

ACTS OF THE SYNOD OF THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA  
HELD AT LAUNCESTON, TASMANIA,  
FROM JUNE 1 TO JUNE 10, 1985.

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**First Session - Saturday 1st June 1985**

**Morning Session**

Article 1

OPENING

On behalf of the convening Church of Launceston the Rev. K. Jonker calls the meeting to order. He requests that Psalm 115 : 1 be sung, reads 2 John 1 and leads in prayer.

He addresses the meeting as follows:

"Dear brothers and sisters!

"On behalf of the convening Church of Launceston I would like to welcome all of you. I extend a special welcome to the brothers delegates, who were sent by the local Churches to meet in Synod Launceston 1985. We are grateful that our heavenly Father has given you safe protection on your journey to this place.

"The Church of Launceston counts it a privilege to have the Synod in her midst. It is now for the fourth time that she is the host of a Synod. And we sincerely hope that it is not the last time, but that our congregation on this beautiful Island of Tasmania may continue to take her turn in convening a Synod. I express this hope because it is sometimes stated that it is actually too much for the Churches to meet in that far-away place of Launceston. Admittedly the distance between our congregation and the congregations in the West is very long, but we, as much as they, need the communion of saints with each other, which is also exercised in a beautiful way in the coming together of all the local churches in a Synod meeting! Therefore, brothers delegates, we are very thankful to see you in our midst. I trust that the journey has not been too much for you, considering the comforts of modern transport. You may be assured that the congregation of Launceston will care for you all to the best of her ability, in order that you may be able to do the important work you are called to perform in the good interest of the Churches.

"It is now for the 14th time that the Free Reformed Churches of Australia come together in a Synod meeting. And

last year it was 30 years ago that the first Synod was convened by our Churches in this country. The Lord gathers and protects His Church also in this part of the world. We may experience His blessing abundantly. The Churches may live in all freedom and prosperity. The Lord grants us growth. This becomes visible amongst other things in the fact that in the beginning of this year the Church of Byford was instituted. The number of our congregations is now five. The Lord has blessed the Church of Albany in giving Rev. A. Veldman as her minister very soon after the departure of Rev. L.J. Joosse.

"In all this and many other things our Covenant God shows His steadfast love and faithfulness to us.

Not to us, O Lord, not to us  
but to thy Name give glory,  
for the sake of thy steadfast love  
and Thy faithfulness! (Ps.115:1).

"We are compelled to do this the more when we consider that the first Reformed Synod was held more than 400 years ago. It was a great occurrence in the history of the Churches in the Low Lands (in The Netherlands) - which is also our church history! - that the Reformed Churches met in 1571 in the Synod of Embden. Churches which had rejected the Roman Catholic Pope as the head of the Church came together in the unity of true faith, accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Head of the Church. Under very different circumstances the Reformed Churches found each other then in love because of the truth! This is how Prof. J. Kamphuis has defined the motive behind that first meeting of the Reformed Churches in his booklet Zo vonden wij elkaar (translated: Thus we found each other). The bond of love does not only bind the believers together locally in a congregation, but also nationally in a mutual fellowship of all the true Churches of Christ. And the basis for this true ecumenicity is the unity of faith, worked by God.

"This work of God is always acknowledged in faith by the true catholic Church of all ages. Through the Spirit of Pentecost we, as Reformed Churches in Australia, confess still the same true ecumenicity, abiding in the truth, in the doctrine of Christ, thus believing in both the Father and the Son. It is all to the praise of God Triune.

"Our prayer is that Synod Launceston 1985 may uphold this true ecumenicity in line with her long and rich Reformed history. May this Synod in her decisions also be proven to have preserved, defended and promoted the truth! And in this way be remembered as a faithful servant of the Churches.

"Brothers delegates, there are many items on your agenda. To name a few: the Book of Praise, Bible translation, contact with other churches, several appeals against decisions of Synod Kelmscott 1983. Undoubtedly some differences of perspective will be revealed in the course of the discussions. May I urge you to speak openly and honestly in accordance with Christ's commandment that we love one another. Therefore, in all humility, listen to each other. Use the mandate and authority given to you by the churches, in Scriptural wisdom.

"May I remind you of a very important rule for our Synods: 'wherever possible, all decisions are to be taken unanimously'.

"It is impossible to do your task in your own strength. Your help must be in the Name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. May our Lord God grant you His help, the guidance of the Spirit and the continuous joy of also the communion of saints in this major meeting of the Churches.

"With these words I declare the fourteenth Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia open."

Rev. Jonker requests that Psalm 133 : 1 & 2 be sung.

## Article 2

### EXAMINATION OF CREDENTIALS

Rev. K. Jonker appoints Rev. A. Veldman and br. A.M. Hidding to examine the attendance roll and the letters of credentials. They report that the following delegates are present with the proper credentials:

From the Church of Albany:	Rev. A. Veldman Elder J. Plug
From the Church of Armadale:	Rev. K. Bruning Elder W. Buist
From the Church of Byford:	Elder J.A. Swarts Elder S.H. Terpstra
From the Church of Kelmscott:	Rev. Dr. S.G. Hur Elder J. Eikelboom
From the Church of Launceston:	Rev. K. Jonker Elder A.M. Hidding

### Article 3

#### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following officers are elected:

Chairman:	Rev. K. Bruning
Assessor:	Rev. Dr. S.G. Hur
First Clerk:	Rev. K. Jonker
Second Clerk:	Rev. A. Veldman

### Article 4

#### CONSTITUTION OF SYNOD

Rev. K. Jonker gives the chair to Rev. K. Bruning, who declares 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.

Synod is adjourned to give the Moderamen the opportunity to discuss meeting times and procedures.

#### **Afternoon Session**

### Article 6

#### RE-OPENING

The chairman requests those present to sing Psalm 25 : 2. He then addresses the meeting. He expresses the wish that Synod Launceston 1985 may come to such decisions which are contributing to the edification of the Churches. He then congratulates the Rev. Dr. S.G. Hur on his appointment as Professor in Church History at the Theological College of our sister Churches in Busan, Korea. He wishes the Rev. Hur God's indispensable blessing and help in making a decision. Rev. Hur thanks the chairman for his words.

## Article 7

### RULES OF PROCEDURE

The following rules are adopted:

- (a) there will be no smoking during the sessions and in the buildings on the premises;
- (b) incoming correspondence received after this declaration is made will not be dealt with by Synod, except for a letter from the P.C.E.A., which should be received by Synod on Monday or Tuesday next;
- (c) daily closing of Synod will be conducted by delegates in alphabetical order;
- (d) deputies may be requested to attend the sessions when their reports are being discussed;
- (e) proposals and amendments shall be submitted in writing;
- (f) the Acts of each day will be adopted as much as possible in a session of the following day.

Regarding point (d), point 7.2 of the Report of the Deputies for Correspondence with Foreign Sister-Churches is discussed. Deputies write:

"Because of the extensive correspondence and the wide range of issues raised in this report, the deputies are of the opinion that their secretary should be available when Synod deals with their report."

Synod, considering that there are already two of these deputies in its midst, and that his coming to Synod means extra expense for the Churches,

DECIDES not to accede to the request of deputies.

ADOPTED

## Article 8

### GREETINGS FROM SISTER-CHURCHES ABROAD

The chairman reads the letters of greetings which the deputies for Correspondence with Foreign Sister-Churches have received. The Reformed Churches in The Netherlands, the Canadian Reformed Churches, The Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Indonesia Di Sumba Timur-Sabu, and The Presbyterian Church in Korea wish the Synod the blessing of the Lord and the guidance of the Holy Spirit for all its work.

## Article 9

### ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The following correspondence was received after the provisional agenda was sent to the Churches:

Br. H.G. Bosveld re Bible translation  
Br. J. Byl re Acts of Synod 1983 Art. 72 & 75  
Br. M. Berkelaar re Bible translation  
Br. and Sr. B. & H.M. Postmus re report P.C.E.A.  
Br. and Sr. B. & H.M. Postmus re Bible translation  
Church of Armadale re Church Book  
Br. P.W. Dekker re report P.C.E.A.  
F.R.C. of Kelmscott re lateness of reports  
F.R.C. of Kelmscott re letter Classis W.A. of the  
Reformed Churches of Australia  
Br. J. Numan re Art. 87, Acts 1983  
Br. J. Numan re report P.C.E.A.  
Br. A. Bijl re various decisions Synod 1983 concerning  
contact with Presbyterian Churches.

Before the agenda is adopted br. J.A. Swarts makes the following proposal:

#### A. MATERIAL

1. Article 9c of the Rules for Synods (page 27 Acts 1980):  
"Deputies who have been instructed to report to the Churches will submit their reports to the Churches at least three months prior to the following Synod, unless otherwise determined by the Synod."
2. Article 55 part 2(b) Acts of Synod 1983 (p.28) emphasizes "the requirement that Deputies must submit their required reports within the time limit imposed by the Rules for Synod."

#### B. OBSERVATIONS

1. Applying article 9c of the Rules for Synods, Deputies' reports had to be received by the Churches by March 1st, 1985.
2. Of the 18 reports listed on the Provisional Agenda a few were received prior to March 1st, but in the case of one Church at least 14 of the said 18 reports were still outstanding as at the beginning of May, that is, two months after the closing date.

#### C. CONSIDERATIONS I

1. The Rules for Synods constitute a binding agreement with respect to the conduct of Synods.
2. Reports received after the closing date contravene these Rules and thus forfeit the right to remain on the Agenda.

#### D. CONSIDERATIONS II

1. The lateness of many of the reports has been detrimental to the normal work of consistories and has severely restricted the time available for proper preparation by consistories and delegates.
2. Some "late reports" could not and have not been considered at all.

#### E. CONSIDERATIONS III

1. There already is widespread concern within the Churches that major decisions of past Synods were taken in haste and without adequate information and preparation.
2. Appeals to this Synod reflect this concern.
3. Synod therefore ought to be wary of reports received after the time limit so as to avoid such concern and further appeals.

#### F. RECOMMENDATION

Synod DECIDES:

1. That deputy reports received prior to March 1 be placed on the Agenda for consideration.
2. That reports received after the March 1 closing date not be admitted, unless Synod by a two-thirds majority decides to adopt a proposal to admit a particular report - or part of a report - for reasons advanced as part of the proposal.

Br. J. Eikelboom proposes the following amendment:

"Delete all words in recommendation point 2, following the word 'admitted';

Ground:

Synod rules stipulate in Art. 3(b): 'Any items to be placed on the agenda of the Synod are to be submitted within eight weeks of the receipt of such notice.'

DEFEATED

Synod DECIDES after further amendment and the withdrawal of Observation B.2:

1. That deputy reports received prior to March 1 be placed on the Agenda for consideration;
2. That reports due, but not received by, the March 1 closing date not be admitted, unless Synod decides to adopt a proposal to admit a particular report - or part of a report - for reasons advanced as part of a proposal.

ADOPTED

The Agenda is adopted.

#### AGENDA

1. Opening.
2. Examination of credentials.
3. Election of officers.
4. Constitution of Synod.
5. Agreement with the Three Forms of Unity.
6. Adoption of the Agenda.
7. Adoption of procedures to be followed.
8. Correspondence received:
  1. report re dismissal Rev. L.J. Joosse;
  2. report re approbation of call to Rev. A. Veldman;
  3. Church of Albany re hymns in Book of Praise;
  4. Church of Kelmscott re appointing secundi for deputyships;
  5. Church of Armadale re Byford Church institution and boundaries;
  6. Church of Launceston re amendment to Art.61, C.D.;
  7. Br. W.L. Dekker re Art. 104 Acts of Synod 1983;
  8. Br. W.L. Dekker re an omission in Acts of Synod 1983;
  9. Rev. G. Van Rongen requesting copy of Acts of Synod 1985;
  10. Church of Kelmscott: appeal against Acts of Synod 1983 Art. 87;
  11. Church of Kelmscott: appeal against Acts of Synod 1983 Art. 72 & 75;
  12. Church of Kelmscott: appeal against Acts of Synod 1983 Art. 58;



13. Church of Kelmscott re amendment to Art. 46, C.O.;
14. Church of Kelmscott: proposal to appoint deputies to thoroughly examine the Westminster Confession;
15. Church of Launceston: advice re new deputy for Training to the Ministry;
16. Church of Launceston re Name of the Churches;
17. Church of Kelmscott re Acts of Synod 1983 Art. 46;
18. Br. J. Eikelboom re Art. 35, C.O.;
19. Br. J. Eikelboom re support of theological seminars;
20. Church of Kelmscott re lateness of reports;
21. Church of Kelmscott re letter Classis W.A. of the Reformed Churches of Australia;
22. Br. J. Numan re Art. 87 Acts 1983;
23. Br. J. Numan re report P.C.E.A.;
24. Br. A. Bijl re various decisions Synod 1983 concerning contact with Presbyterian Churches;
25. Br. H.G. Bosveld re Bible Translation;
26. Br. J. Bijl re Acts of Synod 1983 Art. 72 & 75;
27. Br. M. Berkelaar re Bible Translation;
28. Br. and Sr. B. & H.M. Postmus re report P.C.E.A.;
29. Br. and Sr. B. & H.M. Postmus re Bible Translation;
30. Church of Armadale re Church Book;
31. Br. P.W. Dekker re report P.C.E.A.

9. Instructions

10. Reports:

1. Church visitation;
2. Kelmscott re Archives of Synod;
3. Albany re supervision of Archives;
4. Treasurer of Synod;
5. Launceston re Audit of Synod Treasurer;
6. Deputies ad Art. 48 (old 49) and 76 (old 79) C.O.;
7. Deputies Correspondence Foreign Sister Churches;
8. Deputies Church Book;
9. Deputies Bible Translation;
10. Deputies Training for the Ministry;
11. Deputies Ecclesiastical Ordinances;
12. Armadale re Publishing Committee;
13. Deputies Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia;
14. Albany re Future Mission Task;
15. Armadale re Disposal of Mission Assets;
16. Deputies re Art. 26 (new) Church Order;
17. Kelmscott re Synod Rules;
18. Deputies re Art. 66 (old) Church Order.

11. Determination of percentage figures for assessment of Synod expenditures.

12. Appointment of deputies.
13. Appointment of convening Church, time and place of next Synod.
14. Question period according to Art. 41 C.O.
15. Personal question period.
16. Adoption of Acts of Synod.
17. Adoption of Press Release.
18. Censure according to Art. 47 (old 43) C.O.
19. Closure.

#### Article 10

##### COMMITTEES AND TIME SCHEDULE

The Moderamen's proposal to prepare agenda items in committees is adopted.

For the Acts it is decided to frame the decisions as follows:

- (a) Subject title;
- (b) Committee Report, consisting of:
  - Material;
  - Decision;
  - Grounds.

The following time schedule is adopted:

Morning sessions	:	9.00 - 12.00
Afternoon sessions:	2.00 - 5.00	
Evening sessions	:	7.00 - 9.30

#### Article 11

##### ADJOURNMENT

After the singing of Psalm 25 : 4, the chairman leads in prayer and closes the session.

Synod is adjourned.

**Second Session - Monday 3rd June 1985**

**Morning Session**

Article 12

RE-OPENING

The chairman requests those present to sing Psalm 32 :  
1. He reads Romans 5 : 1-5, and leads in prayer.

Article 13

LATENESS OF REPORTS

Rev. A. Veldman reports on the dates on which the reports from Deputies were submitted.

It appears that items 10.7, 10.9, 10.12, 10.13, and 10.16 have to be considered (see Article 9 of these Acts).

Item 10.7 is admitted because these Deputies did submit an interim report by February 1984 with substantial information, and the final report was received only shortly after the 1st March.

Item 10.9 is admitted as it was marginally late.

Item 10.12 the part on the Task of a Classis Church was one month too late. Because it contains much factual material with many proposals added to it, this report is admitted.

Item 10.13 is admitted as it was only three weeks overdue and the contact with the P.C.E.A. was already established seven years ago.

Item 10.16 should not be admitted because it was too late to be studied by the consistories.

Rev. A. Veldman proposes:

to admit the Report of Deputies Article 26 C.O. on the agenda Synod 1985.

Grounds:

- (a) Deputies for a revised Church Order sent their report to the consistories before Synod 1983 (in which report Art. 26 C.O. was included);

- (b) Synod 1983 has dealt with this matter;
- (c) the matter could have been discussed by the consistories after receiving Acts 1983;
- (d) the instruction to the deputies was not clear about whether or not they had to report to the consistories.

DEFEATED

Item 10.16 is declared inadmissible.

Herewith Synod has taken note of the letter from Kelmscott (Agenda item 8.20) in which this consistory requests Synod to address herself to the matter of the lateness of the reports.

(Agenda item 10.17 was not received. The Church of Kelmscott had informed Synod that it could not submit a report due to lack of time - note from the publishers of the Acts).

#### Article 14

#### APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

The following committees are appointed:

- Committee I : Rev. A. Veldman, convener;  
 Elder A.M. Hidding;  
 Elder J. Plug;  
 Elder J.A. Swarts.  
 Material: appeals Kelmscott: I.C.R.C.  
 and the contact with the Churches in  
 Northern Ireland, Scotland, Taiwan,  
 Japan, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and  
 Uganda; the contact with the  
 P.C.E.A.; the Westminster Confes-  
 sion; and the related items on the  
 agenda.
- Committee II : Rev. K. Jonker, convener;  
 Elder W. Buist;  
 Elder J. Eikelboom;  
 Material: Church Book; the use of the  
 R.S.V.; the relationship with sis-  
 ter-Churches; mission; Training  
 for the Ministry; and related items.

Committee III: Rev. K. Bruning, convener;  
Rev. Dr. S.G. Hur;  
Elder S.H. Terpstra.  
Material: Name of the Churches; Eccle-  
siastical Ordinances; Art. 19, 35 and  
61 C.O.; alternates for deputies; insti-  
tution of Church of Byford; appeals br.  
W.L. Dekker; and related items.

Article 15

DEPARTURE REV. L.J. JOOSSE

Agenda item: 8.1

The Church of Armadale reports that the Rev. L.J. Joosse was properly dismissed by our Churches in accordance with Article 7, C.O.

Article 16

CALL REV. A. VELDMAN

Agenda item: 8.2

The Church of Armadale reports that she has approved the call of the Rev. A. Veldman in accordance with Article 7 C.O.

Article 17

ADJOURNMENT

The chairman adjourns the meeting.  
The committees meet.

**Evening Session**

Article 18

RE-OPENING

The chairman requests the meeting to sing Psalm 105 : 4.

Article 19

ACTS

Articles 1 - 11 of the Acts are adopted.

Article 20

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting is adjourned for committee work.

Article 21

RE-OPENING

The chairman re-opens the meeting and announces that the letter from the P.C.E.A. has been received. The contents will be discussed on Tuesday in the morning session. The system of working in committees is briefly discussed. It is felt to be an improvement on previous meeting procedure.

Article 22

ADJOURNMENT

The brothers are asked to sing Psalm 1 : 2, and Elder W. Buist leads in prayer.  
Synod is adjourned.

**Third Session - Tuesday 4th June 1985**

**Morning Session**

Article 23

RE-OPENING

The chairman requests Synod to sing Psalm 65 : 2 and leads in prayer. He then reads Ezekiel 14 : 6-11. He welcomes especially Sr. A. 't Hart, the typist of Synod, and congratulates her on her birthday. He wishes her the Lord's blessing for the year to come.

The agenda items related to Bible Translation are transferred from Committee II to Committee III.

## Article 24

### LETTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

In this letter the clerk of the Synod of Eastern Australia, the Rev. W.P. Gadsby, conveys the sincere greetings of their Synod which met recently in Taree, N.S.W. He informs us about the decision of their Synod pertaining to the contact with our Churches as follows:

"That Synod recognises the Free Reformed Churches of Australia to be true and faithful churches of the Lord Jesus Christ, rejoices at the opportunity of involvement together in the International Conference, and expresses the hope that continued contact will open the way to closer relations in the future; at the same time recognising our mutual responsibility to exhort one another to continued obedience to the Word of God, and the doctrine and practice which is according to godliness."

And further, their Synod resolved:

"That we advise the Free Reformed Churches of Australia that should they desire representatives of our church to attend their coming Synod as observers, and to bring our greetings, we have appointed Rev. R.S. Ward, or in his absence, Rev. J.M. Cromarty, together with Rev. D.R. Nibbs, to be such representatives."

He writes also that copies of their Synod 1985 reports and Minutes will be sent to us. The Synod of the P.C.E.A. appointed the Rev. W.P. Gadsby to be their delegate to the I.C.R.C. in Edinburgh in September.

It is decided to answer this letter after Synod has dealt with the report of her deputies P.C.E.A. (Agenda item 10.13).

## Article 25

### ADJOURNMENT

The session is adjourned until the evening.  
The committees meet.

## Evening Session

### Article 26

#### RE-OPENING

The chairman requests those present to sing Psalm 65:3.

### Article 27

#### ACTS

The Acts of the Second Session, the Articles 12 - 22, are adopted.

### Article 28

#### PROPOSAL LAUNCESTON RE AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 61 C.O.

Agenda item: 8.6  
Report: Committee III

#### MATERIAL

Letter from the Church of Launceston in which she proposes an amendment to Article 61 C.O., namely:  
instead of reading:

"they will in respect of deacon support remain as much as possible under the care of the Church they are leaving"

to read:

"they will be under the care of the receiving Church in all respects. If this places too heavy a burden on a congregation the bond of Churches can be approached."

#### Synod DECIDES:

not to adopt the changes proposed for Article 61 of the Church Order but to maintain the article in its present form.

#### GROUND

1. The Scriptural norm is that children have the responsibility to care for their parents when they need to be cared for in institutions.

Deacon support is thus directed to the needs of the children.



2. The task of the Church is to ensure that the children are faithful in carrying out their task.

3. To make a Church dependent on others because the institutions mentioned are located within its boundaries is undesirable.

4. It is not good for a Church to abdicate its financial responsibilities because the facilities to care for its members are located elsewhere.

ADOPTED

#### Article 29

APPEAL KELMSCOTT RE ARTICLE 58 (ACTS 1983)

Agenda item: 8.12

Report: Committee I

#### MATERIAL

Letter of Appeal from the Church of Kelmscott re Article 58 (Acts of Synod 1983). The Church of Kelmscott requests Synod to declare that the decision re Article 58 Acts 1983 has been wrong.

Synod DECIDES:

that Synod 1983 wrongly decided not to admit the letter from Kelmscott.

#### GROUND

1. The letter was received before the declaration of Article 6(b) (Acts 1983).

2. Synod failed to show that the letter contravened the Rules for Synods.

3. Synod ought to have decided the question of admissibility at the time of the Adoption of Agenda.

4. Synod used the contents of the letter in deciding the question of admissibility.

UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED

#### Article 30

PROPOSAL KELMSCOTT RE AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 46 C.O.

Agenda item: 8.13

Report: Committee I

## MATERIAL

Letter from the Church of Kelmscott re amendment to Article 46 of the Church Order. The Church of Kelmscott requests Synod to delete the last sentence of Article 46, and replace it with Article 86 of the "old" Church Order.

Synod DECIDES:

to reject the proposal of the Church of Kelmscott.

## GROUND

1. The Churches should only change or amend the Church Order when there are compelling reasons to do so.
2. There is little difference in meaning between 'non-essentials' and 'minor points of Church Order and ecclesiastical practice'.
3. The churches are not bound by a private interpretation of an article of the Church Order.
4. The statement 'minor points of Church Order and ecclesiastical practice' can and may not be interpreted to mean that Church Order and ecclesiastical practice are minor points.

ADOPTED

## Article 31

### PROPOSAL LAUNCESTON RE NAME OF THE CHURCHES

Agenda item: 8.16

Report: Committee III

## MATERIAL

Letter from the Church of Launceston re Name of the Churches. The Church of Launceston requests Synod to appoint deputies with the mandate to:

- (a) study the Name of the Churches in light of developments since its adoption in 1954, considering whether that Name adequately renders the essence of their existence in this country and whether amendment to the Name would be of benefit in the context of the Churches' calling;
- (b) present its findings to the next Synod of the Churches.

Synod DECIDES:

to reject the proposal by the Church of Launceston to study the Name of the Churches and present its findings to the next Synod.

GROUND

1. The task to conduct a study of this nature which does not contain clearly formulated proposals does not belong to the Synod.

2. A study of this nature can be undertaken by a Church at any time, which can then submit its report containing specific proposals to a Synod.

ADOPTED

Article 32

REQUEST REV. G. VAN RONGEN

Agenda item: 8.9

In his letter the Rev. G. Van Rongen makes the following request:

"Having assisted the Consistory of the Church of Armadale in the preparation of a book containing the decisions of the respective Synods of our Churches, keeping the copyright of this publication, and intending to supplement it with the decisions made by your Synod, and--the Lord willing--the Synods of the future,

I kindly request your co-operation in supplying me with a copy of the (non-printed) Acts of your Synod as early as possible."

Synod DECIDES to grant this request.

Article 33

REPORT SUPERVISION OF ARCHIVES

Agenda item 10.3

The Church of Albany reports to have inspected the Archives of Synod. Synod takes note of this report.

The following recommendations are adopted:

- a) to give a guideline to the consistory of Kelmscott regarding what belongs to the Closed Sessions;
- b) to give permission to the consistory of Kelmscott to obtain another metal cupboard for storing material of the Closed Sessions;
- c) to decide what belongs to the Archives and what belongs to the library;
- d) to compile a general list of the contents of both the Archives and the library which is to include all relevant and separate items;
- e) to appoint deputies who will also check the library;
- f) to do everything possible to recover the missing minutes of the Closed Sessions;
- g) to express its appreciation for the manner in which the consistory of Kelmscott has reorganised the Archives and also its appreciation for the way in which they manage them.

#### Article 34

#### ADJOURNMENT

Elder J. Eikelboom asks the brothers to sing Psalm 65 : 5 and leads in closing prayer.

Synod is adjourned.

#### Fourth Session - Wednesday 5th June 1985

#### Morning Session

#### Article 35

#### RE-OPENING AND ADJOURNMENT

The chairman requests the meeting to sing Psalm 56 : 4. He leads in prayer and reads Amos 7 : 4-9.

Synod is adjourned, and the committees meet till noon.

## Afternoon Session

### Article 36

#### RE-OPENING

The chairman requests Synod to sing Psalm 86 : 4. He re-opens the meeting.

### Article 37

#### DEPUTIES ARCHIVES

Agenda item: 10.2

The chairman tables the letter from Kelmscott in which this Church as Deputies for Synod Archives reports about its work. Synod takes note of this report, especially of the fact that the missing minutes of Closed Sessions are still lost.

#### Synod DECIDES:

1. to write to the Churches, requesting them to conduct a thorough search in their congregations as to the whereabouts of the missing minutes of the Closed Sessions.
2. to discharge Deputies.

ADOPTED

### Article 38

#### AUDIT OF BOOKS OF SYNOD TREASURER

Agenda item: 10.5

The Church of Launceston reports that she has audited the financial records of the Synod Treasurer. These records were found to be correct.

## Article 39

### ECCLESIASTICAL ORDINANCES

Agenda item: 10.11

Report: Committee III

### MATERIAL

Report Deputies Ecclesiastical Ordinances, containing:

1. restructured Subscription Forms for Ministers, Elders and Deacons;
2. translated Ecclesiastical Ordinances.

### PROPOSALS

The following changes are proposed:

1. in the Certificates as per Article 5 C.O. (Deputies Report Appendices 1 and 2) to change the Latin words 'preparatoire' and 'peremptoire' to 'preparatory' and 'peremptory'.

ADOPTED

2. in the Certificate as per Art. 7 C.O. (Deputies' Report Appendix 3) to delete the second reference to the words: 'Free Reformed Church' in paragraph 1.

ADOPTED

3. in the Certificate as per Art. 7 C.O. (Deputies' Report Appendix 4) to add to the word 'classis' in the title, the word 'Church', i.e. 'Classis Church'.

ADOPTED

4. in the Certificate as per Art. 7 C.O. (Deputies' Report Appendix 5) to consider whether or not the words 'most' in point 1 and 'without giving occasion for offence' in point 2 are necessary. It is proposed to maintain them.

ADOPTED

5. in the Declaration as per Art. 13 C.O. (Deputies' Report Appendix 6) to delete the word 'old' from line 9.

ADOPTED

6. in the Form for Elders and Deacons as per Art. 51 C.O. (Deputies' Report Appendix 8) to replace the

word 'sentiments' in paragraph 4 with the word  
'opinion'.

ADOPTED

Deputies are discharged.

Synod appoints a committee (br. J.A. Swarts and br. S.H. Terpstra) to peruse the Forms and Certificates, examining the linguistic aspects of these Ordinances so as to be able to finalize their text.

#### Article 40

APPEALS AGAINST ARTICLES 72 AND 75 (Acts of Synod 1983)

Agenda items: 8.11; 8.24; 8.26; 10.7

Report: Committee I

#### MATERIAL

1. Letter dated 24th October, 1984, from the Free Reformed Church of Kelmscott requesting Synod to declare that the decisions recorded in the Acts of Synod 1983 (Articles 72 and 75) were:

- a) in violation of the Rules for Synods;
- b) contrary to Article 46 of the Church Order;
- c) based on insufficient information;

and requesting Synod to (re)consider these decisions.

2. Letter dated 1st May, 1985, from br. J. Byl, requesting Synod to rescind the decisions recorded in Articles 72 and 75 on the grounds that:

- a) no reference was made to the marks of the true Church and
- b) the Deputies' report gave no information that permits the conclusion that these Churches have the marks of a true Church.

3. Letter dated 29th March, 1985, from br. A. Bijl, requesting Synod to rescind the decisions recorded in Article 72 and 75 on the grounds that Synod 1983 took these decisions without sufficient information.

4. Report to Synod Launceston 1985 of the Deputies for Correspondence with Foreign Sister-Churches, paragraphs 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3.

The discussion is begun.

Session is adjourned.

## Evening Session

### Article 41

#### RE-OPENING

The chairman requests the meeting to sing Psalm 57 : 4.

### Article 42

#### ACTS

Articles 23 to 34 of the Acts are adopted.

### Article 43

#### APPEALS AGAINST ARTICLES 72 AND 75 (Acts of Synod 1983)

The discussion is continued.

After the committee has made a few alterations in its report, the proposals are put to the vote as follows:

#### Synod DECIDES:

1. that the decisions recorded in Articles 72 and 75 of the Acts of Synod 1983 were taken with undue haste and without due consideration.
2. that in future suchlike decisions be not made on the basis of oral information supplied to Synod.
3. that the Deputies for Correspondence with Foreign Sister-Churches appointed by Synod 1985 be instructed to thoroughly investigate the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland, and the Free Church of Scotland and submit comprehensive reports to the Churches and to the next Synod, paying particular attention to the marks of the true Church and the question of Church government.
4. until the next Synod has dealt with the above mentioned study, contact with these Churches shall be maintained at the present level.



## GROUNDS

1. Synod can only rescind a decision of a previous Synod when that decision is proved to be in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order (Article 31 of the Church Order).
2. While in matters of appeal the Rules for Synods do not have the same binding power as Article 31 of the Church Order, they ought to be observed as they are an agreement between the Churches.
3. Seeing Deputies had an obligation to report their activities three months prior to Synod (Article 53.5 Acts Synod 1980), it was incorrect for Synod to recognize and confirm a Church as true and faithful on the basis of oral reports presented to Synod.
4. While Synod ought to consider the reports of our sister-Churches it is on weak grounds when its decision is based on such information without prior evaluation of the material in the Deputies' Report.
5. The appeal of the Free Reformed Church of Kelmescott incorrectly claims that "Synod acknowledged that '...for the purpose of this Church Order the term "Reformed" is synonymous to "Three Forms of Unity"', as this quotation from Article 39 of the Acts of Synod 1983 is from the motivation of a defeated proposal.
6. Because Church government is not a "minor point" in the sense of Article 46 of the Church Order, a Synod can only recognize a Church as a true and faithful Church after careful and earnest investigation of this aspect.
7. The report of such an investigation must be made available to the local Churches before Synod decides (refer to Decision 3. above).
8. The Report of the Deputies for Foreign Sister Churches to Synod 1985 provides further information but also raises questions about Church government and various ecclesiastical practices.

UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED

#### Article 44

#### AMENDMENT ARTICLE 35 C.O.

Agenda item: 8.18

Report: Committee III

#### MATERIAL

Letter from Br. J. Eikelboom with the proposal:

to change the wording of Article 35 of the Church Order to that which was used in the text of 1959.

#### GROUND

1. The intent of the article has changed. While the previous article emphasized that the various levels of authority are the same, the present wording emphasizes the authority to make judicial pronouncements.
2. The original article does not define the extent of the authority. All it does is state that they are the same for the three levels.

#### Synod DECIDES:

not to accept the proposal of J. Eikelboom on the following grounds:

1. Art. 35 C.O. formulates the principle that a classis has the authority to make pronouncements (which means to make decisions) which have judicial value for the Church consistories.
2. This principle is also applicable to Synod decisions in respect to the classis.
3. This principle is not a new or foreign element in the Church Order, but it belongs to the general rule in the Church Order that in the Bond of Churches decisions of major ecclesiastical meetings have a binding character in the light of Article 31 C.O.

ADOPTED

#### Article 45

#### ADJOURNMENT

Elder A.M. Hidding requests the meeting to sing Psalm 145 : 5 and leads in prayer.

Synod is adjourned.

**Fifth Session - Thursday 6th June 1985**

**Morning Session**

Article 46

RE-OPENING

The chairman requests the meeting to sing Psalm 93 : 1 and 4. He leads in prayer and reads Amos 7 : 10-17.

Article 47

REQUEST BY BR. W.L. DEKKER

Agenda item: 8.8

Report: Committee III

MATERIAL

Request by Br. W.L. Dekker to inquire whether the reply to his letter to Synod 1983 was in fact read out as specified in Article 104 of Acts of Synod 1983 and to make a statement in the Acts of this Synod as to the outcome of the inquiry.

Synod DECIDES:

that it cannot be ascertained that this particular letter was read before Synod because it is not specifically mentioned in Article 115, Acts Kelm-scott 1983.

ADOPTED

Article 48

APPEAL BY BR. W.L. DEKKER

Agenda item: 8.7

Report: Committee III

MATERIAL

Appeal by Br. W.L. Dekker against the decision of Synod Kelm-scott 1983 pertaining to contact with the Reformed Churches of Australia. (Acts 1983, Art. 104).

1. Synod DECIDES:

to reject the appeal, and to reply to brother W.L. Dekker stating that Synod 1983's decision to reject his requests to:

- (a) pray in Synodical meeting, in accordance with the above (the previous points of appellant's letter);
- (b) approach the Reformed Churches of Australia with an unconditional requisition to meet each other in prayer and discussion, with the aim to come to unity in true faith;
- (c) do so before it is too late and lest we are also held responsible for maintaining the existing separation;

was correct;

- 2. that it be acknowledged that the reply from Synod 1983 was rather brief.
- 3. that GROUND 7 will be further substantiated in the letter of reply to the appellant.

GROUNDS

Request A - Synodical Prayer

- 1. It is not legitimate for any person to prescribe to the Synod how to pray.
- 2. Synod 1983 could not accept the considerations and conclusions which determine the nature of the prayer requested.

Requests B and C

- 3. Synod 1983 could not comply with the request for an unconditional requisition to meet each other because previous Synods have set conditions which were never subjected to any appeal.
- 4. Appellant's conclusion drawn from the reply of Synod 1983 that Synod did not fully deal with his letter, is incorrect because many points are covered in Articles 102 and 103 of the Acts 1983 which deal with related requests.
- 5. Section A of appellant's letter to Synod 1983 is too general and does not support the specific matter raised in the letter.

6. The considerations in appellant's letter to Synod 1983 do not support the request to enter into an unconditional arrangement to establish contact.
7. The appeal to Synod 1985 is difficult to accept and deal with because of the various unscriptural and unwarranted comments contained in the points raised.

ADOPTED

Article 49

APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

Agenda item: 8.4  
Report: Committee III

MATERIAL

Letter from the Church of Kelmscott, proposing that Synod appoint secundi (Rules for Synods speak of: alternates) for all deputy positions.

Synod DECIDES:

to appoint alternates for all Deputies' positions.

ADOPTED

Article 50

INSTITUTION OF THE FREE REFORMED CHURCH OF BYFORD  
AND AREAS UNDER THE CARE OF THE CHURCHES

Agenda item: 8.5  
Report: Committee III

MATERIAL

Letter from the Church of Armadale, reporting the institution of The Free Reformed Church of Byford.

Synod DECIDES:

1. to take note of the letter;
2. to adopt the proposed areas under the care of the Churches as follows:

Albany : South Australia and the South Coast  
of Western Australia.  
 Armadale : Queensland  
 Byford : South West of Western Australia  
 Kelmscott : North of Western Australia,  
 Northern Territory  
 Launceston : Victoria, New South Wales,  
 Australian Capital Territory

ADOPTED

# Article 51

## REPORT TREASURER OF SYNOD

Agenda item: 10.4

1. The report of Treasurer of Synod 1983 is tabled. It was already reported that the books were found in order (see Article 38 Acts 1985).

Synod DECIDES

to discharge the Treasurer, Br. J. Kroeze, and to thank him for his work.

ADOPTED

2. The nature of Synod expenses is discussed; see further Art. 55, Acts 1985

# Article 52

## TRAINING FOR THE MINISTRY (ARTICLE 18 C.O.)

Agenda item: 8.19  
 Report: Committee III

### MATERIAL

Letter from Br. J. Eikelboom re support of a theological seminary or college for the training for the Ministry of the Word.

Synod DECIDES:

to deal with the letter from Br. J. Eikelboom pertaining to Article 18 C.O.

### GROUND

In the situation of the Churches of Australia the matter raised belongs to the material of the Deputies Training for the Ministry.

ADOPTED

Article 53

ADJOURNMENT

The session is closed.  
Synod is adjourned.

**Afternoon Session**

Article 54

RE-OPENING

The chairman re-opens the meeting. He declares that Synod meets in closed session.

After having declared the session open, the chairman announces that Synod has dealt with the Church visitation reports.

Article 55

SYNOD EXPENSES (see Article 51, Acts 1985)

1. Rev. K. Jonker tables the following proposal:

Synod DECIDES:

- (a) to instruct the Deputies for Revision of Rules for Synods to insert a general guideline to determine the nature of expenses the Churches may claim as Synod costs, in the Rules;
- (b) to instruct these Deputies to report to the Churches before 1st March, 1986, so that all the new rules, if possible, can be accepted by mutual agreement before Synod 1987.

GROUNDS

- (a) there should be uniformity in claiming Synod expenses;
- (b) the existing rules are not clear (see Article 54 Acts Kelmscott 1983).

DEFEATED

2. Rev. K. Bruning tables the following proposal:

Synod DECIDES:

to appoint the Treasurer of Synod and Br. A.M. Hidding to examine and report about the nature of expenses the Churches may claim as Synod costs. These Deputies will report before 1st March, 1986, so that, if possible, it can be adopted by mutual agreement before Synod 1987.

ADOPTED

#### Article 56

#### ADJOURNMENT

The session is closed.  
Synod is adjourned.

#### Evening Session

#### Article 57

#### RE-OPENING

The chairman invites those present to sing Psalm 98 : 4.

#### Article 58

#### TRAINING FOR THE MINISTRY (ARTICLE 18 C.O.)

The discussion on the proposal of Br. J. Eikelboom is continued (see Art. 52, Acts 1985). He asks the Synod to take steps:

- (a) to explore the possibility of our Churches becoming formally involved in the maintenance of Kampen or Hamilton;
- (b) to promote increased levels of awareness in our Churches and among our Church members of the duty which we have to give regularly and sufficiently towards this cause;
- (c) which will lead to the situation that the Churches will budget for amounts similar to those contributed by our overseas brothers and sisters.

Synod DECIDES:

to adopt the proposal and to instruct Deputies accordingly.



## GROUNDS

1. The Free Reformed Churches of Australia have existed for 30 to 35 years and are reasonably well established;
2. Present financial support for the Training for the Ministry by the local Churches can be improved;
3. The Churches in Australia rely completely on our overseas sister-Churches for Training for the Ministry;
4. The Church Order, Article 18, instructs the Churches to support or, if possible, maintain a theological seminary for the Ministry of the Word.

ADOPTED

## Article 59

### CHURCH BOOK

The chairman welcomes the brothers G. Brouwer and J. Vander Ros, being Deputies Church Book. He invites them to take part in the discussion.

Agenda items: 8.3; 8.30; 10.8

Report: Committee II

### MATERIAL

1. Deputies' Report;
2. Addendum to Deputies' Report with proposals pertaining to the word 'christian' in the Apostles' Creed;
3. Letter from the Church of Albany proposing to adopt the whole Hymn Section;
4. Letter from the Church of Armadale requesting Synod to adopt the Church Book provisionally.

Synod DECIDES:

to endorse Synod's Deputies' broad interpretation of their mandate (see Deputies' report paragraph 1.2).

### GROUND

This interpretation is in line with the decisions of earlier Synods.

ADOPTED

Deputies' report contains three parts:

- A. Book of Praise - Psalms, Hymns, Prayers;
- B. Ecumenical Creeds and Three Forms of Unity;
- C. Liturgical Forms.

**A. Book of Praise - Psalms, Hymns, Prayers**

**1. Synod DECIDES:**

to adopt the Revisions to the Psalms and Prayer Sections and to the approved Hymns, to adopt Hymn 39 on the tune now adopted, and Hymn 1B (Deputies' Report refers to this Hymn as number 2).

**GROUND**

- (a) Synod 1983 already dealt with these Sections of the Church Book and adopted the Psalms (Art. 24), Prayers (Art. 98) and a number of Hymns (Art. 31, 32).
- (b) Synod's Deputies have examined the Revised Psalms, Hymns and Prayers, as well as hymns 1B and 39. They are satisfied with the few revisions that were made.

**ADOPTED**

( According to Synods' decisions 1978, 1983 and 1985 the following Hymns are adopted for use in the church services: 1A, 1B, 2, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 32, 34, 36, 39, 40, 41, 44, 47, 49, 50, 53, 58, 59 and 63. -Note from the Publishers of the Acts).

**2. Synod DECIDES:**

not to accede to the requests made by the Church of Albany:

- 1. "to reconsider the decision of Synod 1983 regarding the Hymn section"
- 2. "to accept the complete Hymn Section for use in the worship services, or to leave it to the Churches, which hymns of this Section will be sung in the worship services."

**GROUND**

- (a) The decision made by Kelmescott 1983 (Art. 31) is consistent with the principle established by earlier Synods to keep the number of Hymns to be used in our Churches to a minimum. See also Acts 1966, Article 46(d).

- (b) Albany's request does not advance new grounds, and should thus not be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of Article 33 of the Church Order.

ADOPTED

3. Synod DECIDES:

to reject the proposal made by the Church of Armadale "to decide to the provisional use of the Book of Praise", in so far as this concerns the Psalms, Hymns and Prayers Sections.

GROUND

Synod 1983 already adopted these parts of the Church Book (Arts. 24, 31, 32, 98).

ADOPTED

B. Ecumenical Creeds and Three Forms of Unity

1. Synod DECIDES:

to provisionally adopt the texts of the Ecumenical Creeds and Three Forms of Unity for use by the Churches.

GROUND

This is the first time that the Churches in Synod deal with this material. The Canadian Churches have given these Creeds and Confessions extensive consideration. Synod's Deputies have examined these Creeds and Forms including the latest changes and recommend adoption of the revised documents as they now stand.

ADOPTED

2. Synod DECIDES:

- (a) to take note of Deputies' proposals concerning the word 'christian' in the Apostles' Creed, and not to act on them;
- (b) to instruct new Deputies to examine this matter further and make a suitable recommendation to next Synod.

ADOPTED

## C. Liturgical Forms

### 1. Synod DECIDES:

to adopt the following Liturgical Forms for use by the Churches:

- (a) for Baptism of Infants;
- (b) for Baptism of Adults;
- (c) for the Public Profession of Faith;
- (d) for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper;
- (e) for the Excommunication of Communicant Members;
- (f) for the Readmission into the Church of Christ;
- (g) for the Ordination of Ministers of the Word;
- (h) for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons;
- (i) for the Solemnization of Marriage.

This in effect rejects Armadale's proposal "to decide to the provisional use of the Book of Praise", insofar as this concerns these Liturgical Forms.

#### GROUND

a. Synod 1983 already considered to adopt these Forms for use by the Churches but decided that more work needed to be done.

b. Synod's Deputies now report that these Forms have been further improved to their satisfaction, and propose that Synod adopt these Forms for use by the Churches.

ADOPTED

### 2. Synod DECIDES:

to provisionally adopt the following Liturgical Forms for use by the Churches:

- (j) for the Excommunication of Non-Communicant Members;
- (k) for the Ordination of Missionaries;
- (l) Abbreviated Form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper.

#### GROUND

These are new Forms which have not been previously dealt with in a Synod of the Churches. It will be beneficial to have the Churches test these Forms before formal adoption.

ADOPTED

D. Instructions for new Deputies

Synod DECIDES:

1. to instruct new Deputies to invite comments and collect material on:
  - (a) the Ecumenical Creeds and the Three Forms of Unity and
  - (b) the Liturgical Formswhich were adopted provisionally by decisions B.1 and C.2.
2. to evaluate these and report to next Synod with appropriate recommendations.

Deputies Church Book are thanked and discharged.

ADOPTED

Article 60

MISSION WORK

Agenda items: 10.14; 10.15  
Report: Committee II

MATERIAL

1. Letter from the Church of Armadale re books Br. P. 't Hart.
2. Report from the Church of Armadale re assets mission.
3. Report from the Church of Albany re future Mission Task.

A. Mission Assets

1. Committee observes that the Armadale letter of 20th April 1985 re books Br. P. 't Hart has still to be added to the Agenda. It is decided to add this letter as an addendum to item 10.15.

2. Synod DECIDES:

to accept the fact that the books have become the property of Br. 't Hart.

GROUND

It is too late to reverse the situation.

ADOPTED

Synod DECIDES:

that the Deputies for Mission Assets (the Church of Armadale) be requested to report to the next Synod regarding the transfer of Mission Assets (Article 107, Acts 1983) to the Church of Albany for the work in Papua New Guinea.

ADOPTED

B. Mission Work

Synod DECIDES:

to advise the Churches to fully support the work in Papua New Guinea as organized by the cooperating Churches.

GROUND

Synod regards the work in Papua New Guinea as fulfilling the mission command of the Lord Jesus Christ.

ADOPTED

Article 61

ADJOURNMENT

Rev. Dr. S.G. Hur requests the meeting to sing Psalm 135 : 2 and leads in thanksgiving.

Synod is adjourned.

## Sixth Session - Friday 7th June 1985

### Morning Session

#### Article 62

##### RE-OPENING

The chairman requests the brothers to sing Psalm 103 : 2. He leads in prayer and reads Amos 9 : 9-15. He congratulates Br. J. Eikelboom on his birthday, and wishes him the Lord's blessing for the year to come.

Synod receives the greetings from our sister-Churches in South Africa. Also the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in New Zealand sends greetings.

#### Article 63

##### ACTS

The Articles 35 - 45 are adopted.

#### Article 64

##### CONTACT WITH THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA (P.C.E.A.)

The chairman welcomes the brothers J. Kroeze and S. Reitsema, being Deputies for the contact with the P.C.E.A. He invites them to take part in the discussion.

Agenda items: 8.23; 8.24; 8.28; 10.13

Report: Committee I

##### MATERIAL

1. Report of the Deputies for Contact with the P.C.E.A.
2. Letter dated 26th May, 1985, from Br. P.W. Dekker, expressing doubts about the P.C.E.A. in relation to the marks of the true Church according to Article 29 of the Belgic Confession.
3. Letter dated 29th May, 1985, from Br. A. Bijl, requesting Synod to reject the proposal to recognize the P.C.E.A. as a true and faithful Church.
4. Letter dated 28th May, 1985, from Br. J. Numan requesting Synod not to acknowledge the P.C.E.A. as true Churches, but to appoint Deputies to direct the attention of the P.C.E.A. to the clear scriptural norms of the true Church.

5. Letter dated 9th May, 1985, from Br. and Sr. B. and H.M. Postmus requesting Synod not to accept the Deputies' recommendations.

The discussion is begun.

#### Article 65

#### ADJOURNMENT

The morning session is closed.  
Synod is adjourned.

#### Afternoon Session

#### Article 66

#### RE-OPENING

The chairman re-opens the meeting.  
The discussion on Contact with the P.C.E.A. continues.

#### Article 67

#### DECLARATION REGARDING THE MEANING OF "TRUE AND FAITHFUL CHURCH"

Br. J. Eikelboom tables the following proposal:

Synod declare

that our recognition of another Church as being  
"true and faithful Church of the Lord Jesus Christ"

1. means that both our churches, and that recognized church, stand on the foundations as expressed in Articles 27 to 32 of the Belgic Confession;
2. has as a direct consequence that a sister-Church relationship can be established, without disregarding the fact that historical developments may well give cause to several stumbling blocks still lying on the road to a practical realization of unity;
3. and that our church members must join that church, and vice versa, in the case that such church is their nearest church, in accordance with Article 28 of the Belgic Confession.



## GROUNDS

1. This Synod, in representing the Churches, and in the present situation of developing contacts with many other Churches both in Australia and abroad, must clearly define in accordance with Scripture and Confession, what is meant by the formal recognition of such Churches as being "true and faithful Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ".

2. This clear definition will be helpful in the process of coming to full sister-Church relationship in a scriptural way.

ADOPTED

## Article 68

### DECISION ON CONTACT WITH P.C.E.A.

(see Articles 64,66, Acts 1985)

#### Synod DECIDES:

1. to express its joy and gratitude with the resolution of the Synod of Eastern Australia (P.C.E.A.) conveyed in its letter of 31st May, 1985, to Synod Launceston (refer Acts 1985 Article 24);
2. that the available information is not sufficient for the responsible recognition of the true marks according to Article 29 of the Belgic Confession;
3. that Deputies be appointed with the instruction to:
  - a) convey our joy and gratitude with the mutual recognition of the need to seek unity of faith on the basis of God's Word;
  - b) further investigate whether the P.C.E.A. can be acknowledged as a true Church according to Articles 27-29;
  - c) pay particular attention to the point of "three types of communicants" as mentioned in Deputies' report;
  - d) submit their report to the Churches at least three months prior to the next Synod;

4. not to request representatives of the P.C.E.A. to attend the Synod.

#### GROUND

1. The acknowledgement of a Church as 'true and faithful' has to be based on the marks of the true church according to Article 29 of the Belgic Confession (refer to Article 96 Synod observes-B.1, Acts 1983).
2. An evaluation of these marks relies on adequate information pertaining to the ministry, the administration of the sacraments and the exercise of church discipline.

ADOPTED

Deputies are discharged.

#### Article 69

#### INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES

Agenda items: 8.10, 8.22, 8.24 and 10.7  
Report: Committee I

#### MATERIAL

1. Report Deputies for Correspondence with Foreign Sister Churches, paragraph 6;
2. Letter from the Church of Kelmscott asking Synod to revoke the decision of Synod 1983 pertaining to the I.C.R.C. (Acts 1983 Article 87);
3. Letter from Br. J. Numan, dated 28th May 1985 with the same request;
4. Letter from Br. A. Bijl, dated 29th May 1985 with the same request.

The discussion is begun.  
(See Article 88 for continuation)

#### Article 70

#### CLOSED SESSION

Synod goes into closed session.

After the chairman declares the session open, he announces that the letter to Br. W.L. Dekker was adopted.

Article 71

ADJOURNMENT

The afternoon session is closed.  
Synod is adjourned.

Evening Session

Article 72

RE-OPENING

The chairman invites those present to sing Psalm 107:17.

Article 73

BIBLE TRANSLATION

Agenda items: 8.25; 8.27; 8.29; 10.9  
Report: Committee III

MATERIAL

1. Report of the Deputies for Bible Translation;
2. Appeal from Br. H.G. Bosveld;
3. Letter from Br. M. Berkelaar;
4. Letter from Br. and Sr. B. Postmus.

I. Report Bible Translation

Synod DECIDES:

1. to thank the Deputies for their report;
2. to acknowledge that Deputies could not fulfil the mandate given to them by Synod 1983;
3. to discharge the Deputies.

GROUND

The Deputies mention but do not evaluate the following points:

- (a) all The Free Reformed Churches of Australia use the R.S.V.;
- (b) that the introduction of the R.S.V. was delayed by problems in acquiring stocks;
- (c) that the introduction and use of the R.S.V. raised few objections;

- (d) the objections that were raised relate to:
- (i) the influence of modern/liberal translators not committed to the divine authority of Scripture or to the divinity of Christ;
  - (ii) omissions and substitutions compared with the K.J.V.

ADOPTED

## II. APPEAL BY BR. H.G. BOSVELD

Synod DECIDES:

to write to appellant:

1. thanking him for bringing to the notice of Synod various questions pertaining to the R.S.V.;
2. stating that these matters have been passed on to Deputies for a proper study;
3. admonishing him for the unscriptural tone and nature of his comments and the irrelevant accusations contained in the report.

### GROUND

1. Despite the tone of the appeal it contains evidence of genuine concern on appellant's part about the issue. This concern was also mentioned in the Report of the Deputies.
2. There is a need for a broader study of the issue and of points raised in the Appeal. Deputies' reports and studies by our sister-Churches contain relevant information.
3. The Appeal contains many irrelevant comments, innuendos, disrespectful remarks, and unwarranted accusations.

ADOPTED

## III. LETTER FROM BR. M. BERKELAAR

Synod DECIDES:

1. to take note of the letter;
2. to send the brother a copy of the instructions to Deputies.

### GROUND

The letter is a statement of this brother's position with regard to the R.S.V. It is not an Appeal to Synod and contains no proposals.

ADOPTED

IV. LETTER FROM BR. AND SR. B. POSTMUS

Synod DECIDES:

1. to thank this brother and sister for their valuable correspondence;
2. to pass the letter on to Deputies for their information.

GROUNDS

1. The letter is not an appeal and contains no proposals.
2. It is an in depth study of the issue.

ADOPTED

V. NEW DEPUTIES

Synod DECIDES to appoint new Deputies with the following mandate:

1. to undertake a thorough study of the issue making use of the material placed before this Synod and that produced by Synods of our Canadian sister-Churches;
2. to maintain archives of relevant matter regarding Bible translations;
3. to invite submissions from within the congregations on this issue and to evaluate the validity of the arguments presented;
4. to monitor further work of the Translation Committee of the R.S.V.;
5. to submit an Interim Report to the Churches by June 30th, 1986;
6. to report to the next Synod and send copies of these reports to the Churches three months before next Synod.

ADOPTED

Deputies are discharged.

## Article 74

### RELATIONS WITH CHURCHES ABROAD

Agenda item: 10.7

Report: Committee II

#### MATERIAL

1. paragraphs 1 to 4, and related items in paragraph 8 of Deputies' Report 1985;
2. official text of decisions by General Synod Heemse relating to our churches and to the I.C.R.C.;
3. letter from Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Indonesia di Sumba Timur-Sabu (dated 1 May 1985).

#### I. NAME OF DEPUTIES

Synod DECIDES:

to change the name of these deputies from 'Deputies for Correspondence with Foreign Sister Churches' to 'Deputies for Relations with Churches Abroad'.

#### GROUND

1. The word 'Deputies' should not be replaced with the word 'Committee' as suggested, since
  - a) the use of the word 'Deputies' by the Churches for this type of synodical committee is well established, and thereby this word has become well understood to indicate the special nature of the relationship between Synod and its Deputies;
  - b) all other Synod committees of this type are known as 'Deputies';
  - c) both the Church Order (Article 48) and Rules for Synods (Article 9) use the word 'Deputies' for the same purpose.
2. Deletion of the word 'sister' acknowledges that these Deputies maintain also contact with 'non-sister' Churches.
3. The word 'Relations' is used by Article 46 C.O. which deals with foreign Churches.

ADOPTED

## II. RULES FOR TEMPORARY CONTACT

Synod DECIDES:

as there should be only one form of permanent ecclesiastical fellowship between sister-Churches and this under the mutually accepted rules for correspondence, any rules for temporary ecclesiastical contact should make clear that the contact has as its ultimate aim the establishment of sister-Church relationship.

GROUND

It is essential that Rules for temporary contact embody this principle (see Acts 1985, Article 67).

ADOPTED

## III. CANADA

Synod DECIDES:

to continue the sister-Church relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches, in accordance with the adopted Rules.

GROUND

Deputies' report contains no adverse aspects.

ADOPTED

## IV. KOREA

Synod DECIDES:

to continue the sister-Church relationship with the Presbyterian Church in Korea, in accordance with the adopted Rules.

GROUND

Deputies' report contains no adverse aspects.

ADOPTED

## V. THE NETHERLANDS

Synod DECIDES:

to continue the sister-Church relationship with de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, in accordance with the adopted Rules.

GROUND

Deputies' report contains no adverse aspects.

ADOPTED

VI. EAST SUMBA-SAVU (INDONESIA)

Synod DECIDES:

to continue correspondence with the Gereja-gereja Reformasi Indonesia di Sumba Timur-Sabu, in accordance with the adopted Rules.

GROUND

Deputies' report contains information showing: "that everywhere in the Churches a desire to live according to God's Word, consistent with the Reformed Confession" could be detected (paragraphs 4.4.6 a/b).

ADOPTED

VII. SOUTH-AFRICA

Synod DECIDES:

to continue the correspondence with Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika, in accordance with the adopted Rules.

GROUND

Deputies' report contains no adverse aspects.

ADOPTED

VIII. GENERAL

Synod DECIDES to cause:

- (a) that an in depth evaluation be made of the two chapters added to the Westminster Confession of Faith, and adopted by the Presbyterian Church in Korea;
- (b) the distribution of the findings of this evaluation to the Churches.

GROUND

Careful evaluation of these additions to the Westminster Confession of Faith is important for the Churches.

ADOPTED



Article 75

CONTACT WITH THE REFORMED CHURCHES  
OF NEW ZEALAND

Agenda item: 10.7  
Report: Committee I

MATERIAL

Report of Deputies for Correspondence with Foreign  
Sister Churches to Synod Launceston 1985, par. 5.5A.

Synod DECIDES:

to instruct Deputies to write to the next Synod of  
the Reformed Churches of New Zealand to point out  
to these Churches that their sister-Church rela-  
tionship with, for instance, the Reformed Churches  
of Australia, as well as their second level corre-  
spondence with the G.K.N. (Synodical) are impedi-  
ments to continue the existing contact.

to inform the Deputies of our Sister-Churches in  
The Netherlands about this decision.

GROUND

1. Synod 1962 stated that the Reformed Churches of New Zealand were not faithful Churches because of their relationship with the Reformed Churches of Australia and the G.K.N.
2. This relationship with the Reformed Churches of Australia is still current.

ADOPTED

Article 76

CONTACT WITH THE REFORMED CHURCH OF JAPAN,  
AND THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN UGANDA

Agenda item: 10.7  
Report: Committee I

MATERIAL

Report of Deputies for Correspondence with Foreign  
Sister-Churches, to Synod Launceston 1985, paragraphs 5.4 and  
5.7

Synod DECIDES:

that Deputies be instructed:

- (a) to investigate whether or not the Reformed Church of Japan and the Presbyterian Church in Uganda can be recognised as true and faithful Churches according to Article 29 of the Belgic Confession with a view to the possible establishment of sister-Church relations;
- (b) to urge the Reformed Church of Japan to break its ties with the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (R.E.S.).

ADOPTED

#### Article 77

#### STUDY WESTMINSTER CONFESSION

Agenda item: 8.14  
Report: Committee I

#### MATERIAL

Letter from The Free Reformed Church of Kelmscott re study of Westminster Confession.

Committee proposes:

1. that Synod appoint deputies to study and evaluate the Westminster Confession, giving due consideration to similar studies undertaken by our sister Churches.
2. that the above Deputies be instructed to publish the results of their study in booklet form.

#### FOUNDATIONS

1. It is true that no Synod has ever declared that the Westminster Confession is a "true Reformed Confession".
2. Though we as Churches do not subscribe to the Westminster Confession, we do by our interchurch contacts show that we recognize the Westminster Confession as a Reformed Confession.

3. It is not the task of Synod to make official pronouncements regarding the Westminster Confession. But in view of our contacts with Churches subscribing to the Westminster Confession Synod has a task in promoting a knowledge and understanding of this Confession.

DEFEATED

Synod does not grant the request of the Church of Kelmscott.

#### Article 78

#### CONTACT WITH THE REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA

Agenda item: 8.21  
Report: Committee III

#### MATERIAL

Letter from the Church of Kelmscott, to which is appended the letter from Classis Western Australia of the Reformed Churches of Australia, dated 3rd May 1983.

#### Synod DECIDES:

1. not to deal with the subject matter;
2. to notify the Church of Kelmscott of this decision.

#### GROUND

1. The appended letter was not addressed to, nor intended for the Synod (see Acts of Synod 1983, Article 17).
2. The Reformed Churches were notified in earlier correspondence that the matter of contact is one which concerns all the Free Reformed Churches, and is, therefore, a matter which should be dealt with by Synod.

ADOPTED

#### Article 79

#### ADJOURNMENT

Rev. K. Jonker requests the meeting to sing Psalm 9 : 1 and leads in closing prayer.

Synod is adjourned.

**Seventh Session - Saturday 8th June 1985**

**Morning Session**

Article 80

RE-OPENING

The chairman requests the brothers to sing Psalm 149 :  
1 and leads in prayer. From Scripture he reads Ezekiel 34 :  
7 - 16.

Article 81

TASK OF THE CLASSIS REFERRED TO CLASSIS CHURCH OR SYNOD

Agenda item: 10.12

Report: Committee III

MATERIAL

Deputies' Report about the Task of a Classis Church  
(Acts 1983, Articles 88 and 11b): "to collect, collate and  
consider all Synod decisions re Classis Church."

Article 5 C.O. The Calling to the Ministry of the Word

Re: Advice at calls and examinations

1. Deputies propose:

to maintain the decision of 1970 Article 47, whereby  
"Classis" is replaced by a Synod for preparatory and  
peremptory examinations.

Synod DECIDES:

to re-affirm and re-state the decision of Synod  
1970 Article 47, whereby "Classis" is replaced by  
"Synod" for preparatory and peremptory examinations  
and to amend the Rules for the examinations accord-  
ingly.

GROUND

The established practice in our Churches to convene  
Special Ecclesiastical Meetings for this purpose contravenes  
this decision.

ADOPTED

2. Deputies propose:

to supplement the decision of Synod 1970 as follows:

- a) At the peremptory examination the Deputies of Synod or some of them (Article 5 C.O.) shall act in that capacity, even when they are the same as the examiners.
- b) The decision made by Synod 1985 regarding the appointment of counsellors according to Article 43 C.O. (see below).

Synod DECIDES:

to adopt the proposal with the amendment that all the words after 'capacity' be deleted.

GROUND

It is necessary for the evaluation of the peremptory examination that Deputies for Article 48 C.O. are present. These should preferably not be the examiners themselves.

ADOPTED

**Article 6 C.O. Calling to Another Church**  
Re: Approbation of Calls

Deputies propose:

To maintain the rule in Rules for Synods Article 12 (Appendix II Acts 1980) whereby the neighbouring Church shall act as Classis Church.

Synod DECIDES:

to take note of this proposal and take no further action.

GROUND

The Rules for Synods have been previously adopted and are thus in force.

ADOPTED

**Article 7 C.O. Certificate of Dismissal with  
the Acceptance of a Call**

Re: Issue of a Certificate by Classis

Deputies propose:

1. to replace "Classis" by "Classis Church", appointed by Synod;
2. if this Church is the same as the calling Church, the "second appeal Church" to be appointed for this purpose;
3. a report shall be tabled at the next Synod.

Synod DECIDES:

not to accept this proposal.

**GROUND**

The situation envisaged by the proposal would apply only when a minister is called from within the Australian Bond of Sister Churches.

ADOPTED

**Article 8 C.O. Admission without Theological Training**

Re: The Position of Classis & Synod in this Respect

Deputies propose:

1. The persons concerned shall present themselves to the Classis Church, which shall make some investigations, whereby she shall consult the Church of which the person concerned is a member;
2. the examination shall take place in "a special ecclesiastical meeting"; which shall determine the period of time mentioned in Article 8.
3. the Classis Church shall further deal with the persons concerned according to the final sentence of the Article, but be advised by the deputies ad Article 48 appointed by Synod.

Synod DECIDES:

to adopt the proposal with the following amendment:

- a) delete the words "a special ecclesiastical meeting";
- b) replace these words with "Synod (extraordinary)".

GROUNDS

1. Special ecclesiastical meetings for this purpose have no place within the Church Order or the Rules for Synods.
2. The format, structure and rules for such meetings have not been defined.
3. As the Australian Churches do not have classes, there is at present no provision for this eventuality.

ADOPTED

**Article 9 C.O. Admission of Ministers who have  
of Late Joined the Church**

Re: The Position of Classis and Deputies of the Synod

Deputies propose:

To replace "the classis and Deputies of the Synod" by "a special ecclesiastical meeting of the Churches."

Synod DECIDES:

to adopt the proposal with the following amendment:  
to replace the words "a special ecclesiastical  
meeting of the Churches" by "Synod (extraordinary)"

GROUND

As for Article 8 C.O.

ADOPTED

**Article 12 C.O. Appointment to an Extraordinary Task**

Re: The Consent of the Classis

Deputies propose:

"Classis" to be replaced by: "Classis Church."

Synod DECIDES:

to adopt this proposal.

GROUND

As for Article 8 C.O., point 3.

ADOPTED

**Article 14 C.O. Dismissal**

Re: The Position of Classis and Deputies of the Synod

Deputies propose:

1. to replace "Classis" by: "Classis Church;"
2. to maintain: "the deputies of the Synod."

Synod DECIDES:

to adopt Proposal 1 and to take note of Proposal 2.

ADOPTED

**Article 15 C.O. Relief from Office**

Re: The Position of the Classis

Deputies propose:

to replace "Classis" by: "Classis Church."

Synod DECIDES:

that the proposal be

ADOPTED

**Article 17 C.O. Equitable Distribution of Duties**

Re: The Position of the Classis

Deputies propose:

"Classis" to be replaced by: "Classis Church."

Synod DECIDES:

to reject this proposal and  
to replace "Classis" by "Synod."

GROUND

The Classis Church has no task in the matter of maintaining equality between Ministers where there is more than one Minister in a Church. The same applies to the positions of Elders and Deacons in a Church.

ADOPTED



**Article 30 C.O. Authority of the Assemblies**  
**Re: Restrictions of the Authority of the Classis Church**

Deputies propose:

to issue a special statement whereby it is made clear that the authority of the Classis Church is limited to the cases described in the rules set by Synod 1985. (The same applies also to Articles 32, 33, 48 and 81.)

Synod DECIDES:

to reject this proposal.

**GROUND**

1. The rules of Synod 1985 do not exist.
2. The authority of the Classis Church is already limited to the cases where its task is specifically defined.

ADOPTED

**Article 31 C.O. Appeal to a Major Assembly**  
**Re: Appointment of Appeal Churches**

Deputies propose:

1. to maintain the decision of Synod 1959, Acts Article 16, whereby the "Classis" is replaced by the "Classis Church," and a second-appeal-Church is appointed;
2. to appoint Classis Churches (which has to be done after the institution of the Church at Byford);
3. to appoint second-appeal-Churches;
4. to state that the second-appeal-Churches shall not function when an appeal is made within two months prior to a Synod.

Synod DECIDES:

to adopt the proposals with the following amendment: to add in Proposal 1 the words 'concerning appeals' after the words 'Article 16'.

**GROUND**

This is the implementation of the decision of Synod 1959.

ADOPTED

**Article 35 C.O. Jurisdiction of the Major Assemblies**  
**in Respect of the Minor**  
**Re: Jurisdiction**

Deputies propose:

1. "Classis" to be replaced by: "Classis Church;"
2. As long as Classes have not been established to read the second sentence of the Article as follows:  
"The second-appeal-Church has this authority in respect to the Classis Church. This applies also to the Synod in respect to the second-appeal-Church or - if the latter is not involved - to the Classis Church."

Synod DECIDES:

that this proposal be

ADOPTED

GROUND

As for Article 31 C.O.

**Article 38 C.O. Institution of Offices**  
**Re: Agreement of the Classis**

Deputies propose:

to replace "Classis" by: "Classis Church."

Synod DECIDES:

that the proposal be

ADOPTED

**Article 39 C.O. Places without Consistories**  
**Re: The Position of the Classis**

Deputies propose:

to replace "Classis" by: "Synod".

Synod DECIDES:

to delete all reference to the Classis Church.

GROUNDS

1. Synods are held only once every two years.
2. The neighbouring Church would be in a far better position to exercise these duties than a Classis Church which may be far removed from the place referred to.

ADOPTED

**Article 41 C.O. The Classis**  
**Re: Question Time**

Deputies propose:

What the chairman shall ask according to this Article shall be done - as long as no Classes have been established - by the chairman at the Synod - in accordance with tradition since 1954.

Synod DECIDES:

to adopt the proposal amended as follows:  
in the sentence commencing, "The chairman shall ask" to replace "Classis" with "Synod".

GROUND

Article 41 has been on the Agenda of our Synods.

ADOPTED

**Article 43 C.O. Counsellors**  
**Re: Appointment of Counsellors**

Deputies propose:

1. Counsellors to be appointed by Synod;
2. When a vacancy arises more than two months before a Synod, the Classis Church shall appoint a counsellor according to this Article, and report to the next Synod.

Synod DECIDES:

that the proposal be

ADOPTED

**Article 44 C.O. Church Visitation**  
**Re: Appointments and Reports**

Deputies propose:

1. to replace "Classis" by "Synod;"
2. Appointments shall be made for a period of two years;
3. to report to Synod, only after having written the report during the visitation.

Synod DECIDES:

1. to adopt Proposals 1 and 2.

2. to amend Proposal 3 to read:

"To write one report covering the two annual visits, to be sent to the Consistory concerned."

GROUNDS

For 1: This is already established practice.

For 2: This simplifies the procedure at the Synod and prevents repetition.

ADOPTED

**Article 45 C.O. The Synod**

Re: Time, Delegation, Earlier Meetings

Deputies propose:

1. to maintain the decisions made in these respects;
2. as for earlier meetings "at least two classical meetings" to be replaced by: "at least two Churches, with the advice of the Classis Church or second -appeal-Church of the Church that took the initiative."

Synod DECIDES:

to amend the proposal by deleting all words in point 2 after the comma behind the word 'churches';  
to adopt the amended proposal.

GROUND

There seems to be no reason to introduce a third Church into this procedure.

ADOPTED

**Article 73 & 74 C.O. Procedure Relating to Discipline & Announcements during the Procedure**

Re: Consent for Excommunication  
& Advice as for Discipline

Deputies propose:

1. re Art. 73: "The Classis" to be replaced by: "the Classis Church."
2. re Art. 74: "Classis" to be replaced by: "the Classis Church."

Synod DECIDES:

that the proposals be

ADOPTED

GROUND

This is already established practice.

**Article 76 C.O. Discipline in Relation to Office Bearers**  
Re: Position of Classis and Deputies of Synod

Deputies propose:

1. the neighbouring congregation to be appointed by the Synod;
2. the deposition to be judged by the neighbouring Church (Classis Church) with the advice of Deputies for Article 49 C.O. appointed by the Synod.

Synod DECIDES:

1. that Proposal 1 be amended to read:  
"the consistory of the neighbouring (classis) congregation to be appointed by the Synod."
2. the deposition to be judged by the second-appeal-Church with advice of Deputies for Article 49 C.O. appointed by Synod.

GROUND

The appointment of Neighbouring Churches, Classis Churches, and Appeal Churches could be confusing.

ADOPTED

**Article 79 C.O. Discipline in Relation to Baptised Members**  
Re: Consent of Classis

Deputies propose:  
to replace "Classis" by "Classis Church".

Synod DECIDES:  
that the proposal be

ADOPTED

IN CONCLUSION,

Synod DECIDES:

1. that the final text of these changes be added to the file of the Church Order, and published in a suitable form for insertion in the printed booklet of the Church Order.
2. that these changes remain in force until classes have been formed;
3. that Deputies are discharged and thanked for presenting this report;
4. that it expresses its appreciation to Rev. G. van Rongen, M.Th., for having compiled the Church Order of Dordrecht as revised by the Synod Kelm-scott 1983 of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia.

ADOPTED

## Article 82

### TRAINING FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD (ARTICLE 19 C.O.)

The chairman welcomes the brothers R. Groenewold and K. Salomons, being Deputies for Training for the Ministry of the Word. He invites them to take part in the discussion.

Agenda items: 8.15, 10.10  
Report: Committee II

#### MATERIAL

1. Deputies' report;
2. The letter from the Church of Launceston, informing Synod of the appointment of brother R. Groenewold in the place of brother J. Alberts, and Rev. K. Jonker as alternate.

#### Synod DECIDES:

1.
  - a) to note the appointment to Deputies, of the brothers R. Groenewold and Rev. K. Jonker (alternate) in the vacancy created by the departure of brother J. Alberts, as approved in earlier correspondence between the Churches.
  - b) to note that the Churches were asked to provide funds for the financial support of one theological student.
2. to adopt the "Regulations for the financial aid of students (Article 19 C.O.)" and the "Rules for Students Support Fund" as prepared by Deputies and as amended by Synod.
3.
  - a) to thank Deputies, also for the extensive information given to the Churches in the publication of articles in the Una Sancta, on the subject of "Training for the Ministry";
  - b) to discharge the Deputies.

ADOPTED

## Article 83

### AUDIT OF BOOKS AND DOCUMENTS OF DEPUTIES FOR TRAINING FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Elder A.M. Hidding reports orally that the books and documents of Deputies for Training for the Ministry of the Word were audited by the Church of Launceston and found to be in good order.

Article 84

ADJOURNMENT

The morning session is closed.  
Synod is adjourned.

Afternoon Session

Article 85

RE-OPENING

The chairman re-opens the meeting.

Article 86

DEPUTIES RE ARTICLE 66 C.O.

Agenda item: 10.18

Synod takes note of the letter from the Church of Launceston reporting to Synod that it has not been necessary to nominate a day of prayer.

Article 87

ACTS

The Articles 46 to 61 are adopted.

Article 88

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES

The discussion is continued. (see Article 69)

Synod DECIDES:

1. to inform the appellants that the decision recorded in Article 87 of the Acts of Synod 1983 was reviewed in the light of the material presented by the appellants;
2. not to revoke the decision of Synod 1983;
3. to re-define and expand the 1983 decision as follows:

- 3.1 to send two delegates to the first meeting of the I.C.R.C. to be held at Edinburgh in 1985, with the instruction stated in 3.2 below;
- 3.2 to propose or support the proposed constitutional amendments of our Canadian Sister Churches as recorded in the Acts of Synod Cloverdale 1983 namely:
  - a) a stipulation in the Basis of the I.C.R.C. that the delegates subscribe only to the standards of the Churches of which they are members;
  - b) that membership of the R.E.S. is an impediment to membership in the I.C.R.C. (refer Acts Synod 1983, Article 82);
  - c) to add to Purpose (Article III, 5): "to encourage each other as member Churches to ...";
  - d) that under 'Authority' (Article V) change "are urged to receive the decisions" to "urged to consider";
  - e) to amend the Regulations (Article II): "Each Conference shall elect ...";
  - f) to amend the Regulations (Article II, 4, b, iv) "to forward to the Churches material ...";

and to make or support the request that the I.C.R.C. at Edinburgh will deal with:

- a) the doctrine of the Church in the Reformed Confessions;
- b) the doctrine of the Covenant in the Reformed Confessions;
- c) the exercise of interchurch relations;

and to give these matters priority after amendments to the Constitution and before attending to matters of Mission.

- 4. that Synod 1987 is to make a decision regarding our continuing membership of the I.C.R.C. on the basis of the reports of conference delegates and on the report of the Deputies for Relations with Churches Abroad, giving due consideration to the stated grounds for this and the above decisions.



## GROUNDS

1. Synod can only rescind a decision of a previous Synod when that decision is proved to be in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order (Article 31 of the Church Order).
2. The briefness and lateness of Deputies' report to Synod 1983 (refer to Article 60 of Acts 1983) is not a sufficient ground to revoke the decision recorded in Article 87 of the Acts of Synod 1983.
3. Appellants have not proved that an international conference of this nature is unscriptural.
4. The Church Order speaks of minor and major assemblies but does not touch on the opportunity for contact by way of a conference with foreign Churches of Reformed Confession.
5. Seeing that in our contact with sister-Churches we have recognized the Westminster Standard as a Reformed Confession, we cannot regard the constitutional basis of the I.C.R.C. as being contrary to God's Word.
6. The present Constitution of the I.C.R.C. could imply that member Churches subscribe to the Three Forms of Unity as well as to the Westminster Standards.
7. Churches who have, and faithfully adhere to, a Reformed Confession have an obligation to promote their unity of faith and thereby also present a Reformed testimony to the world.
8. The promotion of this unity in faith implies the exercise of ecclesiastical fellowship among each other, with the expectation that such fellowship leads to sister-Church relations.
9. On reaching sister-Church relations, inter-church cooperation in mission and other matters is possible.
10. Within sister-Church relations the study and resolution of common problems and issues also is possible.
11. Sister-Churches have a duty to encourage each other to present a Reformed testimony to the world.
12. The decision to join the I.C.R.C. was based on our acceptance of the constitutional BASIS and PURPOSE, and not on any evaluation of potential member Churches.
13. Seeing the meeting held at Groningen was a Constituent Assembly the question of adherence to the Reformed Confession, and hence the question of unity of faith between member Churches, cannot be properly decided until after the first meeting of the I.C.R.C. to be held in Edinburgh this year.
14. Because of the lack of accountability of the I.C.R.C. members themselves are accountable for their membership.

UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED

The Deputies for Relations with Churches Abroad are discharged.

Article 89

RE ARTICLE 46 ACTS OF SYNOD 1983

Agenda item: 8.17

Report: Committee III

MATERIAL

Letter from the Church of Kelmscott re the use of the word "consent" instead of "advice" in Articles 73 and 74 C.O.

Synod DECIDES:

1. to write to the Church of Kelmscott stating:
  - (a) that the intent of the Church Order is to protect against hierarchy;
  - (b) the Church Order should be understood in the ecclesiastical sense that it serves the bond of Churches and protects the members against arbitrary use of power;
  - (c) the Church Order contains many words which can be read to imply hierarchy. The ecclesiastical understanding of the same words is, however, different;
  - (d) the ecclesiastical meaning of words may be somewhat different from that given in a secular dictionary;
  - (e) that Synod shares the concern of Kelmscott if the word should be understood in the manner presented in the letter;
  - (f) that changes in the Church Order can only be made if good and sufficient reasons are given.
2. to take no further action on this matter.

GROUPS

1. As stated in Decision 1.
2. The letter does not make any proposals.

ADOPTED

Article 90

ADJOURNMENT

Elder J. Plug requests Synod to sing Psalm 25 : 6 and leads in prayer.

Synod is adjourned.

## **Eighth Session - Monday 10th June 1985**

### **Afternoon Session**

#### Article 91

#### **RE-OPENING**

The chairman requests the brothers to sing Psalm 97 :6. He leads in prayer. From Scripture he reads Luke 12 :22 - 40.

#### Article 92

#### **CLOSED SESSION**

Synod goes into closed session. After the chairman declares the session open he announces that

1. the letter to br. H.G. Bosveld was adopted (see Acts art. 73).
2. the minutes of the closed sessions were adopted.

#### Article 93

#### **ACTS**

Acts articles 62 - 79 are adopted.

The committees which had to examine the linguistic aspects of the Forms and Certificates (see Acts art. 39) and the Regulations and Rules for Student support (see Acts art. 82) could not complete their work. Synod decides that these matters are to be finalised by the Churches by the end of 1985 by mutual agreement.

The letter of reply to the P.C.E.A. is adopted (see Acts articles 24, 64 and 68).

#### Article 94

#### **DETERMINATION OF PERCENTAGE FIGURES FOR ASSESSMENT OF SYNOD EXPENDITURES.**

Agenda item: 11

Costs will be shared as follows:

- |               |     |
|---------------|-----|
| 1) Albany     | 20% |
| 2) Armadale   | 27% |
| 3) Byford     | 6%  |
| 4) Kelmscott  | 27% |
| 5) Launceston | 20% |

Article 95

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTIES

Agenda item: 12

Synod makes the following appointments:

1) Publishing of the Acts:

The Church of Launceston.

2) Publishing the decisions pertaining to the referral of the task of the Classis to Classis Church or Synod

The Church of Armadale.  
Instructions: Acts, Art.81.

3) Archives and Library of Synod

The Church of Kelmscott.  
Instructions: Acts 1983, Articles 112.1; 114.1,2,4,5  
Acts 1985, Article 33.

4) Supervision of Archives and Library

The Church of Byford.  
Instructions: to inspect the Archives and Library and report to Synod 1987.

5) Treasurer of Synod

Br. J. Kroeze. Alternate: Br. G. Reitsema

Instructions:

- I. a) to provide the 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 1987.
- c) to table a written report to Synod 1987.
- II. together with Br. A.M. Hidding to implement Synod's decision Acts article 55.2.

6) Deputies for Revision of Rules for Synod

Br. J. Eikelboom (convener), Br. S.H. Terpstra.  
Alternate Br. A. Slobe

Instructions:

- a) to re-state and re-formulate the Rules, thus providing them with greater clarity and statement of intent. (Acts 1983, Art. 54);
- b) to report to the Churches before the end of 1985, so that the revised rules, if possible, can be accepted by mutual agreement before Synod 1987.

7) Deputies for Relations with Churches Abroad

Rev. K. Bruning (convener)  
Br. L. VanBurgel (deputy convener)  
Rev. Dr. S.G. Hur  
Rev. A. Veldman  
Rev. G. Van Rongen  
Alternates: Br. J. Eikelboom, Br. J.A. Swarts.

Instructions:

I to continue the sister-Church relationship with:

- a. The Canadian Reformed Churches
- b. De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland
- c. Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika
- d. The Presbyterian Church in Korea
- e. The Gereja-gereja Reformasi Indonesia di Sumba Timor-Sabu

See Acts, Article 74.

II to visit the first Synod meeting of the Churches mentioned in I(e) above in November 1985, by Rev. Dr. S.G. Hur; Alternate: Br. L. VanBurgel.

- III
- a) to thoroughly investigate the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland, and the Free Church of Scotland and submit comprehensive reports to the Churches and to the next Synod, paying particular attention to the marks of the true Church and the question of Church government.
  - b) to maintain contact with these Churches at the present level (Acts 1985, Art. 43).

- IV
  - a) to write to the next Synod of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand to point out to these Churches that their sister-Church relationship with, for instance, the Reformed Churches of Australia, as well as their second level correspondence with the G.K.N. (Synodical) are impediments to continue the existing contact.
  - b) to inform the Deputies of our sister Churches in The Netherlands about this decision.  
(Acts 1985, Article 75).
  
- V
  - a) to investigate whether or not the Reformed Church of Japan, the Presbyterian Church in Uganda and the Dutch Reformed Church of Sri Lanka can be recognized as true and faithful Churches according to Art.29 of the Belgic Confession with a view to the possible establishment of sister-Church relations.  
(See Acts 1983, Art.112.5e; Acts 1985, Art. 76).
  - b) to urge the Reformed Church of Japan to break the ties with the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (R.E.S.).  
(Acts 1985, Art. 76)
  
- VI 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 (Acts 1983, Art.112.5f).
  
- VII to inform the Interim Committee of the I.C.R.C. of Synod's decision as recorded in Acts 1985, Art.88 point 3.2.  
Synod deputizes Rev. G. Van Rongen and Rev. A. Veldman ( Alternate: Rev. Dr. S.G. Hur) to attend the Conference 1985 at Edinburgh with the instructions as recorded in Acts 1983, Art.112.5j and Acts 1985, Art.88 point 3.2.
  
- VIII to bring to the attention of the Churches those items from the correspondence with sister-Churches abroad which are of importance to the Churches.
  
- IX to forward copies of the Acts of Synod 1985 to the sister-Churches Abroad.

- X to inform the sister-Churches abroad of the place and time of the next Synod, and to send the preliminary agenda to them at least six weeks prior to the commencement of that Synod.
- XI 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;
- XII to supply the Churches with Acts of Synods of sister-Churches abroad;
- XIII to report to the Churches three months before the next Synod and also to the Synod itself.

8) Deputies Contact with Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia

Rev. K. Jonker (convener), Br. A.M. Hidding, Br. S. Reitsema, Br. J. VanderRos. Alternates: Br. J. Kroeze, Br. J. Lenstra. Advisers: all the ministers.

Instructions: Acts 1985, Art. 68 point 3  
Minutes of meetings with representatives of the P.C.E.A. have to be sent to the Churches.

9) Deputies Church Book

Br. J. VanderRos (convener), Br. G. Brouwer, Br. G. Groenewold; Alternate: Br. J.C. Meijer.

Instructions: Acts 1985, Art. 59 B.2; D.

10) Deputies Bible Translation

Rev. K. Bruning (convener), Br. J.A. Swarts (deputy convener), Br. A. Plug, Rev. G. Van Rongen. Alternate: Br. S.H. Terpstra.

Instructions: Acts 1985, Art. 73 V.

11) Deputies for Training for the Ministry (Art.18,19 C.O.)

Rev. K. Jonker (convener), Br. K. Salomons, Br. R.E. Groenewold; Alternate: Br. A.M. Hidding.

Instructions: a) Acts 1985, Art. 58 and 82;  
b) to ask the Churches to provide funds when necessary.

12) Classis Churches:

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

13) Deputies for Study proposed Art. 26 C.O. on Evangelism

Rev. K. Jonker (convener), Br. A.M. Hidding;  
Alternate: Br. M. Mol.

Instruction: to submit their report to Synod 1987.

14) Deputies for Church visitation

The active serving Ministers, (Convener Rev. A. Veldman)  
Alternates: Br. W. Geurts, Br. J. Mulder.

The Church of Launceston should receive visitation at the time of Pulpit exchange.

15) Deputies for Articles 48 and 76 C.O.

Rev. Dr. S.G. Hur, Rev. K. Jonker, Rev. A. Veldman, Br. J. VanderRos;  
Alternates: Br. J.E. DeJong, Br. T. Mostert.

16) Deputies for Art. 66 C.O.

The Church of Launceston.

17) Deputies for Audit of Synod Treasurer's Books and the Books of Deputies for Art. 18 and 19 C.O.

The Church of Launceston.

The Deputies mentioned under 5,7,8,9,10,11 and 13 have to submit their reports to the Churches at least three months prior to Synod 1987.



Article 96

ADJOURNMENT

The afternoon session is closed.  
Synod is adjourned.

Evening Session

Article 97

RE-OPENING

The chairman requests those present to sing Psalm 16:3.  
He re-opens the meeting.

Article 98

APPOINTMENT OF CONVENING CHURCH OF SYNOD 1987

Agenda item: 13

Synod decides that the next Synod will be convened,  
the Lord willing, in September 1987 by the Church of  
Albany.

Article 99

QUESTION PERIOD ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 41 C.O.

Agenda item: 14

At the request of the Church of Byford, Synod appoints  
Rev. A. Veldman as its Counsellor.

Article 100

PERSONAL QUESTION PERIOD

Agenda item: 15

Each delegate is asked whether he wants to raise any  
matter pertaining to this Agenda item. No one makes use  
of this opportunity.

### Article 101

#### ADOPTION OF ACTS OF SYNOD

Agenda item: 16

The Acts, Articles 80-96 are distributed. As it will take too much time to peruse them in this final session, it is decided that these Articles together with the Articles of this evening's session will be finalised by a Synod committee, consisting of the Elders br. J. Eikelboom and br. A.M. Hidding and the first clerk. The other brothers delegates are invited to give comments on the drafted Articles by tomorrow morning.

The brothers from Launceston are charged to care for the final text.

It is decided to incorporate the following appendices with the Acts:

1. the letter from the P.C.E.A. (see Acts, Art.24)
2. Synod's reply to the P.C.E.A. (see Acts, Art.93)

The letter of Credentials for Synod's delegates to the I.C.R.C. is adopted and signed.

### Article 102

#### PRESS RELEASE

Agenda item: 17

The assessor, Rev.Dr. S.G. Hur, reads the Press Release, which is adopted.

### Article 103

#### CENSURE ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 47 C.O.

Agenda item: 18

The chairman reads Art. 47 of the Church Order. He notes with gladness that no censure has to be exercised over any member of Synod.

## Article 104

### CLOSURE

Agenda item: 19

The chairman hands the chair to the assessor, Rev. Dr. S.G. Hur, who then addresses the meeting. He especially thanks the chairman for chairing this Synod, and conducting the meetings in such a manner that we could work together in a most cordial way. Rev. Hur also expresses appreciation for the work Rev. Bruning was allowed to do for more than 20 years in this country. He mentions that this will be the last Synod at which Rev. Bruning will be present as a member, since he will retire in 1986, the Lord willing.

Now that Rev. Bruning is about to leave for Port Moresby to work some months there in the community of the West Irian Refugees, Rev. Hur wishes him and his wife God's indispensable blessing for this new task at the close of his Ministry. 'We wish and pray that the Lord will give you and your wife all that you need. We hope to receive beautiful news from Papua New Guinea.'

After these words by the assessor, the chairman Rev. K. Bruning gives his final address:

Brothers delegates of the Synod Launceston 1985, brothers and sisters,

I want to speak a few words at the closure of the Synod of The Free Reformed Churches of Australia in Launceston, 1985.

This moment is the end of an important period in the history of The Free Reformed Churches of Australia. This importance does not point to the more or less successful or unsuccessful performances of the delegates who crept through the agenda and all its items to reach decisions and record results; but this importance points to the fact that the work of the Synod is a fruit of God's mercy upon His Churches; a blessing from the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

We confess that the human part in the Synod's activities was incomplete and polluted by sins; we also believe, however, that by the grace of Jesus Christ, the Father in heaven has worked by means of His servants for the benefit of the Churches in this country. Only God's Hand in what was done has lasting value. The Acts must be read in that light.

After these words I express the thankfulness which is in our hearts at the end of this Synod. This gratitude also has a human aspect. The sisters in the kitchen e.g. provided the delegates with food and drink of fine quality. Especially Sr. Mol should be mentioned. At high age she was still able to make a feast of every meal! It is hard to understand how the sisters in the kitchen could fabricate such complicated menus; it is even more unbelievable that some delegates safely worked themselves through the contents of plate after plate without serious consequences.

I also express the thankfulness of the delegates to Sr. Anna 't Hart, who as typist did a marvellous job, and was available all the time to produce computerized sheets full of reports, proposals, Acts, etc.

As chairman of this Synod I want to show real appreciation for the work of the Synod Committees which made helpful preparations for the full sessions. Especially Committee I went through a mountain of questions and difficult items. The new system is a recommendation for later years.

We do not forget the several deputies who were active between the previous and present Synods. Most of them had to fulfil their mandates in the spare moments of their daily commitments and that is not an easy task. I make a special mention of Br. J. Vander Ros, who has been deputy for the Church Book for a continuous period of 31 years! An essential part of one's life-time. It is a relief that the Book of Praise is practically ready in its definite form.

As said before, the material things are not the most important ones. The agenda of the Synod, therefore, asks our attention for a few moments. The heavy load of this agenda contained items such as: several appeals re Synod 1983, reports from deputies - Bible Translation, - Correspondence with Foreign Churches, - Church Book, - Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, - Mission, - Training for the Ministry, etc.

This programme has caused concern in us because of the seriousness of some topics. However, through the grace of God, the discussions at Synod were held in a brotherly atmosphere, and the most important decisions were taken in a mutual agreement! Not many Synods in the past have been able to show a unity of trust and conviction as this one.

This fact is even more enjoyable when we consider the nature of the decisions of this Synod! This Synod had a real Reformed character by the grace of God. The historical line

of the Churches of the Reformation was maintained, confirmed and continued. This was done with caution and prudence. And we can thank the Lord for His blessing.

A closing word cannot go into details. It is our opinion that the Acts speak for themselves. It is now the task of the Churches to make study of the Acts, and to deal with them in accordance with Article 31 of the Church Order.

At the end of this address we think of the future. This is always difficult, especially in the present world situation. How long can we still meet as Churches in freedom and peace? Can we continue our contacts with sister-Churches and other ones for a long period? Will we have time, opportunity and means to complete what was started or is halfway to its aim?

We have plenty of questions, and we face a lot of insecurity in all these matters. However, we have the Word of God. In the critical situation of God's Church at the Red Sea (Exodus 14), there was no need to count the chances and to weigh the possibilities. The Lord said: Tell the people of Israel to go forward; Exodus 14 : 15b. This is a simple commandment; not a naive instruction, because it was sure that the Lord Jahweh was with them! When His Church goes in His ways, she is safe, and sure of her progress to the promised aim.

What else can we say on this evening? Our Churches have a secure future; they are safe; they are protected because of the blood of Christ that was shed for them, and as long as they will remain in the way of His Word.

Brothers delegates, I thank you all - and especially the first clerk - for all the work you have done, and for all the help, patience and co-operation you have given me in the task to conduct this Synod. We have had a Synod in which we richly experienced the communion of saints.

May the Lord bless our Churches, and their office-bearers; their families and all their members.

After the singing of Psalm 87:1,4, Rev.Dr.S.G.Hur leads in thanksgiving and prayer.

At 9.00 p.m. on Monday 10th June, the chairman closes the fourteenth Synod of The Free Reformed Churches of Australia.

## APPENDIX I

### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

31 May 1985

The Synod of the Free Reformed Churches  
of Australia,  
c/- Rev. K. Jonker,  
37 Chun Gon Crescent,  
LAUNCESTON TAS. 7250.

Dear brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ,

I am writing to convey to you the sincere greetings of the Synod of Eastern Australia which met recently in Taree, NSW.

Flowing from the contact that several of our ministers have had with ministers of the Free Reformed Churches, the Synod resolved as follows:

That Synod recognises the Free Reformed Churches of Australia to be true and faithful churches of the Lord Jesus Christ, rejoices at the opportunity of involvement together in the International Conference, and expresses the hope that continued contact will open the way to closer relations in the future; at the same time recognising our mutual responsibility to exhort one another to continued obedience to the Word of God, and the doctrine and practice which is according to godliness.

And further, the Court resolved:

That we advise the Free Reformed Churches of Australia that should they desire representatives of our church to attend their coming Synod as observers, and to bring our greetings, we have appointed Rev. R.S. Ward, or in his absence, Rev. J.M. Cromarty, together with Rev. D.R. Nibbs, to be such representatives.

Synod also resolved to furnish to you copies of our 1985 Reports and Minutes, these will be presented to you by Rev. Rowland Ward, in due course.

You may be interested to know also that Synod appointed me to be our church's delegate to the International Conference in Edinburgh in September.

Yours in Christ's service,

w.s. W.P. Gadsby  
CLERK OF THE SYNOD OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

## APPENDIX II

### SYNOD OF THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA

Launceston, 10 June, 1985

Clerk of Synod P.C.E.A.  
Rev. W.P. Gadsby, B.Sc., B.D.  
69 Galloway Street East  
ARMIDALE NSW 2350

Dear Brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ,

In its sixth session on Friday 7th June 1985 Synod has dealt with your letter, dated 31st May 1985 and with the report of our deputies. Synod decided to write about the outcome of this discussion.

First of all it wants to express its joy and gratitude with the resolution of the Synod of Eastern Australia. It is a reason of thankfulness that there is mutual recognition of the need to seek unity of faith on the basis of God's Word.

Synod, however, declared that there can only be unity of faith on the foundation of what the Free Reformed Churches confess in Article 29 of the Belgic Confession concerning the marks of the true Church. It reads:

"The true Church is to be recognized by the following marks: It practises the pure preaching of the gospel. It maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as Christ instituted them. It exercises Church discipline for correcting and punishing sins. In short, it governs itself according to the pure Word of God, rejecting all things contrary to it and regarding Jesus Christ as the only Head."

Synod declared that a direct consequence of mutual recognition on this basis means that there is the obligation to come to full sister-Church relationship.



It is decided that the available information was not sufficient to come to a final decision in this matter at this time. Among others, particularly the point of "three types of communicants" as mentioned in the report of our deputies raised some questions.

Synod wants to express the desire that further contact by our deputies may lead to mutual recognition on the above mentioned basis.

Hopefully you can understand that at this time and in the light of the decisions which have been taken, it was too early to invite representatives of the PCEA at our Synod.

Synod conveys to you its sincere greetings. May the Lord by His Spirit grant you and us continual wisdom in the fulfilment of our mutual responsibility.

With brotherly greetings,

w.s. Rev. K. Bruning, chairman

w.s. Rev. A. Veldman, second clerk

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