armadale results in a children's meeting being started on Monday evenings in Armadale by extra workers. This group is soon split into two age groups due to large numbers. In Pinjarra the children's meetings are continued on Thursday afternoons instead of Saturday afternoons.

The Hall is built in Pinjarra on land made available by the Lands & Surveys Department at no cost to the Churches. Substantial financial assistance for the building of the Hall is received from the Netherlands.

Ideas of Social and Cultural activities at the hall are mooted, but never fully implemented.

Generally meetings become more orderly and some people appear to be genuinely and favourably influenced by the Gospel. On Sunday 25th August, 1974, Sr. I. Indich and Br. C. McClymans publicly profess their faith in the Church of Armadale.

Over the ensuing years five different catechism classes are started at different places. However one after the other each of these has to be stopped due to a lack of continuing interest.

1975

Meetings are started in Coolbellup on Sundays with the express intent of attracting the parents and adults. However the objective is not achieved. These meetings continue for sometime with children only, with the occasional one or two adults. 'Home' visits are brought but to no avail.

1978

The number of people attending the meetings at Pinjarra has dropped considerably. Very few of these actually come from Pinjarra itself. By large the interest of the Pinjarra people is at a very low ebb. The children's meetings at Pinjarra have to be abandoned because of impractically low attendances. In the light of the situation at Pinjarra, Br. 't Hart requests to be allowed to return to Armadale, as no material benefit for the work is to be gained by him and his family staying in Pinjarra. The Church Council of Armadale accedes to his request, subject to the agreement of the Churches, which is obtained.

The work is continued, with Br. 't Hart based again in Armadale.

1979

Meetings are started at Wandering at an Aboriginal Alcoholics Rehabilitation Centre, where several people from the Mission Area are staying. Generally the attendance and attention is good. Some good conversations can be had with previously inebriated people.

1980

All meetings and visits in the Coolbellup Area are stopped due to the un-willingness of the people. This work amongst children only, without the parents is not considered to be mission work. For five years the workers tried to bring the Gospel to the parents and families. The work is deemed to be complete and therefore is stopped.

1981

Catechism classes with some girls in Armadale are stopped after 3 years. Most of these girls also regularly attended church services in Armadale. However as they grew up, one after the other stopped coming, forcing the closing of this work.

### 3. ACTIVITIES CURRENTLY BEING CONDUCTED BY THE MISSION TEAM

At present there are four distinct activities of the mission work. These are:-

#### 3.1 PINJARRA

Meetings on Sundays 10 - 11 a.m. Br. 't Hart is the speaker who leads the meeting and preaches the Gospel. He is supported by part time workers who also provide music and transportation for those who want to come to the meetings. Two mission buses are involved in this activity. This meeting is attended by approximately nine adults and fifteen children of various ages. Those who attend do not necessarily attend every meeting.

#### 3.2 PINJARRA

Meetings on Wednesday 8 - 9 p.m. This meeting is similar to the Sunday meetings. The comments relative to that meeting equally apply to the Wednesday meetings except that attendances are generally a little lower.

#### 3.3 ARMADALE

Meetings at the Church of Armadale from 7 - 8 p.m. on Mondays specifically for Aboriginal children of the district.

The leaders of this activity are: Sr. J. van Leeuwen, Br. A.M.C. Bruning, Br. H. Hamelink. The children are split into two age groups, and are given Biblical instruction. Approximately 25 children attend. One of the mission buses is used to transport the children to and from the meetings.

#### 3.4 WANDERING - "Waardiny" Centre for Aboriginal Alcoholics

Meetings are held Mondays 7.15 - 8.15 p.m. The leader is Br. 't Hart who conducts the meetings and preaches the Gospel to an average of 15 adults in a room allocated to him by the Aboriginal leaders of the centre. (Attendances are presently somewhat lower.) Normally no extra workers accompany Br. 't Hart at this meeting. Guitar Music is provided by Mr S. Dinah, an Aboriginal man from Pinjarra who makes his own way to Jarrahdale turn-off. From there he travels with Br. 't Hart in the bus to Wandering. The round trip involves some 250 km, plus the travelling of Mr S. Dinah of 80 km from Pinjarra.

### 4. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Mission Work can only be or remain viable and purposeful if there is:

- a) A sufficiently large population in the chosen field to who the Gospel can be brought, AND
- b) If the Gospel preaching is being responded to.

After examining the present mission work in West Australia, the committee concludes that the 'high' point of this mission work, as far as its viability is concerned was during the years 1971 - 1976. There was a good population which, although somewhat scattered over a wide area, were nonetheless communally bound together socially, ethnically and geographically to such an extent that we could speak of an identifiable mission field. During the years referred to there was a definite response to the Gospel preaching. Whilst there was a consolidation of interest by some, there was also an implied rejection by others of the real purpose of the Mission work. During this period the mission activity was at its peak. A full time mission worker was appointed, as also many extra part time workers, the hall was built at Pinjarra. The mission worker moved to Pinjarra, the 'hub' of the work area. The Gospel was faithfully preached, 'in season and out of season'. People were pressed in the preaching and in personal contact to take the Gospel seriously, and to respond in faith to the urgent appeal. Two people came and professed their faith and became members of the Church of the Lord at Armadale.

We do not say that the work before and after this period was wasted or ineffective. On the contrary.

After the initial years of the mission we see a great response, with many people attending the meetings to hear the Gospel, they receive the seed bountifully. However, following this period we see the falling away of many and only a few remain, (10 or 12) who still have a greater or lesser degree of interest for the Gospel.

During 1971 - 1976 the mission work was viable. The committee is of the opinion that this is no longer the case.

Whilst we may rejoice that there are still 10 - 12 people at Pinjarra who reasonably regularly attend the meetings and are willing to listen to the Gospel preaching, their number is so small that the maintaining of this mission field must be seriously questioned.

During the past two years only one additional person started attending the Pinjarra meetings regularly.

From all this, the committee concludes that the mission field has been worked. THE GOSPEL HAS BEEN PREACHED, the seed has been sown, and with heavy hearts we must acknowledge that the Gospel has been rejected by most.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THOSE FEW WHO STILL COME TO THE MEETINGS?

If we try to evaluate the attitudes of people, why they still come to the meetings and yet are making little or no progress, we must generalise.

In this context it should be stated that they attend because they wish to hear the Gospel. Apart from that they like to do this in surroundings where they meet their own friends and acquaintances and where they do not have to be ashamed of themselves. Most of them listen fairly well, but cannot often speak about the message that was preached. However the mission workers are convinced that over the years they have learned the real message

and context of the Scriptures. In parallel with the mission work there has been a gradual change in the social pattern and lifestyle of many people.

Many who once were almost hopeless alcoholics, living in shockingly squalid conditions, under-nourished and unhealthy, are now relatively 'decent' clean living people. This improvement of physical and material well-being is generally speaking going on all the time, not only in our mission field, but it is a general trend with the aboriginal people.

Some people also make certain changes in their lifestyles in direct response to the Gospel preaching. However it is apparent that may do so because they want to achieve a certain level of lifestyle and conduct before they can make a commitment to the Lord.

They are happy with what they have, and see no reason why they should come further. It has been pointed out and stressed time and again what repentance really is, what it means to confess faith in the Lord of the Scriptures and what it means to belong to the Church, the Body of Christ, but to no avail.

If this was all, it may be said that with further teaching and personal contact, these erroneous thoughts might be corrected. However, these same people are often reluctant, to further personal teaching such as catechism instruction. They avoid this and remain evasive even in personal discussion. Furthermore it is clear that many willingly cling to certain sins. They understand that they must break with them, but are unwilling to do that. Some are afraid they must break with the church to which they are officially are affiliated - usually Roman Catholic.

The majority of the people have no real desire to come any further than attending the meetings. The style of the meetings resemble a form of church service and thus they cling to that form and openly call the meetings 'church'. They delude themselves into accepting that they go to 'church' though they have constantly been reminded that it is not a church, and know this very well. They use the meetings as a means of quieting their conscience. They know that they cherish sin in their life, but delude themselves into thinking they can off-set this by going to 'church'. Here they can apparently have the best of both. They can have their 'church' without the obligations that they know membership of the real church brings. It is also obvious to the mission workers that they rarely, if ever, read their Bibles. It is obvious from this that there are, by and large, no signs of true conversion. The committee believes that no change can be expected in this attitude of the people if the work continues along the present lines.

In the light of the foregoing the committee is convinced that a situation has developed and is continuing which requires very definite action on the part of the Churches.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The mission work has been faithfully conducted in accordance with the instructions of the churches and in obedience to the Word of God.

5.2 The Gospel has been preached, faithfully, seriously and joyously. The seed has been sown.

5.3 Essentially the task of preaching towards most people is complete.

5.4 There remains a concluding task towards those who still attend the meetings. This task being that those people must now be firmly pressed to make a clear and definite choice.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 PINJARRA

The committee has concluded that essentially the mission task has been completed. There remains however a concluding task towards those people who still show an earnest desire to listen to the Gospel. We will refer to this group as the 'remnant'. It is to this remnant alone that this concluding task is to be addressed. It would be wrong, in the committee's view, to simply stop the work. We may not 'walk out' on them. We must continue to be hopeful for the remnant. If the meetings are stopped suddenly it may well have a disastrous effect on these people. They are but a tender plant, and need much care and love if they are to reach out and embrace the Gospel wholeheartedly.

Although the mission work has been conducted for over 12 years the committee is of the opinion that a greater degree of urgency in accepting the Gospel must be pressed on these people in a personal way. It is now clearly the mission team's duty and task to bring out the decisive step in the lives of the remnant. They must be urged to come to confession of faith and membership of the Church.

Therefore the committee recommends that the concluding task be carried out in the following way.

Continue the Sunday morning meetings for a definite period of six months after the Churches have adopted this report. The preaching at these meetings should be planned in advance and aimed very specifically at the remnant only. Br. 't Hart should consider the need for repentance and true conversion of the remnant and treat any others as visitors. Strong emphasis should be placed on a total acceptance of the Gospel.

This six month period of preaching must be carefully prepared and planned with that aim in mind. At the end of that six months these meetings should cease altogether.

The usual Wednesday evening meetings should cease. These should be replaced with meetings organised for the remnant only. Great care should be taken to invite only to these meetings those who show a genuine desire to commit themselves to further learning. Children should certainly be excluded from these meetings. The form of these meetings should be to involve these people in discussion with the mission worker, to draw them out and make them active participants and

not passive listeners. All semblance of a classroom type lecture should be avoided, bearing in mind the purpose of leading them in love to the Lord of the Scriptures and the doctrine of the Church. Continually the accent should be on total commitment.

Here also a proper six month program should be drawn up and progressively carried out. At the end of the six month period this work too should be stopped.

Home visit work should at the same time be very much intensified, but only with the remnant. All others should be told very clearly that the mission worker is only working amongst those who show a genuine desire to learn the way of salvation, and adding the warning to repent.

The remnant who are invited to the special Wednesday meetings must be visited regularly every week without fail. They must know that Br. 't Hart is coming on a certain day or evening and at a set time. Suspect excuses should be exposed and the consequences clearly pointed out, the aim being to expose insincerity if there is any.

The thrust of the home visits is to press upon them the urgency of the Gospel. They need to repent NOW and come to confession of faith and membership of the Church. If, however, as a result of this work no meaningful contact can be maintained then Br. 't Hart will have the painful duty to tell them that they are refusing the only way to eternal life. It should be pointed out that it is their decision. It should not be mission worker who leaves them, but they who refuse the Lord of the Scriptures whom the mission worker brings. This should be made very clear to them.

The committee is aware that this six month period amongst the remnant is no small task. Therefore it is essential that Br. 't Hart should have the full support and assistance of the Church Council. Therefore the committee further recommends that:

The mission committee or two brothers from that committee meet on a weekly basis with Br. 't Hart to review the progress of the work and give advice where needed. Each of the people on the remnant list should be discussed, their responses at meetings, results of home visits, progress made, and so on.

The mission committee should report verbally each month to the Church Council on the progress of the work. The Church Council should allow adequate time on the agenda so that a full discussion can take place. The work must be analysed to see if it is effective, and if not methods must be changed to allow effective use of the six months.

After the six months the work should cease and if there are people left who have not come to confession of faith, but show a desire to do this at a future time, they should then come under the care of the Local Church. This church should then decide how best to help these people further. Those who have come forward to confess

their faith will be of course under the care of the Local Church. The public confession of faith should take place at a special Church Service held at Pinjarra, if it is considered desirable because of any inhibitions that some Aboriginal people may have.

## 6.2 WANDERING

The work at Wandering was commenced due to the relationship with the Pinjarra work. A few of the people from our mission field found their way out of the alcohol problem by going there for the group therapy program offered.

Wandering attracts Aboriginal people from all over the State who stay there for approximately three months, and then move back to their own homes. They cannot remain there as it is a treatment centre and not a place of permanent residence. By definition therefore it cannot be classed as a mission field. It does not have a steady population, and therefore mission work cannot lead to church planting there. All the same it is a joy to proclaim the true Gospel to willing and attentive hearer who perhaps have never before heard of the Only Source of Hope and Life.

However, because the criteria of viability and purpose of mission work cannot be sustained in this work, and in view of the recommendations regarding Pinjarra, this work should be stopped. The connecting link between Pinjarra and Wandering will no longer exist.

Nevertheless the committee strongly recommends that this work come under the care of the local church(es). Wandering presents an unusual opportunity to bring the Gospel to willing hearers who very likely have never heard it before. That in itself is a wonderful task.

## 6.3 ARMADALE

This work was originally started for the Aboriginal children of the district whose parents either were reasonably regular at the Pinjarra meetings, or whom the mission workers had some contact with. As the decline in the mission progressed, that contact with the parents became more and more shallow. Today contact with the parents is virtually non-existent. Only one or two of the parents attend the meetings at Pinjarra very sporadically. Most of them are clearly not interested. They don't mind sending their children off for a while, in fact they encourage it for various reasons. In this situation it is difficult to justify the continuation of this work as mission work. Moreover this work is literally on the 'doorstep' of the local churches of Armadale and Kelmscott.

Therefore it is recommended that this work as mission work be terminated. However, the committee strongly recommends that the churches of Armadale and Kelmscott give serious consideration to continuing this work. The many children who come to these meetings show great willingness and are generally keen to learn and join in. Some positive responses are often evident. This work presents an opportunity to teach young unbelievers also of the only way to real peace and joy.

#### 6.4 PROPERTY AND MISSION WORKER

This committee has no mandate to make any recommendations regarding Mission property or the position of the Mission worker at the end of the concluding task period, and therefore makes no recommendations regarding these.

#### 7. CLOSING REMARKS

The work in compiling this report has not been an easy task, and the committee is fully aware of the major steps that it is recommending. However, the committee is convinced that these steps need to be taken. We have at all times sought the Will of God in these matters and are sure that what is proposed is the proper Scriptural course to follow.

#### THE SUB-COMMITTEE

Br. A. Slobe           (Chairman)  
Br. S.C. Fokkema      (Secretary)  
Rev. S.G. Hur  
Rev. K. Bruning  
Br. L. Schoof (Jnr)

December 1981

APPENDIX 8b

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE FREE REFORMED CHURCH OF ARMADALE,  
W.A., TO THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCHES TO BE HELD  
AT KELMSCOTT, W.A., MAY 1983

SUBJECT: Mission Australia

Esteemed Brethren,

Synod 1980 (Art. 34) instructed the Church Council of Armadale to investigate all aspects of the future developments of the mission work (in Western Australia) and advised this Council to appoint a sub-committee for this task, including some members of Kelmscott and to report to the Churches.

Synod 1980 (Art. 48) also decided to defer a decision regarding the future financial support from Holland, pending the study instructed before (Art. 34).

In response to the instruction the Church Council of Armadale appointed a sub-committee, consisting of brothers from both Armadale and Kelmscott, under the chairmanship of br A. Slobe. This sub-committee commenced its task in April 1981 and submitted its report in November of that year. A copy of that report is attached and forms an appendix to this report.

After deliberation the report was adopted by the Church Council in March 1982 and submitted to the Churches, as per instruction. Agreement was reached from the Churches of Kelmscott and Launceston. The Church Council of Albany replied, giving the opinion that this report should not be acted upon by the Churches but that the next Synod should deal with it. The correspondence to and from this Church delayed the final adoption of the report. The Church Council of Armadale tried to arrange a meeting so that these matters could be discussed. However, the Church Council of Albany decided not to attend this meeting, which was therefore cancelled.

After consultation with the Mission worker, br P. 't Hart, who (also in his report No. 39) pressed for a decision, this Council decided to propose once again to the Churches that the report be adopted. Replies were received with the identical result as before.

With the adoption of the report, the Mission field in Western Australia was abandoned as from early October, 1982. Our mission worker visited most of the people in the field for a last admonition and call to repentance.

The report of the sub-committee made mention of a small group of people from this Mission field who still showed sufficient interest and who still attended the meetings in Pinjarra. While this group was too small to maintain the Mission field for their sake, it was, though, equally clear that we must not leave these people. The report suggested a six-month period of exclusive and intensified work with them and if, at the end of that time, there were still people who, though they may not yet have come to profession

of faith, show sincere interest in the Word, they should come under the care of the local Church.

This period of intensified contact commenced early October, 1982, and will conclude at the end of March, 1983, as far as Mission Australia is concerned. The 31st March, 1983, will then also be the date of the termination of employment of br 't Hart. Provision for this event were already formulated by Synod 1972 (see Acts of Synod 1972, Art. 34, sub. 9b).

A sub-committee consisting of the brs J. de Vos, A. Pleiter and P. 't Hart was appointed to meet on a weekly basis to discuss the progress of the work. Each month they report verbally to and discuss the work and the individual people with this Church Council.

Of the eleven adults and the three teenage girls who were considered sufficiently interested at the beginning of October, one man since died, while three adults and one of the girls had to be deleted from the 'list' later. The Mission worker lost contact also with the other two girls for a time, but at the time of the writing of this report it seems likely that they may return. It may also be reported that one man, partly through the admonitions earlier, has now come to attend the meetings regularly. All the people are visited each week and the progress of some is encouraging.

The Church Council regrets deeply that this Mission field proved no longer viable. We are, however, comforted and assured by the sure knowledge that also this work has not been in vain. The Word has been brought, according to God's good pleasure. This Mission work has been allowed to contribute to the coming of the Kingdom of our God and Saviour.

\* \* \* \* \*

To wind up a Mission field means that also attention must be given to the assets aquired over the years. In this case there is a Mission Hall in Pinjarra, two buses, some other small articles and monies in hand including the reserves. The Church Council thinks it advisable to propose to Synod 1983 to realise all assets. When this is done, the option is open to divide the available money among the Churches.

However, we consider it at least a possibility that further Mission work is undertaken within Australia by the Australian Churches. We will therefore propose that the monies be suitably invested and held back to await further developments in this direction.

The Church Council of Armadale has no proposal at this stage to open up a new Mission field. Instead, we will propose that Synod 1983 shall appoint deputies to investigate our common Mission task for the future and that the Churches separately be encouraged to support existing Mission fields overseas after their financial responsibility to Mission Australia comes to an end, until such time that the Churches make further decisions.

\* \* \* \* \*

At the beginning of this report mention was made of Synod 1980

deferring a decision about the future financial support from Holland. Seeing this was done pending the study on the Mission activities, knowing now the outcome of that study and realising the desirability to ease the burden of our Dutch sister churches, the Church Council in the Mission budget for 1983 proposed to the Churches that the costs for this year should be borne only by the Australian Churches. This proposal was adopted. The budget for 1983 was for a period of three months only, plus for a possible pay-out of six months salary, the time allowed br 't Hart to find suitable other employment, as per original agreement.

\* \* \* \* \*

In conclusion the Church Council of Armadale proposes to Synod 1983 to decide:

- 1) Synod takes note of the actions taken by the churches in regard to the report submitted by the sub-committee that the Mission field in Western Australia had to be abandoned.
- 2) Synod takes note that the employment of the full-time Mission worker, br 't Hart, was terminated at 31st March, 1983.
- 3) Synod decides to invest all proceeds from the realisation of the assets of Mission Australia until such time that further decisions are made in regard to future Mission work by the Churches.
- 4) Synod appoints deputies to investigate our future Mission task in or outside Australia. Deputies to report to next Synod.
- 5) Synod takes note of this report and discharges the Church of Armadale as Mission Committee.

INDEX

Contents	Article(s)
Acts	23,44,91,97,121
Agreement with Three Forms of Unity	5
Approbation of Rev. L.J. Joosse	116
Archives	106,112
Bible Translation	12,13,35
Church Book	24-34,44,98
Church Order	14-16,18-20,36-43,45-46,51-52,98
Church Visitation	93,94,95
Classes-formation of	88
Contact-Canadian Reformed Churches	17,66
- Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Africa	68
- Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland	75
- Free Church of Scotland	75
- Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland	67,120
- Korean Presbyterian Church	70
- Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia	89,96
- Presbyterian Church of Taiwan	72
- Reformed Churches of Australia	7,17,102-104,119
- Reformed Church of Japan	69
- Reformed Presbyterian Church	105
- Sumba-Savu	71
Convening Church Next Synod	111
Cost Percentages	110
Deputies - appointment of	112
- Correspondence with Government	53,113
- Correspondence with Sister Churches Abroad	73-78
Ecclesiastical Certificate	49
Ecclesiastical Contact	47
International Conference of Reformed Churches	58-60,62-65,75,79-87,121
	.../140

Index (continued)

Contents	Article(s)
Library of Synod	114
Ministers, Elders and Deacons - Subscription forms for	48
Ministers - training of	50
Mission	90,93,100,101,107,115
Moderamen	3
Peremptoir Exam - Rev. K. Jonker	109,117,Appendix 1
Press Report	23,44,122
Synod 1980	54,56-57
Synod 1983 - Agenda	7
- Close & Address of Chairman	124
- Constitution of	4
- Credentials	2
- Opening & Address Rev. Dr. S.G. Hur	1
- Rules of	6,55,108
- Sequence of Business	9
- Time Schedule	8
Appendices	Page
1. Acts of Special Ecclesiastical Meeting	77
2. Notes taken at Synod Session on Liturgical Forms	84
3. Deputies for Correspondence with Churches Abroad:	
a) General Report	85
b) Report on the I.C.R.C.	94
c) Constitution and Regulations of the I.C.R.C.	97
d) Official Communique of the I.C.R.C.	102
4. Report from Deputies Church Book	104
5. Report from Deputies for English Bible Translation	111
6. Report re Library Content	123
7. Mission:	
a) Report of Sub-committee	125
b) Report from Church Council of Armadale	136