

ACTS OF THE 2000 SYNOD

and

Reports to the 2000 Synod

of the

**FREE REFORMED
CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA**

West Albany, 3-13 July 2000



Delegates to Synod West Albany 2000

Rev B Zuiddam, Rev M Flinn (RCNZ), Rev R ter Beek (RCN), Elder A Byl (Kelmescott), Rev P de Boer (Mt Nasura),
Elder F Veldhuis (Legana), Rev C Bouwman (Kelmescott), Elder K Heerema (Armadale), Rev J Kroeze (Legana),
Elder J Plug (West Albany), Rev W Huizinga (Armadale), Elder B Bosveld (Rockingham),
Rev A van Delden (Rockingham), Elder F Bakker (Launceston), Elder F Postmus (Launceston),
Elder L van Burgel (Mt Nasura), Elder N Louw (West Kelmescott), Rev A Veldman (Albany), Rev J Poppe (West Albany),
Elder P Terpstra (Byford), Rev W van der Jagt (Byford), Elder J van der Linden (West Kelmescott),
Rev JA Boersma (RCN), Elder H Olde (Albany).

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Photograph of Synod delegates

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**Monday 3 July 2000
EVENING SESSION**

Article 1

Opening by the convening church

After a prayer service led by Reverend C Bouwman, Reverend J Poppe, on behalf of the convening church of West Albany, speaks the following opening address:

Esteemed delegates,

On behalf of the convening church of West Albany it is my privilege and pleasure to welcome you to the twenty-first Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia. We are thankful that all the delegates have arrived safely and in good health. It is good that the churches are able to send delegates to this major assembly to deal with matters we have in common. At this Synod we also welcome some guests. Our sister churches in the Netherlands are sending two deputies to visit us. Rev J Boersma and Rev R Terbeek hope to be present at Synod on July 10, 11 and 12. The Reformed Churches of New Zealand are sending a representative, Rev M Flinn, who also hopes to be present at Synod for about three days at the beginning of next week. Our deputies have also invited Rev Madah Biha from our Indonesian sister churches (GGRI). I'm not sure if it has been possible for him to obtain a visa yet, or whether or not he will be present with us.

It is some thirteen years since a Synod has been convened in Albany; this is the first time that West Albany can serve as hosting church. We hope that you feel welcome in our midst, and enjoy our hospitality. We are thankful for the use of the Albany church building, the John Calvin School facilities, and the support of Albany members in hosting this Synod. May God bless our work so that you are able to serve well in your task as delegates at this major assembly.

I'd like to draw your attention to some significant events that have occurred in our bond of churches in the twenty months since the last Synod was concluded. You will remember that the last Synod was held in Launceston. It had to deal with the doctrinal teachings of Rev F J van Hulst. It found that some of his teachings were not in accordance with Scripture and confession. In the months that followed, the consistory of Launceston was unable to resolve these matters with Rev van Hulst. In the end it suspended and later deposed him from office. A consequence of all this was that our brothers and sisters in Tasmania have been through a very difficult time.

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Why mention all this? Because in reviewing some of these difficulties we may also see that our heavenly Father continues to care for His church. One of the results of the last Synod was that our sister churches in Launceston and Legana were both left vacant. Yet God has provided. He has blessed the FRC of Legana with a minister in Rev J Kroeze. The call that the FRC of Launceston extended to Candidate B A Zuiddam has been accepted. If his sermon proposal is approved by Synod, the way will be open for him to be ordained as minister of the Word. In these things we see that our heavenly Father has answered the many prayers that have been offered to Him. We praise Him for His blessings on us.

Since the last Synod, another church has been instituted in our Australian bond of churches. Thus we may welcome the FRC of West Kelmscott officially also to this Synod. In 1980 there were three churches within the bond; in 1990 there were seven; today there are ten. In a day and age in which the membership of most churches is declining, God continues to prosper us. That is not a reason for self-congratulation; it is reason for thankfulness to our heavenly Father. The Lord has also blessed West Kelmscott with an acceptance of the call they extended to Rev A Veldman. Our loss [here in Albany] is your gain! We trust that in due time the Lord will also provide for the church of Albany again.

This evening, as the chairman of the last Synod, Rev C Bouwman addressed us in the prayer service with a passage from God's Word. He spoke to us about how our God prospers the way of those who do His Word and will. In spite of our sins and shortcomings – God remains faithful. He keeps His covenant promises to a thousand generations. In Him we may trust. About a month ago we could remember Pentecost, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the church. It is by His Word and Spirit that Jesus Christ defends and preserves us in the unity of true faith. May He grant us His Spirit to lead us in the way of truth and love. In all our deliberations and decisions, let it be our aim to remain faithful to Him.

With these words I declare the twenty-first Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia officially opened.

Let us sing from Hymn 36:2,5

Article 2

Examination of Credentials

The Chairman of the convening Church requests the brothers of the Church of Albany to examine the delegates' credentials. Having completed this task, the brothers report that all the churches are properly represented by their delegates, as follows:

The Church of

has delegated

Albany

Reverend A Veldman

Elder H Olde

Armadales

Reverend W Huizinga

Elder K Heerema

Byford

Reverend W van der Jagt

Elder P Terpstra

Kelmscott

Reverend C Bouwman

Elder A Byl

Launceston

Elder F Postmus

Elder F Bakker

Legana

Reverend J Kroeze

Elder F Veldhuis

Mount Nasura

Reverend P K A de Boer

Elder L van Burgel

Rockingham

Reverend A van Delden

Elder B Bosveld

West Albany

Reverend J Poppe

Elder J Plug

West Kelmscott

Elder J van der Linden

Elder N Louw

There were no instructions.

Article 3

Election of Officers

The following officers are elected:

Chairman

Reverend W Huizinga

Vice Chairman

Reverend A van Delden

First Clerk

Elder L van Burgel

Second Clerk

Reverend J Kroeze

Article 4

Constitution of Synod

The Chairman declares Synod duly constituted and thanks the convening church of West Albany for its contribution to the arrangements for this Synod.

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Article 5

Delegates agreement with Three Forms of Unity

The Chairman asks delegates to rise to indicate their agreement with the Three Forms of Unity.

All delegates rise.

Article 6

Adjournment

The Chairman asks Synod to sing Psalm 48:1, 4. The Vice Chairman leads in closing prayer. The Chairman adjourns Synod.

Tuesday 4 July 2000

Article 7

Re-opening

The Chairman reopens Synod, asks those present to sing Psalm 122:2, reads from Scripture at Malachi 1 and leads in prayer. All delegates are present.

Article 8

Time Schedules, Homepage on Internet

Synod adopts the following time schedule:

Monday to Fridays:	9.00am to 12.00 noon
	1.30pm to 4.30 pm
	7.30pm to 9.30pm

A proposal from the executive to place Acts of Synod also on the Internet is adopted, on the proviso that the matters of personal nature are excluded. Also in matters relating to other churches, discretion will be used.

Article 9

Adoption of Agenda

The final draft agenda is presented.

1. Opening by convening church
2. Signing of attendance list and examination of credentials
3. Election of officers
4. Constitution of Synod
5. Delegates agreement with Three Forms of Unity
6. Adoption of Agenda
7. Adoption of meeting procedure
8. Examination of sermon proposal – Dr Zuiddam
9. Incoming correspondence from:
 - 9.1. FRC Kelmscott, appealing decision of their classis and second appeal church
 - 9.2. FRC Byford, appealing Article 93 of Acts 1998
 - 9.3. FRC Byford, appealing Article 122 of Acts 1998
 - 9.4. Rev G VanRongen, requesting permission to use Synod acts
 - 9.5. FRC Mt Nasura, regarding proposed change to Church Order
 - 9.6. FRC Launceston, request for preaching examination for Dr B A Zuiddam
 - 9.7. Appeal re decision of consistory and classis church
 - 9.8. FRC West Albany, proposal date and place for next Synod
 - 9.9. FRC West Albany, regarding report of Deputies Training for the Ministry
 - 9.10. FRC West Albany, proposal regarding relations with the RCNZ
 - 9.11. FRC Albany, proposal regarding relations with RCNZ
 - 9.12. Appeal re classis church decision
 - 9.13. FRC Mount Nasura, proposal regarding contact with RCA
 - 9.14. FRC Mount Nasura, proposal regarding printing of Australian edition of Book of Praise
 - 9.15. FRC Launceston, regarding Article 10 of Acts of Special Synod 2000
10. Instructions
11. Reports by classis churches
12. Reports of deputies and discharge of deputies
 - 12.1. Archives and Library of Synods
 - 12.2. Inspection of the Archives and Library of Synods
 - 12.3. Synod Treasurer Report
 - 12.4. Relations with other Churches
 - 12.4.1. General Secretary's Report
 - 12.4.2. Deputies Relations Reformed Churches (Other Churches)
 - 12.4.2.1. Reformed Churches of Australia
 - 12.4.2.2. Reformed Churches of New Zealand
 - 12.4.2.3. Free Reformed Church of the Philippines
 - 12.4.2.4. Indonesian Reformed Churches (GGRI and GGMM)
 - 12.4.3. Deputies Relations Presbyterian Churches
 - 12.4.3.1. Presbyterian Church of Australia
 - 12.4.3.2. Free Church of Scotland, Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland, Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland

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- 12.4.4. Deputies Relations Sister Churches
 - 12.4.4.1. Free Reformed Churches of South Africa
 - 12.4.4.2. Presbyterian Church of Korea
 - 12.4.4.3. Canadian Reformed Churches
 - 12.4.4.4. Reformed Churches in the Netherlands
- 12.4.5. Supplementary Reports
 - 12.4.5.1. Free Reformed Churches of South Africa
 - 12.4.5.2. Reformed Churches in the Netherlands
 - 12.4.5.3. Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia
 - 12.4.5.4. Reformed Churches of Australia
- 12.5. Training for the Ministry
- 12.6. Nicene Creed
- 12.7. Pulpit Exchange
- 12.8. Civil Registration of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia
- 12.9. Formation of Classes
- 12.10. Church Visitation reports
- 12.11. Article 48 and 76 of the Church Order
- 12.12. Article 66 of the Church Order
- 12.13. Audit Report for the books of Deputies for Training for the Ministry
- 12.14. Synod Audio Equipment
- 12.15. Needy Churches
- 13. Audit of the books of the treasurer and discharge of the treasurer
- 14. Calculation of the percentages of the churches share of Synod costs
- 15. Appointment of deputies
- 16. Appointment of convening church and place and date of next Synod
- 17. Questions according to Article 41 of the Church Order
- 18. Personal Questions
- 19. Adoption of Acts
 - 19.1. Adoption of Acts Extraordinary Synod 1 and 2 March 2000
- 20. Approval of press release
- 21. Censure according to Article 47 of the Church Order
- 22. Closing of Synod

ADOPTED

Article 10

Committee Division and Tasks

The executive proposes the following committees:

Committee 1

Members: Rev de Boer (convenor), Rev Poppe, N Louw, B Bosveld, K Heerema and F Veldhuis

Items and Agenda numbers:

Agenda item 9.1: FRC Kelmscott appealing decision of their classis and second classis church

Agenda item 9.7: Appeal re decision of consistory and classis church

Committee 2

Members: Rev Veldman (convenor), Rev Bouwman, A Byl, H Olde, F Postmus and J van der Linden

Items and Agenda numbers:

Agenda item 9.2: FRC Byford appealing Article 93 of Acts 1998

Agenda item 9.3: FRC Byford appealing Article 122 of Acts 1998

Committee 3

Members: Rev van der Jagt (convenor), Rev van Delden, Rev Kroeze, F Bakker, J Plug and P Terpstra

Items and Agenda numbers:

Agenda item 9.12: Appeal classis church decision

Agenda item 12.9: Formation of Classes

ADOPTED

Article 11

Request for preaching examination for Dr B A Zuiddam

Material:

Agenda item 9.6 FRC Launceston request a preaching exam for Dr B A Zuiddam be arranged at this Synod.

Proposal to agree to this request.

ADOPTED

Article 12

Sermon proposal Dr B A Zuiddam

Proposed that a printed copy of the sermon proposal by Dr B A Zuiddam be distributed to delegates before its delivery.

ADOPTED

Acts of Synod

Article 13

Appeal from FRC Launceston regarding preaching consent, Dr B A Zuiddam

Material:

Agenda item 9.15

Letter from Launceston advising they cannot accept the decision of Article 10 of the Special Synod 2000 and ask for a revision

Decision:

Not to grant the request of Launceston.

Ground:

Although Br B A Zuiddam had been declared eligible for call in the sister churches (and therefore did not need to have his sermon checked), the Extraordinary Synod found his sermon proposal inadequate for ordination. In that situation it is not advisable to allow the brother to continue to preach without any assistance/guidance being offered. For that reason it was correct for the Extraordinary Synod to apply the guidance it did.

ADOPTED

Article 14

Examination sermon proposal Dr B A Zuiddam

After requesting Synod to sing Psalm 23: 1-3, the Chairman invited Candidate B A Zuiddam to deliver his sermon proposal. The text was John 10:1-18. Following the completion of the sermon proposal, Synod went into closed session.

Synod decides that the proposal is satisfactory and approves the call extended to Candidate B A Zuiddam by Launceston.

Article 15

Adjournment

Synod resumes in open session and the Chairman announces the result of the examination. On behalf of Synod he extends congratulations to Br Zuiddam.

Rev A Veldman asks Synod to sing Psalm 84:6 and leads in prayer. The Chairman adjourns Synod.

Wednesday 5 July 2000

Article 16
Re-opening

The Chairman invites Synod to sing Psalm 81:1-4, reads the Scriptures at Malachi 2:1-10 and leads in prayer. All delegates are present.

Article 17
Formation of Classes

On the request of Committee 3, there is a round of discussion to determine the options of the number of classes and the possibility of a second appeal.

Article 18
Adjournment

Synod adjourns to allow advisory committees to meet.

Wednesday 5 July 2000
EVENING SESSION

Article 19
Re-opening

Synod is re-opened in the evening session. The Chairman asks Synod to sing Psalm 118:1,4.

Article 20
Adoption of Acts

Articles 1-18 of the Acts are adopted.

Article 21
Address to Dr B A Zuiddam

The Chairman addresses Candidate Zuiddam, reading 1 Kings 3:1-16 and wishing him the "wisdom of Solomon".

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Article 22

Signing of subscription form by Dr B A Zuiddam

In accordance with Article 24 CO, Dr Zuiddam is asked to sign the subscription form. After the Chairman reads out the contents of the form, Dr Zuiddam signs the form.

An ecclesiastical ordinance is signed for Dr Zuiddam.

Article 23

Synod Archives and Library

Materials:

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Agenda Item 12.1 | Report of the FRC of Mt Nasura as deputies for the Synod Archives and Library |
| Agenda Item 12.2 | Report of the Inspection of the Synod Archives and Library |

Decisions:

1. To accept the report from the FRC Mt Nasura responsible for the Synod Archives and Library;
2. To purchase another new cabinet to house future archives;
3. To receive gratefully the report of the inspection of the Synod Archives and Library;
4. To thank the Deputies for their work and discharge them.

Grounds:

1. The archives and library were well cared for.
2. A new cabinet is needed.

ADOPTED

Article 24

Byford Appeal - Art 122 of the Acts 1998 (refer article 51)

Committee 2 presents its proposal. A round of discussion ensues. Committee 2 takes back its proposal for further consideration.

Article 25

Training for the Ministry

The proposals from deputies and West Albany are placed in discussion.

Materials:

Agenda Item 12.5	Report of Deputies for Training for the Ministry
Agenda Item 12.13	Audit Report of the Books of the Deputies
Agenda Item 9.9	Proposal of West Albany re Training for the Ministry

Decisions:

1. Synod thanks the deputies for the work done.
2. Synod decides to assess the churches \$40.00 per communicant member per year, for the maintenance of the Theological College in Hamilton as of 1 July 2000.
3. Synod decides to discharge deputies and to appoint new deputies with the mandate to:
 - a. collect funds for "Hamilton" and forward them to the College;
 - b. continue correspondence with both "Hamilton" and "Kampen" in order to maintain contact and obtain information;
 - c. ensure that relevant information is published concerning the training for the ministry, so that the churches understand the need to support the colleges and the training of the students;
 - d. continue to arrange the support of theological students whenever required in accordance with Art 18 CO, and as agreed in Art 50 of Acts of Synod 1992;
 - e. make arrangements for a guest lecturer from "Hamilton" once every four or five years.
 - f. to investigate the long-term possibility of setting up theological training in Australia, including the possibility of starting a theological library.

Ground:

In the past (Art 125 of the 1990 Acts) Synods have mandated deputies "to alert the churches to the requirements and the possibilities for Australian based

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theological training in the light of changing circumstances" and "to appoint deputies ... to investigate the possibility of finding a facility to house some books." The 1992 Synod repeated this mandate (Art 50). However, the 1994 Synod did not renew this part of the mandate. It seems that support for Hamilton grew to the extent that this mandate was forgotten (cf Art 78 of the 1996 Acts and Art 102 of the 1998 Acts). West Albany FRC however makes a strong plea to keep this matter alive. Article 17 CO obliges us "if possible, to maintain an institution for the training for the ministry."

ADOPTED

Article 26

Nicene Creed

Material:

Agenda item 12.6

Deputy report for the Revision of the Nicene Creed

Decision:

To adopt the same translation of the Nicene Creed as adopted by our Canadian sister churches and found in the *Book of Praise*.

Grounds:

1. The translation is faithful to the original, and an improvement on the present wording of the creed.
2. It is desirable to retain the same translation of the creeds and confessions as the Canadian Reformed Churches, our only English speaking sister church, especially in light of the fact that we use their *Book of Praise* in which the Nicene Creed is found (cf. Acts 1994, art 124, Ground 1c).

ADOPTED

Article 27

Adjournment

At 9.30 pm, Synod was requested to sing Psalm 25:1,2. Br F J Veldhuis leads in thanksgiving prayer. The Chairman adjourns Synod to Thursday 6 July 2000 at 9.00 am.

Thursday 6 July 2000

Article 28

Re-opening

The Chairman asks Synod to sing Psalm 128:1-3, reads Malachi 2:10-17 and leads in prayer.

Article 29

Closed session

Synod goes in closed session to deal with appeals (agenda items 9.1, 9.7 and 9.12).

The acts of the closed session will be adopted in closed session at a later session.

Synod resumes in open session.

Article 30

Dr B A Zuiddam

It is decided to invite Dr B A Zuiddam to sit in Synod as an observer.

Article 31

Free Reformed Churches of South Africa

Material:

Agenda item 12.4.4.1

Deputies report

Agenda item 12.4.5.1

Supplementary Report to Synod

Decisions:

1. To continue sister relations with the Free Reformed Churches of South Africa (FRCSA) according to the established rules.
2. To agree that it is desirable for deputies to aim to visit alternate Synods of the FRCSA.

Grounds:

1. The Free Reformed Churches of South Africa give evidence of continuing faithfulness to the Word of God, maintaining the Reformed Confession and Church Order.

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2. The Free Reformed Churches of Australia and the FRCSA are both small bonds of churches confronted by very real challenges in this modern world. Their recent visit to us and our recent visit to them have shown that we can support one another, as well as learn from each other.
3. Synod 1990 decided "to concentrate on relations and contacts with churches who are geographically closer to us" (Acts, Art 58). Of our historic sister churches, South Africa is certainly the closest to us geographically.

ADOPTED

Article 32

Presbyterian Church in Korea

Materials:

Agenda item 12.4.4.2

Deputies report

Decision:

To continue sister relations with the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Koshin) according to the established rules.

Ground:

No evidence has arisen suggesting that the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Koshin) has departed from the Word of God, the Reformed Confessions or the Church Order.

ADOPTED

Article 33

Canadian Reformed Churches

Materials:

Agenda item 12.4.4.3

Deputies report

Decision:

To continue sister relations with the Canadian Reformed Churches according to established rules.

Ground:

The Canadian Reformed Churches give evidence of continuing faithfulness to the Word of God, maintaining the Reformed Confessions and Church Order.

ADOPTED

Article 34

Greetings from the Canadian Reformed Churches

The Chairman reads a letter of greeting to Synod from the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Thursday 6 July 2000
EVENING SESSION

Article 35

Re-opening

The Chairman asks Synod to sing Psalm 74:1-3.

Article 36

Classis Formation (refer articles 39, 40, 41, 42, 43)

Committee 3 presents its amended proposal.

Material:

Agenda Item 12.9

Deputies Report

Decisions:

Synod decides:

1. To thank deputies for their work.
2. To establish two classes instead of one.

Grounds:

- a. Offer a two stage appeal process (Classis and Synod);
 - b. Allow for fewer delegates to Classis, giving more time for discussion and personal contact to the delegates;
 - c. Operate at a lower cost;
 - d. Give greater variety of persons delegates to Synod than the one classis model;
 - e. Will not quickly take on its agenda matters that belong to churches as a whole, and properly dealt with at Synod.
3. To change Article 41 Church Order so that it reads ... *"Classis shall convene at least once every six months in person ..."*

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Grounds:

The great distances that lie between many of the churches and the high cost of travel discourages a classical meeting every three months.

1. To establish a boundary for the division of classes in the Metro area, and appoint the Tasmanian churches to Classis North, and the churches of Albany to the Classis South. From west to east, the border could run along Forrest Road, which runs into Armadale Road as far as the Albany Highway Junction. All churches established north or south of this line would belong to Classis North and South respectively. At this point of time, Armadale, Byford and Rockingham would be joined to the Albany churches, while Kelmscott, Mt Nasura and West Kelmscott would be joined to the Tasmanian churches.

ADOPTED

The remainder of the proposals will be considered at the next session.

Article 37

Adjournment

The Synod was requested to sing Psalm 75:1,6. Br J van der Linden leads in thanksgiving prayer. The Chairman adjourns Synod to Friday 7 July 2000 at 10.30 am.

Friday 7 July 2000

Article 38

Re-opening

The Chairman requests Synod to sing Hymn 11:1, 2, reads Scripture at Malachi 3:1-12 and leads in prayer. All delegates are present.

Article 39

Formation of Classes (refer articles 36, 40, 41, 42, 43)

Delegates from Launceston request item 4 of the Classis Formation previously decided on be revisited.

Upon listening to the reasons presented, Synod decides to allow further discussion and on possible revision of item 4.

Article 40

Formation of Classes (refer articles 36, 39, 41, 42, 43)

Proposal:

4. Synod decide to establish a boundary for the division of Classes into Classes A and B with newly instituted churches added in such a way so that Classis remain nearly equal.

DEFEATED

Article 41

Formation of Classes (see Article 36, 39, 40, 42, 43)

Committee 3 proposal:

5. To adopt the italicised portion of Article 45 Church Order so that it reads:
“... *Each consistory shall delegate one minister and one elder to Synod...*”

Ground:

This allows all the churches to maintain contact with each other, which is still possible while our churches are relatively few in number.

DEFEATED

A counter proposal is presented:

5. As long as there are two classes each classis shall delegate three ministers and three elders.

Ground:

Owing to the smallness of the bond of churches, a Synod shall have a minimum of 12 members.

Amendment to proposal:

To replace the words “three ministers and three elders” in the proposal by the words “four ministers and four elders”. In the ground, “12” is replaced with “16”.

ADOPTED

The new counter proposal now reads:

5. As long as there are two classes each classis shall delegate four ministers and four elders.

Ground:

Owing to the smallness of the bond of churches, a Synod shall have a minimum of 16 members.

ADOPTED

Article 42

Formation of Classes

Committee 3 presents proposals 6 to 9 (see articles 36, 39, 40,41,43)

6. To reimburse the travelling costs of the churches for classes, pulpit exchanges and church visitations from the synodical treasury.

Ground:

A cost-sharing arrangement is necessary because otherwise Classis North would have to bear the burden of travel costs between Tasmania and Perth on its own.

Counter Proposal to delete proposal 6.

DEFEATED

The original proposal is then presented.

DEFEATED

Counter proposal:

6. Concerning travelling cost, if necessary, classes can ask for reimbursement from the synodical treasury.

Ground:

A cost-sharing arrangement may be necessary because otherwise Classis North would have to bear the burden of travel costs between Tasmania and Perth on its own.

ADOPTED

7. To delete the italicised words in the Church Order, as well as the indented sentence at the end of Article 41, and to amend the Ecclesiastical Documents where necessary (*Acts 1996*, Appendix N).

Ground:

With the introduction of classes, it is necessary to update the Church Order and the Ecclesiastical Documents to reflect our new situation.

ADOPTED

8. To appoint the FRC of Launceston as the convening church of Classis North, and the FRC of Armadale as the convening church of Classis South to host the first classis meetings in October, 2000.

Grounds:

1. Since the Tasmanian delegates have just travelled to the West, it is good to have the first meeting of Classis North in Tasmania. Since the Perth Metro delegates have just travelled to Albany, it is good to have the first meeting of Classis South in the Metro area. The particular churches chosen are first in alphabetical order in those regions.
2. October and April are good months for classis to normally meet. They are neither too close to the beginning of the year, nor too close to the end.

Amendment no 1:

To change the words " host the first classis meetings in October" by the words "host the first classis in August 2000"

Delete ground 2.

DEFEATED

Amendment no 2:

Replace the words "in October" by "within next three months".

DEFEATED

The original proposal is presented.

ADOPTED

9. To leave it in the freedom of the former classis churches whether they deal with outstanding matters presented to them, or pass them on to be dealt with by the classis as a whole. Any matter dealt with by a classis church may be appealed to classis.

Grounds:

1. In the transition from the former method of church government to a classis model, it is wise to allow the former classis churches discretion in how to deal with outstanding matters presented to them.

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2. The appeal process should not be hindered during the transitional period. At a classis, more churches are involved in making a judgment.

ADOPTED

Article 43

Formation of Classis (refer articles 36,39,40,41 and 42)

Synod decides to instruct the Second Clerk to notify as soon as possible the Churches of the decision regarding Classis as follows:

Decisions:

1. To thank deputies for their work.
2. To establish two classes instead of one.

Grounds:

1. Offer a two stage appeal process (Classis and Synod);
 2. Allow for fewer delegates to Classis, giving more time for discussion and personal contact to the delegates;
 3. Operate at a lower cost;
 4. Give greater variety of persons delegates to Synod than the one classis model;
 5. Will not quickly take on its agenda matters that belong to churches as a whole, and properly dealt with at Synod.
3. To change Article 41 Church Order so that it reads ... *"Classis shall convene at least once every six months in person ..."*

Ground:

The great distances that lies between many of the churches and the high cost of travel discourages a classical meeting every three months.

4. To establish a boundary for the division of classes in the Metro area, and appoint the Tasmanian churches to Classis North, and the churches of Albany to the Classis South. From west to east, the border could run along Forrest Road, which runs into Armadale Road as far as the Albany Highway Junction. All churches established north or south of this line would belong to Classis North and South respectively. At this

point of time, Armadale, Byford and Rockingham would be joined to the Albany churches, while Kelmscott, Mt Nasura and West Kelmscott would be joined to the Tasmanian churches.

5. As long as there are two classes each classis shall delegate four ministers and four elders.

Ground:

Owing to the smallness of the bond of churches a synod shall have a minimum of 16 members.

6. Concerning travelling cost if necessary classes can ask for reimbursement from the synodical treasury.

Ground:

A cost sharing arrangement may be necessary because otherwise Classis North would have to bear the burden of travel costs between Tasmania and Perth on its own.

7. To delete the italicised words in the Church Order, as well as the indented sentence at the end of Article 41, and to amend the Ecclesiastical Documents where necessary (*Acts 1996*, Appendix N).

Ground:

With the introduction of classes, it is necessary to update the Church Order and the Ecclesiastical Documents to reflect our new situation.

8. To appoint the FRC of Launceston as the convening church of Classis North, and the FRC of Armadale as the convening church of Classis South to host the first classis meetings in October, 2000.

Grounds:

1. Since the Tasmanian delegates have just travelled to the West, it is good to have the first meeting of Classis North in Tasmania. Since the Perth Metro delegates have just travelled to Albany, it is good to have the first meeting of Classis South in the Metro area. The particular churches chosen are first in alphabetical order in those regions.
2. October and April are good months for classis to normally meet. They are neither too close to the beginning of the year, nor too close to the end.
9. To leave it in the freedom of the former classis churches whether they deal with outstanding matters presented to them, or pass them on to be

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dealt with by the classis as a whole. Any matter dealt with by a classis church may be appealed to classis.

Grounds:

In the transition from the former method of church government to a classis model, it is wise to allow the former classis churches discretion in how to deal with outstanding matters presented to them.

The appeal process should not be hindered during the transitional period. At a classis more churches are involved in making a judgment.

Synod decides to advise the churches regarding the decision on formation of classes as soon as possible.

ADOPTED

Article 44

Needy Churches

Material:

Agenda item 12.15 Report of Deputies for Needy Churches

Decisions:

1. To thank the deputies for their work done and to discharge them.
2. To pass the report of deputies on to the classes.

Ground:

Since classes have been formed by this Synod, and since this is a matter for classes, it is proper that this report with all the work done be passed on to classes for their benefit.

ADOPTED

Article 45

Byford's appeal Art 93, 1998 Acts (re PCEA) (refer article 61)

Committee 2 presents its proposal for discussion.

Committee 2 takes back the proposal for further consideration.

Article 46

Indonesian Churches (Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Indonesia)

Material:

Agenda item 12.4.2.4

Deputies Report

Decisions:

1. To continue sister relations with the GGRI in accordance with the adopted rules;
2. To continue to visit the Synods of the GGRI subject to available finance;
3. To support the GGRI in a well-considered and responsible way with the intention of building up the reformed character of these churches;
4. To support financially Pila Njuka and his family to allow Pila Njuka to study at Hamilton and to monitor his progress;
5. To adopt the "Guidelines for Support" and to ask deputies to keep refining these guidelines;
6. To encourage the churches and their members to provide the means of support for the activities of deputies as mentioned in 3 and 4 above;
7. To confirm the decision of deputies to pay from the synodical treasury the travel costs of Reverend Mada Biha; and
8. To send delegates to the next Conference of the Reformed Churches in Indonesia.

Grounds:

1. The Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Indonesia give evidence of continuing faithfulness to the Word of God, maintaining the Reformed Confessions and Church Order.
2. The churches are in a position to support these sister churches in training future leaders and building up the congregations. For this reason, visits to the Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Indonesia are in place also.
3. Synod 1998 decided to support financially Pila Njuka and his family to enable him to study at Hamilton. This commitment should continue, subject to satisfactory progress.

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4. Previous deputies reports had mentioned problems relating to providing support and guidelines will be beneficial.
5. Since the Conference of Reformed Churches in Indonesia will discuss important matters, including theological training which concerns us, it is good to send delegates.

ADOPTED

Friday 7 July 2000
EVENING SESSION

Article 47 **Re-opening**

Synod is re-opened in evening session. The Chairman asks Synod to sing Psalm 102: 5,6,10,11.

Article 48 **Adoption of Acts**

Acts Article 18 to 34 are adopted.

Article 49 **Gereja-Gereja Musyafir Reformasi (GMMR)**

Material:
Agenda Item 12.4.2.4 Deputies Report

Decisions:

1. To continue to visit the synods of the GGMR subject to finance;
2. To support the GGMR in a well considered and responsible way with the intention of building up the reformed character of these churches;
3. To monitor and report developments in the GGMR;
4. To provide limited support for Rev Yonson Dethan to ensure continued effective communication with him;
5. To encourage the churches and their members to provide the means of support for the activities of deputies as mentioned in 2 and 4 above.

Grounds:

1. The churches are in a position to help the GGMR develop in a reformed manner and building up the congregations. For this reason, visits to the Gereja-Gereja Musyafir Reformasi are in place also.
2. The GGMR needs to be stabilised before recommendations regarding sister church relationships can be considered.
3. Rev Yonson Dethan has in the past been supported by the FRCA for theological training and it is appropriate to continue the support in a limited but meaningful manner.

ADOPTED

Article 50

Rev G van Rongen (Agenda item 9.4)

Synod decides to accede to Rev van Rongen's request to use a copy of the Acts to enable him to publish a supplement to his book on the Church Order and standing decisions of synods of the FRCA.

ADOPTED

Article 51

Appeal of FRC Byford re Article 122, 1998 Acts

Materials:

Agenda item 9.3

Byford's appeal on Article 122 re the Law

Committee 2 presents a revised proposal.

Decision 1:

To deny Byford's request to judge that Art 122 Decision 1 is *"not a fully consistent and logical result of the evaluation as mentioned in the Acts."*

Grounds:

Byford argues on the premise that the judgment *"not in accordance with Scripture and confession"* is *"much clearer, stronger and more direct"* than the judgment *"distorts the full biblical message"*. This premise is faulty since Scripture teaches that twisting or distorting the gospel message is also most serious (cf 2 Peter 3:16). Furthermore, a distorted view is itself *"contrary to Scripture and confession"* as the evaluations 1-4 of Synod 1998 make clear.

ADOPTED

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Decision 2:

To deny Byford's appeal to judge that Synod Launceston 1998 in Art 122 made a wrong decision in accepting the unpublished book of Rev F J van Hulst merely as background information.

Grounds:

"In order to do full justice to the doctrinal matters raised in the correspondence between Legana and Rev van Hulst", the Church of Legana requested Synod "to take on board as an appendix to its request dated 20 May 1998 Rev van Hulst's book *De Achillesheel van het Calvinisme*" (letter from Legana to Synod dated 28 May 1998). With this request, Legana did not ask Synod to do a complete examination of the book itself. The purpose of submitting a copy of the unpublished book was simply to ensure that any necessary background information was legally on Synod's table.

ADOPTED

Decision 3:

Not to accede to Byford's proposal that in addition to and in correction of the decisions of Synod Launceston Art 122, the appended teachings of Rev van Hulst about the law are not in accordance with Scripture and confession.

Grounds:

The purpose of further examination of Rev van Hulst on the law was to assist Legana in the pastoral care of the congregation. Synod's investigation was sufficient to satisfy the church of Legana.

Byford pursues correction and clarity because they "are of the opinion that our congregations and the churches in general are in need of clear and scriptural guidance by our major assembly". If Byford needs assistance in matters concerning the law, the manner of obtaining this assistance is not through appealing a decision with which Legana is satisfied, but rather by submitting their own specific request.

ADOPTED

Decision 4:

Not to forward this evaluation to Rev van Hulst, the consistory of his own group and to the consistories of the churches in Launceston and Legana.

Ground:

Synod has decided not to accede to Byford's request to add further judgments regarding the teachings of Rev van Hulst.

ADOPTED

Article 52
Adjournment

After inviting Synod to sing Psalm 103:1,2, Rev W van der Jagt closes in prayer. The Chairman adjourns Synod to Saturday at 9.00 am.

Saturday 8 July 2000

Article 53
Reopening

The Chairman invites Synod to sing Psalm 98:1,2, 4, read Malachi 3:16 to 4:6 and leads in prayer.

Article 54
Book of Praise

Material:

Agenda item 9.14

Proposal from Mt Nasura

Decision:

To accede to the request of Mt Nasura that deputies be appointed to look into the possibility of having an edition of the *Book of Praise* printed for the Australian churches. Such an edition would include the Bible references in the prose section from the New King James Version, the particulars of the Australian Churches in the confessions (eg the word *Christian*) in the Apostles' Creed and the wording of the *Form for Ordination of elders and Deacons* as well as the *Australian Church Order*.

Grounds:

1. An Australian Synod (1996) endorsed the use of the New King James Version as the faithful and reliable translation for use in the churches.
2. With today's use of computer technology in printing such a special edition of the *Book of Praise* may be well possible.

ADOPTED

Article 55
Indigenous Missionary Ministers of the Word

Material:

Agenda item 9.5 FRC Mt Nasura regarding proposed change to Church Order

Mt Nasura proposes:

Synod add as new article to the Church Order with the title "*Indigenous Missionary Ministers of the Word*" namely:

For mission work overseas, the churches may call and ordain a person indigenous to the area as a Minister of the word for the extraordinary task of preaching, administering the sacraments and working towards the institution of churches. He shall remain under the discipline and supervision of the sending church. His calling and task as Minister of the Word shall be limited to the area to which he is indigenous and has been called to labour.

Only those persons shall be eligible for ordination in the office of Minister of the Word for this extraordinary task as an indigenous missionary who:

1. Are members of good standing of one of the churches;
2. Have shown evidence of steadfastness in faith;
3. Received favourable approbation of the calling congregation;
4. Satisfied classis (Synod) of the sufficiency of their theological training; and
5. Have been examined by classis (Synod) with respect to their ability and faithfulness to carry out this extraordinary task.

For the ordination, the adopted *Form for the Ordination (or Installation) of Missionaries* shall be used.

Alternative proposal:

On a point of order, a motion was made to first vote on the proposal of Mt Nasura.

DEFEATED

Material:

A request from Mt Nasura to add an article to the Church Order to ordain a person indigenous to the area as a Minister of the Word for the extraordinary task of preaching, administration of sacraments and working towards the institution of churches.

Decision:

Synod decides not to change the Church Order but to add the following rule to those adopted by Synod 1970, Art 47:

- iv Regarding indigenous men called to do mission work overseas, and who have not studied at the Theological college of our sister churches, they shall be examined by the classis prior to ordination. Their calling and task as Minister of the Word shall be limited to the area to which they are indigenous.

Grounds:

1. Synod does not deem a change in the Church Order necessary in order to answer Mt Nasura's request about indigenous ministers.
2. Synod supports the ordination of indigenous ministers so that they can preach the Word and administer the sacraments subject to the successful completion of an examination following of the Church Order.

ADOPTED

Article 56

Adoption of Acts

Articles 35 to 52 are adopted.

Article 57

Adjournment

Br L van Burgel requests Synod to sing Psalm 46:1,2 and leads in prayer. The Chairman adjourns Synod until Monday at 10.30 am.

Monday 10 July 2000

Article 58
Re-opening

The Chairman asks Synod to sing Hymn 21:1,2 and 3, reads Mark 5: 21-43 and leads in prayer.

Article 59
Welcome to overseas visitors

The Chairman notes that there are visitors from New Zealand and from our sister churches in the Netherlands. He extends a hearty welcome.

Article 60
Credentials

The Chairman reads out the credentials for Rev J A Boersema and Rev R ter Beek provided by BBK from our Dutch sister churches. These delegates are afforded the privileges as determined by Synod for delegates from sister churches.

The Chairman also reads out the credentials for Rev M Flinn from the Reformed Churches of New Zealand. He is invited to sit as observer with the privileges determined by Synod for observers.

The Delegates from overseas rose to indicate their agreement with the Three Forms of Unity.

Article 61
Byford appeal Article 93, 1998 Acts (re PCEA)

Committee 2 presents its revised proposal.

Material:
Agenda item 9.2 Byford's appeal on Article 93 re PCEA

It is proposed that Synod declare this appeal inadmissible.

Grounds:

1. Article 93, 1998 Acts, is a decision in which the FRCA makes an agreement with the PCEA. On the basis of statements the two bonds of

churches could enter into a mutual relationship. Wisdom and orderliness dictate that once this decision goes to the PCEA the FRCA should keep it word and not start to change its agreement.

2. Thus, though technically it is a proper appeal, this matter should have been resolved before it was sent to the PCEA. Our 'yes' should remain 'yes' and 'no' should remain 'no'.

DEFEATED

Synod continues to discuss the proposal from Committee 2.

An amendment was proposed as follows:

Decision 2:

Not to accede to Byford's appeal to acknowledge that *"the statements regarding the 'supervision of the table' and the 'supervision of the pulpit' are still open to misinterpretation and misunderstanding so that both parties will still give a different explanation of the same statements and will allow a different practise."*

Grounds:

1. Byford argues that the statement regarding the supervision of the Lord's table will be applied differently in the PCEA than in the FRCA. Byford correctly points out that the adopted statement does not restrict the PCEA from admitting guests to the table who are not members of one of the PCEA's sister churches, as long as they provide an authentic intimation that they are members in good standing of another church which bears the three marks of the true church. The FRCA, on the other hand, admit only those guests who come with an attestation from a sister church. But by their own submission, Byford shows that the statement regarding the Lord's table is not open to misinterpretation and misunderstanding. For the statement requires agreement to a Scriptural principle, while leaving room for a different application of this Biblical principle in the PCEA than in the FRCA.

Byford argues that the statement regarding the supervision of the pulpit will be interpreted differently in the PCEA than in the FRCA. Byford correctly points out that the adopted statement does not restrict the PCEA from admitting ministers to her pulpits who are not from one of the PCEA's sister churches, as long as they are ministers of another church which the PCEA have recognised as true, and who have undergone the proper ecclesiastical examinations of the PCEA for ministers of the Word. The FRCA, on the other hand, admit only those ministers to their pulpits who come from one of the FRCA's sister churches. By their own submission, Byford shows that the statement

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regarding the supervision of the pulpit is not open to misinterpretation and misunderstanding. For the statement requires agreement to a Scriptural principle, while leaving room for a different application of this Biblical principle in the PCEA and the FRCA.

Decision 3:

Not to accede to Byford's request that Synod decide *"that Synod Launceston 1998 has wrongly decided that the doctrine of the church ... is implicitly addressed in the statements on fencing of the Lord's table and supervision of the pulpit."*

Grounds:

1. The PCEA's doctrine of the church has never been listed as one of the areas of concern, except inasmuch as it affects their view regarding the supervision of the Lord's table and the pulpit. Deputies received this mandate: *"In this discussion about the areas of concern, the confession of the doctrine of the church should be addressed when applicable"* (Art 77, 5a, Acts 1990).
2. Synod 1998 thought particularly of the doctrine of the church when it tightened the wording in the statement re the supervision of the Lord's table. Deputies proposed to speak of *"another true church"*, but Synod deemed it necessary to speak about *"another church of Christ which displays the three marks"* (Art 93, Dec 1). If the PCEA agrees to these statements, they agree not to accept guests to either the Lord's table or to the pulpit who come from a less pure church, but to accept only those guests who come from a church that displays the marks of the church, which are *"the pure preaching of the gospel and the pure administration of the sacraments"*. In this way, both deputies and Synod 1998 have taken into account the doctrine of the church as it affects these areas of concern.

DEFEATED

Amendment to Decision 2, Ground 1:

Delete the words "The PCEA thus should rethink the principles underlying their current practices to bring them in line with the statements which are based on Scripture and confessions as adopted by Synod 1998".

ADOPTED

Committee proposal 2 as amended is presented.

Decision:

Synod decides not to accede to Byford's requests.

Byford has recommended that Synod adopt the following decisions:

Recommended Decision 1:

1. Synod West Albany 2000 regrets the fact that Synod Launceston 1998 took decision 2 too hastily and without sufficient grounds and acknowledges that at this point of time, the Free Reformed Churches of Australia cannot offer sister relations as a first step towards full unity (under the conditions as are stated in the Decision 2 Synod Launceston 1998) before they have investigated the impact of their opinion regarding Purity of Worship upon such a relationship.

Grounds for rejection:

1. Synod 1987 was made aware of a discussion between delegates from the PCEA and the FRCA (in Melbourne in March 1987) about (among other topics) the purity of worship (see Acts 1987, appendix B, pg 5; see also Art 115, Obs 7c). While Synod 1987 listed a number of areas of concern that required further discussion with the PCEA, purity of worship was not one of them (cf Art 115, Rec 4). Now to include an item not included in 1987 (or following years) is not upright.
2. That the matter of purity of worship was listed in 1998 as an area needing assessment with respect of the Free Church of Scotland, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland (Art 93, Dec 4, pg 51) does not automatically put the topic on the agenda for discussion with the PCEA – especially in light of the 1987 decision.

Recommended Decision 2:

1. Synod West Albany 2000 acknowledges that the statements regarding “the supervision of the table” and “The supervision of the pulpit” are still open to misinterpretation and misunderstanding so that both parties will still give a different explanation of the same statement and will allow a different practise.

Grounds for rejection:

1. Byford is very correct when they write that “The PCEA is of the opinion that you have to explain the phrase ‘another church of Christ which displays the marks of the church’ with the help of their opinion regarding ‘less/more pure churches’” (page 3, B). However, this reality does not make the adopted statements themselves open to misinterpretation and misunderstanding.

The statements themselves are clear enough. The cause for possible misinterpretation and misunderstanding is the thinking of the PCEA which applies the concept more/less pure not to the local churches (as was the original intent of the Westminster Standards), but to other bonds of churches instead.

Recommended Decision 3:

1. Synod West Albany 2000 decides that Synod Launceston 1998 has wrongly decided that 'the doctrine of the church, as mentioned in mandates to Deputies by Synod 1990, 1992 and 1994 is implicitly addressed in the statements on fencing of the Lord's table and Supervision of the Pulpit'.

Grounds for rejection:

1. Synod 1998 thought particularly of the doctrine of the church when it tightened the wording in the statement re the supervision of the Lord's table. Deputies proposed to speak of "*another true church*", but Synod deemed it necessary to speak about "*another church of Christ which displays the three marks*" (Art 93, Dec 1). This alteration shows already that the doctrine of the church was "implicitly addressed in the statements".
2. The intent of the statements was to achieve agreement between the PCEA and the FRCA on the principles behind the supervision of the Lord's table and the guarding of the pulpit. By these statements, the PCEA would be forced to consider its practices of fencing the Lord's table and guarding the pulpit (cf Deputies report, Act 1998, pg 128). Reconsideration of these practices would, of necessity, prompt a re-evaluation of their understanding of the doctrine of the church.

Recommended Decision 4:

1. Synod West Albany 2000 decides that the FRCA, before they can offer the PCEA 'sister relations as a first step towards full unity', have to investigate whether the PCEA is willing to work towards complete unity.

Grounds for rejection:

1. The decision of Synod 1998 reads, "*to offer the PCEA sister relations as a first step towards full unity if they agree to the above mentioned statements ...*" (Art 93, Dec 2). That is, this decision as two aspects to it, viz 1, to offer the PCEA sister relations and 2, to offer these sister relations as a first step towards full unity. The PCEA will have to answer positively to both aspects. So Byford cannot maintain that the FRCA first has to investigate willingness on the part of the PCEA.

2. This goal was also expressed by the PCEA in their deputies' letter dated 1 December 1993, as printed in our Acts 1994, pg 158: "While committed to the great goal of true and complete unity in accordance with Christ's high priestly prayer (John 17), we recognise that the limitations imposed by sin and its effects, as well as the barriers of distance, will mean that this goal will not finally be realised until our Lord's return".

Recommended Decision 5:

1. Synod West Albany 2000 decides to appoint new deputies with the following mandate:
 - a. To communicate to the PCEA Synod's decision 1 that "Synod Launceston 1998 took Decision 2 too hastily and without sufficient grounds and acknowledges that at this point of time, the Free Reformed Churches of Australia cannot offer sister relations as a first step towards full unity;
 - b. To revise the statements re 'the supervision of the table', 'the supervision of the pulpit' and 'Children in the Covenant' in such a way that the statements are no longer open to misinterpretation and misunderstanding and that the statements also do full justice to the history of our contacts;
 - c. To investigate whether the doctrine of the visible/invisible church and the closely related notion of the pluriformity of the church is the cause which lies behind the less restricted manner of fencing the Lord's Table and Pulpit in the PCEA; and
 - d. To investigate whether the PCEA is willing to work towards complete unity.

Grounds for rejection:

1. Since the previous four Recommended Decisions were denied, it follows that the mandate requested in Decision 5 cannot be granted.

ADOPTED

Article 62

Philippines - Free Reformed Churches of the Philippines (FRCP) and Reformed Free Churches of the Philippines (RFCP)

Material:

Agenda item 12.4.2.3

Deputies report

Acts of Synod

Decision:

1. Thank the deputies for the work that they have done and discharge them from their task.
2. Appoint new deputies with the following mandate:
 - a. Keep up-to-date with any new developments among the FRCP and RFCP;
 - b. Lend support to these churches, upon their request, by means of instructive literature that may help build up their Reformed character;
 - c. If funding permits, make a visit to these churches;
 - d. Report to next Synod.
1. Advise the Dutch sister churches that these churches *not* be directed to come under the influence of the Christian Reformed Churches of the Philippines (CRCP).

Grounds:

1. Although these churches show the desire to embrace the reformed faith, much learning is needed for them to understand and apply it.
2. Only time will tell whether the FRCP and the RFCP are willing to follow the Scriptural and thus Reformed doctrine and practice.
3. The members of these churches have very limited resources and badly need true Reformed literature.
4. It would be beneficial to all, the FRCA and the FRCP and the RFCP to maintain some face-to-face contact.
5. There is enough evidence to show that the CRCP does not preserve Scriptures in doctrine and practice as maintained in the Reformed Churches.

ADOPTED

Deputies request that the report of the visit to the Philippines should not be included in the acts. It was also proposed to remove any personal reference from the main report.

ADOPTED

**Article 63 (refer Article 73)
Presbyterian Churches (overseas)**

Material:

Agenda item 12.4.3.2

Deputies report

Decision:

To recommend to phase out formal contact with the Free Church of Scotland, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

Grounds:

1. A church does not become faithful or unfaithful on the basis of our findings or recognition.
2. As a small bond of churches it is important for us "to concentrate on relations and contacts with churches who are geographically closer to us "to concentrate on relations and contacts with churches who are geographically closer to us and for whom we have greater responsibility." (Acts 1990, Art 58).

In limiting the mandate for deputies for relations and contact with other churches, synod recommended "to phase out contact with churches with whom we appear to be making no progress" (Acts 1990, Art. 58). It has become clear that we appear to be making no progress with these churches as mentioned in the comments above.

DEFEATED

**Article 64
Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (PCEA)**

Material:

Agenda item 12.4.3.1

Deputies report

Agenda item 12.4.5.3

Supplementary Report

Proposed amendment:

To add decision 5 "to explore desirable levels of recognition and these implications".

Grounds:

1. So that the discussion with the PCEA may proceed in an orderly manner.

DEFEATED

Decisions:

To discharge deputies and to appoint new deputies with the following mandate:

1. To convey to the PCEA our disappointment that they did not interact with the statements accepted by Launceston 1998
2. To ascertain whether there is still a willingness with the PCEA to discuss these statements on the basis of Scripture and our mutual confessions
3. If there is a willingness to discuss these statements, if possible via face to face meetings and in a forum which is deemed most suitable by deputies
4. To assess the PCEA final response and come with recommendations to Synod

Grounds

1. Although the Inter-church Relations Committee of the PCEA resolved that copies of the statements be referred to the lower courts for their possible consideration and asked them to report back to their committee, only one of the presbyteries responded, yet did not really interact with the statements. Moreover, the Synod of the PCEA decided that there is no need for formal statements declaring our doctrinal and practical position beyond what is contained in our constitutional documents.
2. It seems there is some misunderstanding about the status of the statements. Deputies should try to remove this misunderstanding and so try to ascertain whether there still is room for further discussions.
3. In case deputies meet with willingness for further discussion, deputies should have the freedom to arrange a forum most suitable to bring these discussions to fruition.

ADOPTED

**Monday 10 July 2000
EVENING SESSION**

**Article 65
Re-opening evening session**

The Chairman invited Synod to sing Psalm 85:3,4.

**Article 66
Adoption of Acts**

The Acts Article 53 to 56 are adopted.

**Article 67
Address by Rev M Flinn**

Rev M Flinn addressed Synod on behalf of the RCNZ conveying greetings.
The full text of the address is in appendix.

**Article 68
Extra privileges for Rev Flinn**

Synod decides that Rev Flinn be given the following privilege:

1. To be able to address Synod on matters regarding the RCNZ if requested.
2. To be able to request Synod to speak on matters requiring clarification.

ADOPTED

**Article 69
Christian Reformed Churches of Australia (CRCA) (formerly Reformed Churches of Australia) (refer article 72)**

Committee 3 presents its proposal.

Material:
Agenda items 12.4.2.1, 12.5.4.5 and 9.13 Reformed Churches of Australia

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Decision:

1. To thank the deputies for the completion of their mandate;
2. Not to reappoint deputies.

Grounds:

1. Deputies have had "a few face-to-face" meetings to convey the FRCA appeal to the CRCA sessions and Synod.
2. Synod 1996 decided not to enter official contact (which has sister relations or union as its aim) with the CRCA at this time on the grounds "... that they and we travel in a different direction ..." Further contact would thus not be meaningful but frustrating for both parties. Synod 1996 authorised deputies to send a letter of appeal to the 1997 CRCA Synod and to all their sessions, appealing to them to return to a distinctively reformed direction so that future contact may become possible and can be meaningful. The response of the CRCA to our appeal shows that the CRCA do not take the matters addressed in our appeal seriously, but regard the matters raised as nothing more than different practices.
3. Recent decisions of the CRCA Synod regarding women in the office of deacon, children at the Lord's table and the dealings of Classis Tasmania of the CRCA with respect to Rev F J van Hulst, a minister recently deposed from one of our churches on the grounds that his teachings were contrary to Scripture show that the CRCA churches continue to travel down the path of deformation.

DEFEATED

Alternate motion foreshadowed.
Discussion adjourned.

Article 70

Adjournment

After requesting Synod to sing Ps 27:1,2, Br P Terpstra closes in prayer.

Tuesday 11 July 2000

Article 71

Re-opening

The Chairman asks Synod to sing Hymn 11:2 and 3, reads Mark 6:14-32 and leads in prayer. He reconvenes synod.

Article 72

Christian Reformed Churches of Australia

Material:

Agenda items 12.4.2.1, 12.5.4.5 & 9.13

Decision:

1. To thank deputies for the completion of their mandate
2. To reappoint deputies and give them this mandate:
 - a. To receive the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia's anticipated appeal to the FRCA, to seek clarification regarding this appeal if necessary, and to forward the CRCA's appeal to our next Synod with a recommended response.
 - b. To address the CRCA Synod about recent decisions of the CRCA regarding women in the office of deacon, children at the Lord's Supper, their amendment of the CO restricting the binding character of the CO, and the decision of Classis Tasmania of the CRCA to allow Rev. FJ van Hulst to preach in that classical resort, explaining why these decisions are in error.

Grounds:

1. Deputies have had "a few face-to-face" meetings to convey the FRCA appeal to the CRCA sessions and synod.
2. Extracts from the Acts of the CRCA indicate that the CRCA intend to submit an appeal to us.
3. Recent decisions of the CRCA Synod regarding women in the office of deacon, children at the Lord's Table, the change in the CO and the dealings of Classis Tasmania of the CRCA with respect to Rev. FJ van Hulst, a minister recently deposed from one of our churches on the grounds that his teachings were contrary to Scripture show that the CRCA churches continue to travel down the path of deformation.

ADOPTED

Article 73 (refer Article 63)

Presbyterian Churches – Free Church of Scotland, Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland and Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland

A new proposal is presented.

Material:

Agenda item 12.4.3.2

Deputies Report

Acts of Synod

Decision:

To discharge deputies and appoint new deputies with the following mandate:

1. To study/discuss the outstanding areas of concern with FCS, EPCI and RPCI, addressing the following questions:
 - a. What weight the FRCA should give to the remaining areas of concern;
 - b. Whether or not all areas of concern must be cleared before the FRCA can progress with contact/relations;
 - c. How in a manageable and responsible way the FRCA can fulfil their obligations towards churches geographically/culturally far away; and
 - d. In what way the statements with respect to our contact with the PCEA as adopted by Synod 1998 will affect our approach towards the FCS, EPCI and RPCI.

Ground:

Deputies appointed by Synod 1998 came with a recommendation to phase out contacts/relations with the FCS, EPCI and RPCI, yet they did not adhere to the mandate give by Synod and thus this unfinished mandate should still be completed.

ADOPTED

Article 74

Reformed Churches of New Zealand (refer articles 76,89,and 93)

Synod has several rounds of discussion on the proposals contained in the deputies report, and the proposals of Albany and West Albany.

Article 75 (refer article 97)

Synod Budget

Decision:

To include the proposed Synod budget as part of the material to be used by the committee studying the synod financial papers.

Ground:

The budget papers were inadvertently misplaced.

ADOPTED

Article 76

Reformed Churches of New Zealand (refer articles 74,89 and 93)

Further discussions on RCNZ is continued.

Article 77

Pulpit Exchange

Material:

Agenda Item 12.7

Deputy Report

Decisions:

1. To thank the deputy and to discharge him; and
2. Not to reappoint a deputy for this matter.

Ground:

Since classes have now been formed, this matter belongs to their jurisdiction.

ADOPTED

***Tuesday 11 July 2000
EVENING SESSION***

Article 78

Re-opening evening session

The Chairman asks Synod to sing Hymn 46:1,2.

Article 79

Adoption of Acts

Acts Article 57 to 70 are adopted.

Article 80

Reply to Rev Flinn

Rev A van Delden replies to Rev Flinn's greetings to Synod. His address is included as an appendix.

Acts of Synod

Article 81

Address by Rev R ter Beek

Rev ter Beek addresses Synod on behalf of the RCN (Lib) to convey greetings. His address is included as an appendix.

Article 82

Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN) (refer article 87)

Decision:

To add a letter of greeting which has been omitted from the deputies' report as part of the report.

Ground:

The letter of greeting is referred to in deputies' report but inadvertently not copied.

ADOPTED

Article 83

Adjournment

Br F Postmus asks Synod to sing Psalm 68:2,12 and leads in prayer. The Chairman adjourns Synod until 9.00 am Wednesday morning.

Wednesday 12 July 2000

Article 84

Re-opening

The Chairman asks Synod to sing Psalm 50:7,8 and 10, reads Mark 6:1-23 and leads in prayer.

Synod goes into closed session.

Article 85

Open Session

Synod re-opens in open session.

Article 86

Advisor

Br H Dekker, as advisor to Synod under rule 5.1, is requested to stand to indicate his agreement to the Three Forms of Unity.

Article 87

Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (refer article 82)

Material:

Agenda item 12.4.4.4

Deputies report

Agenda item 12.4.5.2

Supplementary Report of Deputies

Decisions:

1. To continue sister relations with the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, requesting deputies to give specific attention to Rules 1 and 2 of the adopted Rules for Sister Relations, viz:
 - One. *Sister relations shall be used mutually to assist, encourage and exhort one another to live as churches of God in this world;*
 - Two. *The churches shall mutually care for each other that they do not depart from the reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline and liturgy;*
1. To mandate deputies to attend the next Synod of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands;
2. To expand the deputyship with the appointment of at least two ministers to this deputyship.

Grounds:

1. While evidence exists in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands that they strive to be faithful to the Word of God, the Confessions of the Church and the adopted Church Order, evidence also surfaces that require sister churches to take seriously their obligation to be the "brother's keeper". One thinks here, for example of the adopted Marriage Form, the decision re the Day of Rest, Lord's Supper celebration in special circumstances, the patronising approach of the Dutch churches towards their historic sister churches in inter-church relations, etc.
2. Face to face discussions are generally more helpful than communications from a distance. Particularly in moments of need, going the extra mile to offer assistance is the right thing to do.

Acts of Synod

3. Doing justice of the concerns expressed above requires more manpower.

DEFEATED

An alternative proposal was tabled.

Proposed amendment:

Remove:

- (d) *"Convey to the PCEA that we were wrong in stating that the RCN does not discuss areas of concern at all with their (presbyterian) sisters" and;*
- ground 4 *"The RCN requests us to retract some statements we made towards the PCEA, ie, that the RCN does not discuss areas of concern at all with (presbyterian) sisters, but just leaves them. In correspondence with our deputies, RCN deputies actually wrote in such a way that one would adopt that conclusion. It is good to stand corrected on this matter, and this correction should be conveyed to the PCEA" from this alternative proposal and to give this mandate to PCEA deputies.*

ADOPTED

The alternative proposal as amended is presented:

Material:

Agenda item 12.4.4.4

Deputies report

Agenda item 12.4.5.2

Supplementary Report of Deputies

Decisions:

1. To continue sister-relations with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands according to the adopted Rules for Sister-Relations;
2. To discharge deputies and to appoint new deputies with the mandate to:
 - a. Exercise sister-relations with the RCN according to the adopted rules;
 - b. According to the rules, discuss with the RCN deputies some concerns as to the developments within the RCN;
 - c. Authorise deputies to attend the next general Synod of the RCN;

d. Report to next Synod;

1. To expand the deputyship by one additional minister.

Grounds:

1. The RCN gives evidence of continuing faithfulness to the Word of God, their Reformed Confessions and the Church Order.
2. Deputies have pointed out and given some evidence about some specific concerns. These should be addressed, according to the rules.
3. Personal visits (to Synods) is more helpful than correspondence from a distance. It also improves relations.
4. The number of items to be studied and discussed increases, and they require exegetical skills. Thus the request for an additional minister is understandable.

ADOPTED

Article 88

Retraction to PCEA

Material:

Supplementary report- Letter of deputies BBK

Decision:

To instruct deputies for the PCEA to convey to the PCEA that we were wrong in stating that the RCN does not discuss areas of concern at all with their (presbyterian) sisters.

Ground:

The RCN requests us to retract some statements we made to the PCEA, ie that the RCN does not discuss areas of concern at all with (presbyterian) sisters, but just leaves them. In correspondence with our deputies, RCN deputies actually wrote in such a way that one would adopt that conclusion. It is good to stand corrected on this matter, and this correction should be conveyed to the PCEA.

ADOPTED

Acts of Synod

Article 89

Reformed Churches of New Zealand (refer articles 74, 76 and 93)

Discussion continues on the proposals presented.

Wednesday 12 July 2000
EVENING SESSION

Article 90

Re-opening of evening session

The Chairman asked Synod to sing Hymn 2:1-3.

Article 91

Adoption of Acts

The Acts articles 71 to 83 are approved.

Article 92

Address by Rev Bouwman

Rev C Bouwman addressed Synod to reply to the greetings given by Rev ter Beek on behalf of the Reformed Churches of Netherlands. The address is attached in appendix 1.

Article 93

Reformed Churches of New Zealand (refer articles 74,76 and 89)

Material:

Agenda item 12.4.2.2	Deputies Report
Agenda item 9.10 with the RCNZ	FRC West Albany proposal regarding relations
Agenda item 9.11 RCNZ	FRC Albany proposal regarding relations with

Decision:

Not to accede with the proposals of Albany and West Albany, and to adopt the recommendations of the deputies which read:

To renew the mandate of deputies to strive relations with the Reformed Churches of New Zealand by:

- a) Encouraging the RCNZ to study the appeal sent to the RCA in order to understand why the FRCA has principle objections in establishing relations with the RCA and therefore this continues as an impediment to acknowledging the RCNZ,
- b) Continuing dialogue with the RCNZ in particular, to explain why the RCNZ's relation with the RCA proves to be an impediment.
- c) Authorising two delegates to attend the next Synod of the RCNZ to be held, the Lord willing in 2001, in order to convey greetings, discuss matters of mutual interest with the RCNZ IRC.
- d) Inviting delegates of the RCNZ to our next Synod as observers with the privileges mentioned in rules 6 of our "Rules for Synods" (Acts 1998, Appendix 12).

Grounds:

It becomes evident from the discussions at Synod that there is not a consensus to go forward in our relations with the RCNZ at this time, and therefore Synod decides to adopt the deputies recommendations.

DEFEATED

West Albany proposal

Decisions:

1. To recognise the Reformed Churches of New Zealand as true and faithful churches of our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To offer to enter into a fraternal relationship with the RCNZ according to the following rules:
 - a. Fraternal relations shall be used to promote ecclesiastical fellowship with churches with which we do not yet have sister church relations;
 - b. The churches shall inform each other of the decisions taken by their broadest assemblies, if possible by sending each other their Acts or their Minutes and, otherwise, at least by sending the decisions relevant to their respective churches (if possible in translation);
 - c. The churches shall give account to each other concerning the establishing of relations with third parties;
 - d. The churches shall accept one another's attestations, which also means admitting the members of the respective churches to the sacraments upon presentation of these attestations;

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- e. The churches shall give account to each other concerning substantial changes or additions to the confession, church order or liturgical forms;
 - f. The churches shall receive each other's delegates at their broadest assemblies and invite them to sit as fraternal delegates.
-
- 1. To continue to strive for a sister relationship with the RCNZ, recognising that it may take some time for the third party relationship between the RCNZ and the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia (former RCA) to be resolved.
 - 2. To thank deputies for the work they have done and charge them with the following mandate:
 - a. To communicate Synod's decision to the RCNZ, offering the RCNZ a fraternal relationship under the proposed rules;
 - b. To indicate to the RCNZ a willingness to further discuss the nature of a fraternal relationship and/or the proposed rules if they so desire;
 - c. To encourage the RCNZ to study the appeal sent to the CRCA in order to understand why the FRCA has principle objections in establishing relations with the CRCA and why this continues to be an impediment to establishing a full sister church relationship with the RCNZ.
 - d. To continue dialogue with the RCNZ to explain why the RCNZ's relation with the CRCA proves to be an impediment;
 - e. To authorise two delegates to attend the next Synod of the RCNZ to be held, the Lord Willing in 2001, in order to convey greetings and discuss matters of mutual interest with the RCNZ IRC; and
 - f. To invite delegates of the RCNZ to our next Synod as Fraternal delegates with the privileges mentioned in rule 6.2 of our "Rules for Synod" (Acts of the 1998 Synod, Appendix 12).

Grounds:

- 1. Deputies have indicated that in doctrine, worship and church government, the RCNZ must be considered a true and faithful church of the Lord Jesus Christ (see Acts of 1996 Synod, art 53). Not acknowledging the RCNZ as true and faithful churches of the Lord Jesus Christ has caused them much disappointment (Deputies report to Synod 2000).
- 2. In our contacts with other churches, we basically have two levels of relationship: a corresponding relationship and a sister church relationship. Currently our rules do not allow for any progress in a relationship. The establishment of fraternal relations would allow for the recognition of a church as a true and faithful church of the Lord Jesus Christ, while acknowledging that historical developments may well give

cause to stumbling blocks that prevent the establishment of a full sister church relationship (see Acts of the 1985 Synod, Art 67).

3. The reason for establishing a fraternal relationship with the RCNZ is not to take away from the goal of a full sister church relationship. Rather, it is to serve as a means of accomplishing this goal.
4. This decision is in line with Synod's decision to concentrate on relations with churches who are geographically closer to us (see Acts of the 1990 Synod, Art 58).

DEFEATED

Alternative Proposal:

Decision:

To agree in principle to the proposal of West Albany, but to postpone the implementation of this decision until next Synod in order to give deputies the opportunity:

- a. to see whether the RCNZ will enter into fraternal relationship with the FRCA;
- b. to elicit and assess responses from the churches regarding this decision;
- c. to consider what changes will need to be made to the CO (eg. Art 57) and other ecclesiastical rules and regulations regarding the establishment of fraternal relations;
- d. To appoint deputies with the new mandate:
 - i Encourage the RCNZ to study the appeal sent to the CRCA in order to understand why the FRCA has principle objections in establishing relations with the CRCA and therefore this continues the impediment to forming sister relations with the RCNZ.
 - ii Continue to dialogue with the RCNZ on matters of common concern.
 - iii Authorise two delegates to attend the next Synod of the RCNZ.
 - iv Invite delegates of the RCNZ to our next Synod.
 - v Keep the churches informed of any developments in the RCNZ.

Grounds:

1. The delegate from the RCNZ has stated that the RCNZ do not have a second level of inter-church relations.
2. Although the proposal of West Albany is in accordance with previous Synod decisions which have seen the RCNZ's relationship with the CRCA as an impediment to sister church relations, and is in agreement

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with Art 67 of Acts 1985, the churches have not had a great deal of time to interact with West Albany's proposal since it was submitted to the churches just prior to the closing date for submissions to Synod.

3. Although the proposal of West Albany received the majority of support from the churches, it is the desire of Synod to work towards a greater consensus by ongoing discussion, according to the rules of Synod.

ADOPTED

Article 94

Adjournment

After requesting the Synod to sing Hymn 31:3-5, Rev J Poppe closed in prayer. The Chairman adjourned the Synod until 9.00 am on Thursday.

Thursday 13th July

Article 95

Re-opening

The Chairman invites Synod to sing Psalm 118:5,6, reads Mark 8:22-38 and leads in prayer.

Synod moves into closed session to deal further with matters related to Article 41 CO.

Article 96

Open Session

Synod reconvenes in open session.

Article 97

Synod Treasury

The following proposal is submitted from the appointed committee:

Materials:

Agenda item 12.3	Synod Treasurer's Report, Draft budget for Synod 2003, Revised Draft Budget for Synod 2003;
Agenda item 13	Auditors of Synod Treasurer's Books and discharge of Treasurer
Agenda item 14	Calculations for church share of Synod costs;

Observations:

Synod's Treasurer prepared a draft budget to take into account Synod's decisions.

As shown, the Revised Budget takes into account Synod's decision to form classis after Synod 2000 and allocation of funds for establishing classes.

Decisions:

1. To accept the Treasurer's statement of receipts and expenditure for the period 1 February 1998 to 31 January 2000 and recommendations regarding reimbursements;
2. To thank the Treasurer for the work done and discharge him;
3. To receive the Report of the Auditors for the Synod Treasury;
4. To thank the Auditors for the work done and discharge them;
5. To adopt the Draft Revised budget as amended by Synod;
6. To adopt the cost sharing arrangement proposed by the Synod Treasurer;
7. To approve costs for travel by Rev Veldman to attend the installation of Dr Zuiddam in Launceston; and
8. To adopt the proposal to allot \$15,000 to Classis North and \$5,000 to Classis South. This is to be a once-off for the establishment of Classes.

Article 98

Synod Audio Equipment

Material:

Agenda item 12.14 Synod Audio Equipment

Decisions:

1. To thank brothers E 'tHart and A van der Wal for the construction of a special sound system for the benefit of synod sessions, for storing and maintaining it and for operating it at this Synod.
2. To discharge the brothers and to appoint new deputies to take care of the sound system equipment for Synod.

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Ground:

The brothers have done an admirable job and have served Synod very well.

ADOPTED

Thursday 13 July 2000 ***EVENING SESSION***

Article 99

Re-opening evening session

The Chairman asks Synod to sing Psalm 68: 7,8.

Article 100

Adoption of Acts

Acts articles 84 to 98 were adopted.

Article 101

Appointment of deputies

In Closed Session the Executive presents a Draft Appointments paper:

Publication of the Acts – the First Clerk

Archives and Library of Synods (*Acts* Art 23) - The Church of Mount Nasura

Inspection of Archives and Library (*Acts* Art 23) - The Church of Byford

Treasurer of Synod

Ad. Hordyk

J G Versluis - Alternate

Auditors for Synod Treasury (*Acts* Art 97) - The Church of Kelmscott

Deputies for Relations with Other Churches

General Convener: Rev C Bouwman

General Secretary: J L van Burgel

All deputies will work under one umbrella. The various deputies will do their own work and are responsible for their own report to Synod. All the

deputyships will meet together as needed to inform and consult with each other regarding their work. Deputies shall present their final report for interaction and consultation by the full deputyship before sending it to Synod.

The duties of the general secretary are:

- to take care of the central post office box,
- to distribute the mail,
- to act as recording clerk for the combined meetings,
- to be responsible for the website of the FRCA, and
- to acknowledge correspondence not applicable to deputies, and if necessary to pass it on to the churches.

Sister Churches - Canada, The Netherlands, Korea, South Africa (*Acts Art 33, 82, 87, 32, 31*) -

Rev C Bouwman (Convener)
A M C Bruning
H J Dekker
Rev W Huizinga
Rev J Kroeze
Alternate: G B Veenendaal

Other Churches (Reformed) - Reformed Churches of New Zealand, Christian Reformed Churches of Australia (*Acts Art 69, 72, 74, 76, 89, 93*)

Rev A Veldman (Convener)
B Bosveld
J L van Burgel
Rev A van Delden
Alternate: P O Posthuma

Indonesia, Philippines (*Acts Art 46, 49, 62*)

Rev P K A de Boer (Convener)
J(ohn) Bosveld
W Geurts
Rev W van der Jagt
J van Dijk (snr)
Alternate: S H Terpstra

Other Churches (Presbyterian) - PCEA, Ireland, Scotland (*Acts Art 63, 64, 73, 88*)

Rev J Poppe (Convener)
H Olde
J Plug (Painter)
L(en) Schoof
L 't Hart
Alternate: A Mulder

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Deputies for Australian Book of Praise (Acts Art 54)

D Pot (Convener)
W Amoraal
E(lton) Swarts

Deputies for Training for the Ministry (Acts Art 25)

Rev C Bouwman (Convener)
H Faas
M(urray) Plug
A van Leeuwen
Alternate: R(ichard) Heerema

Deputy for Revision of Church Order and Ecclesiastical Documents

Rev G van Rongen
Alternate: J Eikelboom

Nominating Authorities of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (Acts Art 102)

S Herbert (Primary responsibility)
W Spijker

Deputies for Synod Audio Equipment (Acts Art 98)

E 't Hart
A van der Wal

Deputies for Article 48 and 76 of the Church Order

For Classis South:

Rev P K A de Boer
Rev A Veldman
Alternate: Rev J Kroeze

For Classis North:

Rev W Huizinga
Rev A van Delden
Alternate: Rev W van der Jagt

Deputies for Article 66 of the Church Order - (Days of Prayer)

The Church of Launceston

Deputies for auditing the books for Deputies for Article 17 and 18 of the Church Order

The Church of Mount Nasura

Deputy for Church Visitation (to arrange Church Visits for 2000, which are to be reported to the respective classes)

Rev A Veldman

Convening church for the next Synod

Church: Rockingham
Place: Rockingham
Time: Between April - July 2003

Article 102

Civil Registration

Material:

Agenda item 12.8 Civil Registration

Decision:

1. To thank the deputies that they have completed their mandate in that the Free Reformed Church(sic) of Australia have now been registered as a recognised denomination for the purpose of the Marriage Act 1961.
2. To discharge the deputies.
3. To appoint new deputies officially designated as the *Nominating Authorities* with the following mandate:
 - a. To carry out all the duties of *nominating authorities* as required under the Marriage Act 1961;
 - b. To see to a correction of the registered church name from *Free Reformed Church of Australia* to *Free Reformed Churches of Australia*.

Grounds:

1. Deputies have carried out and completed their mandate given by Synod 1998.
2. The Marriage Act of 1961 requires that there is an official appointment of Nominating Authorities.
3. Although the deputies submitted the correct name for the churches as a whole when making the application on behalf of the churches, the registrar did not register it correctly.

ADOPTED

Article 103

Report Article 48 and 76 of the Church Order

Material:

Agenda item 12.11 Deputies report

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Decision:

Synod decides to receive the report with thanks.

ADOPTED

Article 104

Report Article 66 of the Church Order

Material:

Agenda item 12.12 Deputies report

Decision:

Synod decides to receive the report with thanks.

Article 105

Report from Classis

Mt Nasura reports that they conducted a colloquium doctum for Rev J Kroeze.
The outcome was satisfactory.

Article 106

Questions regarding Article 41 of the Church Order

All churches could reply affirmative for both questions.

Article 107

Personal questions

No one has any questions.

Article 108

Adoption of press release

Synod approves the second press release as read out by the Vice Chairman.

ADOPTED

Article 109

Censure according to Article 47 CO

The Chairman states that there is no need for censure.

Article 110
Presentations

The Chairman expresses the appreciation of the delegates for the excellent organisation and care by the convening Church. On behalf of Synod he presents a gift to J de Snoo, chairman of the organisation committee.

Br J de Snoo receives the gifts and expresses some words of thanks and also some words of advice to the next convening church.

Special words of appreciation were also expressed to others who gave particular assistance.

Article 111
Closing Address

The Chairman, Rev W Huizinga, speaks the following words:

In closing this synod, allow me first of all to express some words of thanks.

We give the hosting church of West-Albany big "thank-you" for the excellent preparations they have made for us. You took care of the distribution of the agenda items; you kept an accurate and orderly collection of all the materials. You provided accommodation for us and for the overseas delegates. You arranged to have the ladies serve us with refreshments, nibbles, cake and more. Those substantial, three course lunches will take some time to wear off! As our hosts you also made sure there were enough meeting rooms and computer equipment to fulfil our tasks. You prepared a lounge room for us so we could sit, have a coffee and relax. You offered some outings and much more. I am sure there were many more tasks that we may not even have noticed. Rockingham will soon find out about those tasks. In short, we owe you our hearty thanks. I would also like to express our thanks to the brothers, Eric 't Hart and Alan vander Wal, who took care of the sound equipment. We hope that the visitors especially benefited from it in that they were able to hear the discussion on the floor of synod. Well done! Our first clerk is a very capable brother, but he and the second clerk certainly would be the first to say with all of us how much we appreciated the services of our secretary, Kina Van Duyn. Thank you very much Kina for taking a holiday from your regular work and offering your services for this synod. We also thank the sexton, the guardian of the grounds and buildings here, for his work. He was always available when asked. He would open doors and greet us with his warm smile. Thank you, our smiley Jacob Berkelaar.

We approach the closing of the 21st Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia. We have worked for almost nine complete days. Thinking back to

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the synods over the past decade, I think that is a record for us. It could be that the agenda is shrinking; it could be that the reports of deputies are that convincing; it could be that the brothers have less to say; or it could be that the weather in West Albany kept us indoors, kept us cool and hard-working.

Over the years we have learned to appreciate one another's points of view. We have learned that we need to respect each other and to do things together. Some want to run and hurry along faster; some want to walk slowly, while others stand still. We need to adjust our pace to others, neither galloping ahead nor lagging behind. Do we need to go as slow as the slowest? Well, we were told that was not quite correct. It was compared to catching the school-bus. Be on time! Some stragglers need to hurry up and show they wish to get on board. Otherwise, we were told, the synodical driver will close the door and leave! And we did act accordingly, concerning the presbyterian churches and concerning the Reformed Churches in New Zealand, for instance. However, this does not mean that we all think alike on matters. This synod showed that on some matters, especially interchurch relations, we do not have the same mind. That is sad, but fact. Nevertheless, we did strive as much as our convictions allow to move closer towards each other. The Rules for Synods stipulate that we work towards unanimity. As it is said in Dutch, 'niet overstemmen maar overeenstemmen' (do not outvote each other but agree with each other). We said it was better to move one step ahead together than to run three steps ahead with only a few. In this quest for unanimity the delegates from overseas served us with advice, with direction, if necessary, with proddings and scoldings, and also with words of encouragement. We value their input.

These decisions now go to the churches. According to our beloved Article 31, Church Order,

Whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, unless it is proved to be in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order.

This means that these decisions are settled and binding. It also means that the churches should review them and implement them. If they find they are in conflict with the Bible or our Church Order then they will submit an appeal.

May the Head of the churches use these decisions so that his people here in Australia and also elsewhere may prosper! Before synod we had a prayer service. We listened to God's Word about Hezekiah, a faithful king of Israel. The Lord prospered him and Israel. The ministry of the Word, the ministry of the sacraments, prayer, worship and thank offerings to the Lord abounded. God blessed them out of his grace and generosity. May the Lord keep the office-bearers in the FRCA today faithful and diligent! Then we know that his blessings will descend. Indeed, we have heard that the ministry of the Word,

the administration of the sacraments and the exercise of godly discipline prevail in each of the ten lampstands of our bond. This is not to our praise but to the praise of God's grace. May the Head of the churches continue to walk up and down among the lampstands of our bond, in Tasmania, Albany and Perth Metro areas. He knows us thoroughly, our strengths, our weaknesses, and our offensive sins. He controls the churches. This fact heartens us. Yet He holds us responsible. We need his Spirit to equip us to discharge our offices. We pray that we may remain faithful. Hezekiah "lifted up his heart" and became proud. The same can apply to us. Yes, Hezekiah points us to Christ, as we heard in the sermon before synod. May we keep our eye on Him.

I remembered the local churches because this will be the last synod that will pay attention to visits paid to the churches. We have decided to form two classes. That means those classes will pay attention to the ministries of the office-bearers of the local churches. Yes, that was an important decision for our churches. In some ways we still wanted to hang on to the present set-up and provisions. The Tasmanian churches still want to see and hear ministers from what is now Classis South (Albany, Armadale, Byford, Rockingham and West Albany). Yet if the change was to be made we had to make it properly, thoroughly, and we did so. But it has its sad side. We in Classis South will not see as much of, at least not in an official capacity, the churches in Classis North, and vice versa. If another theological student has to be examined or if a candidate needs to be examined, this will be the task of the classis. May God bless this decision so that the desire for more contact may become reality. May this decision bring us closer to the norms of the Church Order.

We come to the end. On behalf of the officers of synod I thank you for the confidence placed in us. It was an honor and a responsibility. If in the discharge of our duties we have offended or hurt any of you by any remark or comment, please accept our apology. The grace of God cleanse us from all wrongs and offences. During this synod we often spoke from the heart. That is good. For we must love God and our neighbour from the whole heart, with the whole mind and with all our soul. Yet in speaking from the heart sometimes our emotions run away with us. God forgive us for that. We have all sought to serve our Lord and each other with our varying gifts and skills.

It is time to return to our normal duties. May God bless you in those respective duties, as elder or as minister. May the Lord give you all safe journeys back home. Some have come with families. Enjoy your holidays now that your synodical duties are finished. To those who left wife and families, I wish you health and wisdom. It will be wonderful to be reunited with our families, even though they did not expect us home as quickly!

May the Lord bless those whom synod appointed as deputies. Some of the deputyships have new names. We tried to give all the ministers tasks. We tried not to give anyone two tasks. May the Lord provide wisdom, brotherly

Appendix 1 Speeches at Synod

love, faithfulness and love so that you fulfil your tasks and can help make the church prosper. You will have three years instead of two to do your work. That is good for you and good for the churches. The Lord bless you.

*Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,
And to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with
exceeding joy,
To God our Savior, who alone is wise,
Be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.*

Article 112

Farewell from RCNZ delegate

Rev Flinn speaks a few words of farewell to Synod.

Article 113

Closing

The Vice Chairman, Rev van Delden, on behalf of Synod, expresses appreciation for the Chairman's capable leadership in chairing Synod in a brotherly and impartial manner. He asks those present to sing Psalm 125: 1,2 and 3 and leads in prayer. The Chairman closes the twentyfirst Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia.