

# **ACTS OF THE 2012 SYNOD**

**and**

**Reports to the 2012 Synod**

**of the**

**FREE REFORMED  
CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA**

**ARMADALE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
9 – 20 July 2012**



Back row:

Rev J Kroeze (Classis North), Rev A Souman (CanRC), Rev H Breytenbach (FRCSA), Rev W Wielenga (CanRC), Rev P Archbald (RCNZ), Rev T Van Spronsen (Classis South West), Rev C Vermeulen (Classis Central), Br J Plug (Classis South West), Br G 't Hart (Classis South West), Br J Wielstra (Classis North), Rev E Rupke (Classis North), Br W Amoraal (Classis Central), Br J de Jong (RCN), Rev PK Meijer (RCN), Rev M Biha (GGRI), Rev W van der Jagt (Classis Central), Br A van der Net (RCNr), Br J Houweling (RCNr)

Front row:

Br G Spyker (Classis North), Br K Wezeman (RCN), Br M Hoogerdijk (Classis North), Rev S 't Hart (Classis South West), Rev R Pot (Classis South West), Rev A van Delden (Classis Central), Br W VanderVen (Classis South West), Rev PKA deBoer (Classis North), Br A Wagenaar (Classis Central), Br E Heerema (Classis Central), Rev Y Dethan (GGRC), Ev R Rehyard (GGRC)



**Moderamen:**

Rev R Pot (Vice Chairman), Rev A van Delden (Chairman),  
Br W VanderVen (First Clerk), Rev PKA deBoer (Second Clerk)

## **GLOSSARY OF ECCLESIASTICAL ABBREVIATIONS**

BC	Belgic Confession
BoP	Book of Praise
CanRC	Canadian Reformed Churches
CO	Church Order
CRCA	Christian Reformed Churches of Australia
FERCS	First Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore
FRC	Free Reformed Church
FRCA	Free Reformed Churches of Australia
FRCSA	Free Reformed Churches in South Africa
GGRC	Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Calvin
GGRI	Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Di Indonesia
LRCA	Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford
NGK	Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken
OPC	Orthodox Presbyterian Church (USA)
PCK	Presbyterian Churches in Korea (Kosin)
RCB	Reformed Churches in Brazil
RCN	Reformed Churches in the Netherlands
RCN(R)	Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Restored)
RCNZ	Reformed Churches of New Zealand
URCNA	United Reformed Churches of North America

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**EVENING SESSION**  
**Monday 9 July 2012**

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**Article 1 - Opening of Synod by Convening Church of Armadale**

The synod is convened in the Armadale church building. The Chairman of consistory, Br AMC Bruning, on behalf of the convening church of Armadale, invites all present to profess their faith by the singing of Hymn 1B:1, 2 and 3 followed by the singing of Psalm 97:1 and 3 and leads in opening prayer. He invites all present to sing Hymn 24:1, 5 and 7.

He then reads from Romans 15:1-21 and meditates on verses 6 and 7 (refer Appendix 1a) and invites all present to sing from Psalm 139:1, 10 and 13.

The Chairman then prays to God for His blessing over the synod. He declares the synod opened.

Once again the Chairman invites all to sing from Psalm 90:1 and 8. He then speaks his opening address, providing some history as this is the 25<sup>th</sup> synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (refer Appendix 1b). He invites all the delegates to the synod table.

**Article 2 - Examination of Credentials**

All delegates sign the attendance list. The Chairman of the convening church, Br Bruning, examines the credentials of the delegates and notes that all primary delegates from Classis North, Classis Central and Classis South are in attendance.

Classis North

Reverend PKA DeBoer  
Reverend J Kroeze  
Reverend E Rupke  
Elder M Hoogerdijk  
Elder G M Spyker  
Elder J Wielstra

Classis Central

Reverend A van Delden  
Reverend W van der Jagt  
Reverend C Vermeulen  
Elder W Amoraal  
Elder E Heerema  
Elder A Wagenaar

Classis South West

Reverend R E Pot

Reverend S 't Hart

Reverend T Van Spronsen

Elder J Plug

Elder G E 't Hart

Elder W VanderVen

**Article 3 - Election of Officers**

The following officers are elected:

Chairman

Reverend A van Delden

Vice Chairman

Reverend R E Pot

First Clerk

Elder W VanderVen

Second Clerk

Reverend PKA DeBoer

**Article 4 - Overseas Delegates**

Br M Bruning then invites all the delegates from other churches to be seated at the table. The delegates are as follows:

Reverend A Souman

Canadian Reformed  
Churches

Reverend W Wielenga

Canadian Reformed  
Churches

Elder K Wezeman

Reformed Churches of the  
Netherlands

Elder J de Jong

Reformed Churches of the  
Netherlands

Elder J Houweling

Reformed Churches of the  
Netherlands (Restored)

Elder A van der Net

Reformed Churches of the  
Netherlands (Restored)

Reverend H Breytenbach

Free Reformed Churches  
of South Africa

Reverend M Biha

Reformed Churches in  
Indonesia

Reverend Y Dethan	Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRC)
Evangelist R Rehyard	Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRC)
Reverend P Archbald	Reformed Churches of New Zealand

### **Article 5 - Constitution of Synod**

The Chairman, Rev A van Delden, declares synod duly constituted.

### **Article 6 - Delegates Agreement with the Three Forms of Unity**

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

All delegates, including all overseas delegates, rise.

### **Article 7 - Administrative Assistant**

All delegates agreed to the appointment of Sr K van Duyn as administrative assistant for Synod 2012.

### **Article 8 - Adjournment**

Following some housekeeping matters the Chairman requests all present to sing from Psalm 127:1 and 2 and leads in closing prayer. The Chairman adjourns the synod meeting.

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**MORNING SESSION**  
**Tuesday 10 July 2012**

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**Article 9 - Opening**

Br J Wielstra invites those present to sing Psalm 111:1 and 4. He then reads from Psalm 111 and, followed by a brief meditation, he leads in prayer.

The Chairman declares the meeting open.

**Article 10 - Time Schedules**

Synod adopts the following time schedule:

Monday to Friday:	9:00 am to 10:30 am	Break
	10:45 am to 12:00 pm	Lunch
	1:30 pm to 3:00 pm	Break
	3:15 pm to 5:00 pm	Dinner
Evening Sessions:	7:30 pm to 9:30 pm	

**Article 11 - Adoption of Agenda**

The final draft agenda is presented.

1. Opening by the convening Church – Armadale
2. Signing of Attendance List and Examination of Credentials
3. Election of Officers
4. Constitution of Officers
5. Delegates' agreement with the Three Forms of Unity
6. Adoption of Agenda
7. Adoption of Meeting Procedures
8. Incoming Correspondence:
  - a. Letter FRC Kelmscott
    - i. Request regarding material received from the Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford
    - ii. Request in relation to Art. 8 of the CO regarding the position of Br J Bruning

- iii. Appeal regarding Art.24 of the 2009 Acts of Synod in relation to the Book of Praise
- iv. Overture regarding the use of Hymns for the worship services
- b. Letter FRC Armadale
  - i. Request re Abbotsford
  - ii. Overture regarding RCN
  - iii. Letter re change of synod rules – distribution of materials
- c. Letter FRC Mount Nasura
  - i. Overture regarding Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford
  - ii. Overture regarding RCN
  - iii. Overture regarding RCNZ
  - iv. Overture regarding CanRC
  - v. Overture regarding amending synod rules
  - vi. Overture regarding RCN<sup>r</sup>
- d. Letter FRC Legana
  - i. Developments in NIV Bible translations and use of ESV
- e. Letter from Liberated Reformed Church Abbotsford
  - i. Abbotsford Appendices A-C and E-H
  - ii. Abbotsford Appendices D
- f. Letter FRC Byford
  - i. Overture regarding Psalm Book
  - ii. Overture regarding RCNZ
- g. Letter FRC West Albany
  - i. Overture regarding Rules of Synod – Visiting Delegates
  - ii. Overture re RCN
  - iii. Overture Book of Praise
  - iv. Overture re Reformed Church of Brazil
  - v. Overture re Rules of Synod re Treasury
- h. Letter FRC Darling Downs
  - i. Overture re RCN
  - ii. Overture re RCNZ
  - iii. Overture re Book of Praise
  - iv. Overture re Training for Ministry

- i. Letter from RCN deputies for foreign church relations (BBK)
  - i. Responses to FRCA deputies report re RCN
  - j. Letter FRC Busselton Overture re Federation name
- 9. Instructions
- 10. Reports
  - a. Classis North:
    - i. Credentials Delegates to Synod
    - ii. Submissions for judgement of Synod:
      - i. New International Version of the Bible (see agenda item 8d.i)
      - ii. J Bruning admitted to Ministry under Art 8 of Church order
      - iii. Rules for Preaching Consent for Students of Theology and Candidates for the Ministry
      - iv. Developments in our sister churches in the Netherlands (see Agenda items 8.c.ii)
      - v. Possibility of developing an Australian Book of Praise (see Agenda item 8.a.iii)
  - b. Classis South West:
    - i. Credentials Delegates to Synod
    - ii. Submission re FERC Singapore in relation to Art 46 of the CO, in order to work towards sister church relations
  - c. Classis Central:
    - i. Credentials Delegates to Synod
- 11. Deputies Reports:
  - a. General Secretary's Report
  - b. Nominating Authorities – Marriage Act 1061
  - c. Indexing of Synodical Decisions
  - d. Australian Book of Praise
  - e. Training for the Ministry



- f. Relations with other Churches:
  - i. Reformed Churches of New Zealand
  - ii. Reformed Churches in the Netherlands Restored (RCNr)
  - iii. Reformed Churches of Brazil
- g. Sister Church Relations:
  - i. Proposal to amend synod rules
  - ii. Indonesian Churches
  - iii. Canadian Reformed Churches
  - iv. Supplementary Report LRC Abbotsford
  - v. Presbyterian Churches in Korea (Kosin)
  - vi. Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (V)
  - vii. Free Reformed Churches in South Africa
  - viii. Supplementary Report 1 – RCN
  - ix. Supplementary Report 2 - RCN
- h. Article 66 of the Church Order (Days of Prayer)
- i. Synod Treasury
  - i. Report
  - ii. Budget
- j. Archives and Library
- k. Auditing
  - i. Synod Archives and Library (Not received)
  - ii. Deputies for Training of Ministry Art 17 & 18 of CO
- l. Articles 48 and 76 CO
- 12. Audit of Books of the Treasurer and discharge of Synod Treasurer
- 13. Calculations of the percentages of the Churches' share of Synod Costs
- 14. Appointment of Deputies
- 15. Appointment of Convening Church, place and time of next Synod
- 16. Personal Questions
- 17. Adoption of Acts
- 18. Approval of Press Release
- 19. Censure according to Article 47 of the Church Order
- 20. Closing of Synod

Material received after deadline:

A proposal is received from FRC Mt Nasura on Book of Praise. After voting the material is not admitted to agenda as it was received after the closing date set (posted on 18 June 2012).

A second supplementary Report from Deputies with Sister Churches is received. After a round of voting it is accepted as incoming material.

### ***ADOPTED***

#### **Article 12 - Personal Letter**

A letter is received from Rev A Veldman explaining his reasons for not being able to attend synod in his capacity as Chairman of Deputies for Relations with Sister Churches.

#### **Article 13 - Homepage on Internet**

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

#### **Article 14 - Welcome to Overseas Visitors**

The letters of credentials for the following visitors are read:

Rev J A Breytenbach	Free Reformed Churches in South Africa
Br J H de Jong	Reformed Churches in the Netherlands
Br K Wezeman	Reformed Churches in the Netherlands
Rev P K Meijer	Reformed Churches in the Netherlands
Rev M Biha	Gereja Gereja Reformasi Di Indonesia (GGRI)
Rev Y Dethan	Gereja Gereja Reformasi Calvinis (GGRC)

Ev R Y Rehyard	Gereja Gereja Reformasi Calvinis (GGRC)
Br J Houweling	Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Restored)
Br A van der Net	Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Restored)
Rev W Wielenga	Canadian Reformed Churches
Rev A Souman	Canadian Reformed Churches
Rev P Archbald	Reformed Churches of New Zealand

The chairman welcomes the overseas visitors and following a discussion the overseas visitors are accorded privileges as follows:

Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (RCN), Canadian Reformed Churches (CRC) and Free Reformed Churches of South Africa (FRCSA) seated under 6.1 of the Rules for Synod.

Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (Restored) RCN(r), Reformed Churches of New Zealand (RCNZ) and Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Calvin (GGRC) seated under 6.2 of the Rules for Synod.

## **Article 15 - Synod Advisory Committee and Schedule**

The moderamen proposed nominations for advisory committees in the event that the recommendations of the deputies do not find general support of the majority. The chairman distributes and explains a schedule for dealing with the items on synod's agenda.

**Article 16 - Request in relation to Article 8 of the CO regarding the position of Br J Bruning (Refer Articles 17, 82, 109)**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 8.a.ii – Application of FRC Kelmscott in relation to Art 8 of the CO regarding the position of Brother J Bruning.

Agenda Item 10.a.ii – Submissions by FRC Kelmscott for judgment of Synod: Br J Bruning admitted to Ministry under Art 8 of the Church Order.

The Chairman requests synod to decide whether this matter ought to be discussed in closed session. Synod votes and decides to deal with this matter in closed session as per Synod Rule 7.6. After voting, synod decides to make an exception to the rule to allow foreign delegates and serving office bearers to be present.

**Article 17 - Acts of Closed Session (Refer Articles 16, 82, 109)**

Synod adjourned for lunch.

Continue in closed session.

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**AFTERNOON SESSION**  
**Tuesday 10 July 2012**

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**Article 18 - Book of Praise – Appeal FRC Kelmscott appeals Art 24 of Acts of Synod Legana 2009 (Refer Articles 19, 39, 78, 106)**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 8.a.iii – Appeal regarding Art 24 of the 2009 Acts of Synod in relation to the Book of Praise.

FRC Kelmscott overtures Art 24, sub XI 3b of Acts of Synod Legana 2009 (also sub-XII 7). This article formulates deputies' mandate as follows:

'Resume investigations regarding copyright, printing cost and feasibility of producing an Australian Book of Praise only if the Canadian Book of Praise is substantially altered such that it is no longer suitable for use by the Australian churches.'

FRCK presents the following draft to reword the mandate:

'Resume investigations regarding copyright, printing cost and feasibility of producing an Australian Book of Praise only if future FRCA synods express the desire to do so.'

**Grounds:**

1. Synod's mandate closed avenues to honour the clearly expressed desire of the churches to develop an Australian Book of Praise.
2. Deputies' reports were not produced on the basis of a necessity for an Australian Book of Praise but on the basis of a desirability to have an Australian Book of Praise.

**II. Admissibility:**

The item is declared admissible.

**III. Decision:**

Synod decides not to sustain the appeal by FRC Kelmscott re Art 24, sub XI 3b of Acts of Synod Legana 2009, because no new grounds were provided.

**Grounds:**

1. Observations such as ‘radical departure’ and ‘such a steep threshold’ are insufficient for an appeal.
2. They do not prove from Scripture or Confessions that the decision was unscriptural.

**ADOPTED**

**Article 19 - Deputies Report: Book of Praise (Refer Articles 18, 39, 78, 106)**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11.d – Deputies Report for Australian Book of Praise.

A round of discussion is held on the submissions from the churches.

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**EVENING SESSION**  
**Tuesday 10 July 2012**

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**Article 20 - Reopening**

The Chairman welcomes all present including a large number of visitors and requests all to sing Psalm 113:1 and 2, ably accompanied by Br G Spyker on the organ. A special welcome is extended to Rev P K Meijer from the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands. Rev Meijer is requested to rise to show his agreement to the Three Forms of Unity. He is accorded the privileges of Synod for delegates from sister churches as per Synod Rules 6.1.

The chairman gives an overview of the agenda items for the evening for the benefit of the audience.

## **Article 21 - Address of Delegates of Sister Churches (RCN, CanRC, GGRC)**

The Chairman invites Rev P K Meijer to present his address on behalf of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Refer Appendix 1c).

Rev W Wielenga is invited to bring greetings on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches (Refer Appendix 1d).

Evangelist R Y Rehyard addresses synod on behalf of the Calvinist Reformed Churches in NTT (GGRC), including a moving vocal rendition of Psalm 23 in his native language (Refer Appendix 1e). Rev W vanderJagt responds to this address (Refer Appendix 1f). He asks all to sing from Psalm 121:1 and 4.

## **Article 22 - First Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore (FERCS)**

### **I. Material:**

Agenda Item 10.b.ii – Submission from FRC Busselton re FERC Singapore in relation to Art 46 of the CO, in order to work toward sister church relations.

### **II. Recommendation:**

That Synod appoint deputies with a mandate to take up contact with the FERCS on behalf of the FRCA, and to make a careful investigation of this church according to BC Art 29, exploring the feasibility of a sister church relationship, and presenting a detailed report and accompanying recommendations to Synod 2015.

### **Grounds:**

1. The relationship with foreign churches is a matter that belongs to the churches in common, and is to be regulated by synod, rather than a local church or classis (Art 46 CO).

2. Busselton's submission gives sufficient reason to conclude that the FERCS wants to be a faithful reformed Church, that ecclesiastical ties between the FERCS and FRCA would be of mutual benefit, and that the FERCS is interested in developing such ties.
3. The Biblical mandate to maintain the unity of the church implies an obligation to take up such contacts when the opportunity arises, particularly given the geographical proximity of this church.

**II. Admissibility:**

The item is declared admissible.

**III. Amendment:**

If requested, deputies are authorized to organize extra pulpit supply and pastoral care.

**Grounds:**

Classis South has in the past given possibility of support.

***DEFEATED***

**IV. Decision:**

To accept the proposal from FRC Busselton as submitted.

***ADOPTED***

**Article 23 - Closing**

Br W Amoraal leads in closing. He requests all to sing Psalm 147:1 and then leads in prayer.

The Chairman adjourns synod.



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**MORNING SESSION**  
**Wednesday 11 July 2012**

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**Article 24 - Reopening**

The brothers arrive dressed in their best. Amazing what a camera commands!

Following the formal photo shoot, Br A Wagenaar requested all to sing Psalm 19:1 and 4 and then read Psalm 117. He then led in prayer. He notes that the brothers from GGRC will be leaving today and encouragement is expressed to the brothers and especially to Rev Y Dethan and his wife whose infant son recently passed away. This is further expressed by inviting all present to sing Psalm 23:1, 2 and 3.

**Article 25 - Reformed Churches of New Zealand (Refer Articles 26, 73, 89)**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11.f.i - Deputies Reports for Relations with Other Churches – Reformed Church of New Zealand.

A round of discussion is held on the report of the deputies. A clarification and response to various matters is provided by Rev P Archbald.

**Article 26 - Overtures regarding Reformed Churches of New Zealand (Refer Articles 25, 73, 89)**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 8.c.iii – Overture from FRC Mt Nasura re RCNZ.

Agenda Item 8.f.ii – Overture from FRC Byford re RCNZ.

Agenda Item 8.h.ii – Overture from FRC Darling Downs re RCNZ.

A round of discussion is held on the submissions from the churches.

## **Article 27 - Adjournment**

Rev M Biha adjourned synod for lunch with the singing of Hymn 40:1 and 4, followed by the reading of Ephesians 4:1-6. He had a short meditation on these verses, then opened the lunchtime by inviting all present to sing Hymn 47:1, 3, 5 and 10.

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### **AFTERNOON SESSION Wednesday 11 July 2012**

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## **Article 28 - Reopening**

The Chairman reopens the afternoon session of synod.

## **Article 29 - Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Refer Articles 30, 40, 43, 57, 76, 94, 114, 116)**

### **I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11.g.vi – Deputies Report for Sister Church Relations: Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (V).

Agenda Item 11.g.viii – Deputies Reports for Sister Church Relations: Supplementary Report 1 – RCN.

Agenda Item 11.g.ix – Deputies Reports for Sister Church Relations: Supplementary Report 2 – RCN.

Two delegates present from the Deputies for Sister Church Relations (Br W Pleiter and Br W Spyker) are invited to be seated at synod as advisors. They are asked to rise to show their agreement with the Three Forms of Unity.

A round of discussion is held on the report of deputies. The BBK delegates are invited to respond to some specific questions raised.

The deputies with Sister Church Relations provide a response to several items raised with respect to their report.

The delegates from our sister churches are invited to provide an update on their contacts with the RCN churches. Delegates from Indonesia, Canada and South Africa spoke.

**Article 30 - Overtures regarding Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Refer Articles 29, 40, 43, 57, 76, 94, 114, 116)**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 8.b.ii – Overture from FRC Armadale re RCN.

Agenda Item 8.c.ii – Overture from FRC Mt Nasura re RCN.

Agenda Item 8.g.ii – Overture from FRC West Albany re RCN.

Agenda Item 8.h.i – Overture from FRC Darling Downs re RCN.

Agenda Item 8.i.i – Responses to FRCA deputies report from RCN deputies.

A round of discussion is held on the submissions from the churches.

**Article 31 - Reformed Churches of Brazil (Refer Article 48)**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11.f.vi – Deputies Reports for Relations with other Churches – Reformed Churches of Brazil.

Synod Legana 2009, in its Article 91, appointed deputies to investigate whether meaningful church relations are possible with the Reformed Churches of Brazil. Deputies wrote a letter to the churches but reported that no response was received. Deputies report that they have no reason to believe that sister church relations would be meaningful and propose that the initiative is dropped.

Agenda Item 8.g.iv - Overture from FRC West Albany re Reformed Churches of Brazil.

## **II. Recommendation:**

Deputies propose that this initiative be dropped.

### **Grounds:**

1. No response was received to a letter sent to the churches.
2. At this point in time deputies have no reason to believe that sister church relations would be meaningful.

### ***DEFEATED***

## **II. Overture from FRC West Albany:**

FRC West Albany proposes that deputies have not completed their mandate and that new Deputies are appointed to as yet approach the Reformed Churches of Brazil in order to ascertain if a meaningful sister church relationship can be established.

### ***DEFERRED (see Article 48)***

Synod adjourned until the evening session.

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**EVENING SESSION**  
**Wednesday 11 July 2012**

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**Article 32 - Reopening**

The chairman re-opens synod by asking all to sing from Psalm 145:3 and 4.

**Article 33 - Address of Delegates of Sister Churches (GGRI, FRCSA)**

The Chairman invites Rev M Biha to deliver his address on behalf of the Reformed Churches in Indonesia (Refer Appendix 1g).

Rev H Breytenbach is invited to bring greetings on behalf of the Free Reformed Churches of South Africa (Refer Appendix 1h).

**Article 34 - Response to address of delegates of RCN and CanRC**

Rev PKA deBoer responds to the address given by Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (RCN) (Refer Appendix 1i).

Br W Pleiter is invited to respond to the address given by the Canadian Reformed Churches of Canada (CanRC) (Refer Appendix 1j).

**Article 35 - Canadian Reformed Churches – Overture FRC Mt Nasura (Refer Articles 36, 49)**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 8.c.iv – Overture from FRC Mt Nasura re CanRC.

**II. Admissibility:**

Declared admissible.

### **III. Overture:**

Agenda Item 8.c.iv – Proposal from FRC Mt Nasura:

“That Synod expresses to the Canadian Reformed Churches its concern that the differences between the Canadian Reformed Churches and other churches (OPC, URCNA, ERQ) were not resolved before entering a sister relationship with them.”

Proposal from FRC Mt Nasura is put to the vote.

***DEFEATED***

### **Article 36 - Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC) (Refer Articles 35, 49)**

#### **I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11.g.iii – Deputies Reports for Sister Church Relations – Canadian Reformed Churches.

#### **II. Motion:**

To add to deputies’ mandate Item 2.f:

“Deputies continue to monitor the outcome of the changed approach of the CanRC regarding resolving differences in their sister church relations” (as per deputies report, point 2).

A round of discussion is held on the amendment.

***DEFEATED***

### **Article 37 - Closing**

Rev PKA deBoer invites all present to sing Psalm 62:1 and 3 and closes the meeting with prayer.

The Chairman adjourns Synod.

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**MORNING SESSION**

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**Thursday 12 July 2012**

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**Article 38 - Reopening**

Rev C Vermeulen requests all to sing Psalm 119:39 and 40, reads from Colossians 3:1-17 and delivers a meditation on verse 12-14 highlighting the character and virtues of the new man in Christ. After leading in prayer he invites all to sing Psalm 86:4.

**Article 39 - Book of Praise (Refer Article 18, 19, 78, 106)**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 8.a.iv – Overture from FRC Kelmscott regarding the use of Hymns for the worship service.

Agenda Item 8.f.i – Overture from FRC Byford regarding the Psalm Book.

Agenda Item 8.g.iii – Overture from FRC West Albany regarding the Book of Praise.

Agenda Item 8.h.iii – Overture from FRC Darling Downs re the Book of Praise.

A round of discussion is held prior to this matter being put to the advisory committee.

**Article 40 - Reformed Churches of the Netherlands  
(Refer Article 29, 30, 43, 57, 76, 94, 114, 116)**

A round of discussion is held prior to this matter being put to the advisory committee.

Synod adjourns for Lunch.

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**AFTERNOON SESSION**  
**Thursday 12 July 2012**

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**Article 41 - Reopening**

The Chairman invites all present to sing Psalm 119:1 and 2.

**Article 42 - Acts of Synod**

The Acts of Synod Articles 1-31 are adopted and approved for publishing on the internet.

**Article 43 - Reformed Churches of the Netherlands**  
**(Refer Articles 29, 30, 40, 57, 76, 94, 14, 116)**

The round of discussion on the RCN is completed.

**Article 44 - Advisory Committee Sessions**

Synod adjourns in order for the three advisory committees to serve synod with proposals for the RCNZ, Book of Praise and the RCN.

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**EVENING SESSION**  
**Thursday 12 July 2012**

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**Article 45 - Reopening**

The Chairman reopens synod by inviting all present to sing Psalm 135:1 and 2.

The Chairman gives an overview of the agenda items of the evening for the benefit of the audience.



## **Article 46 - Address of Delegates of Sister Churches (RCNZ, RCN(r))**

The Chairman invites Rev P Archbald to present his address on behalf of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand (Refer Appendix 1k).

Br A van der Net is invited to bring greetings on behalf of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Restored) (Refer Appendix 1l).

## **Article 47 - Response to address of delegates of GGRI and FRCSA**

The Chairman gives Br B Bosveld the opportunity to respond to the address of Rev M Biha of the GGRI.

Br B Veenendaal responds to the address of Rev H Breytenbach of the FRCSA.

## **Article 48 - Proposal re contact with Reformed Churches of Brazil (Refer Article 31)**

### **I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11.f.vi – Deputies Reports for Relations with other Churches – Reformed Churches of Brazil.

### **II. Decision:**

Synod decides to re-appoint as part of the Deputies for Relations with Churches Abroad, deputies specifically for the Reformed Churches in Brazil with the mandate to approach the Reformed Churches of Brazil again in order to ascertain if a meaningful sister church relationship can be established.

### **Grounds:**

1. Synod Legana 2009 appointed deputies specifically for the Reformed Churches in Brazil with the mandate to investigate whether

meaningful sister church relations are possible (Acts Synod 2009 Legana Article 91).

2. Deputies reported to Synod Armadale 2012 that they wrote a short letter to introduce the Free Reformed Churches of Australia to the *Comissao de Contato com Igrejas no Exterior* (the Committee for Contact with Churches Abroad of the Reformed Churches in Brazil) but that deputies never received a response back.
3. The FRC West-Albany in their submission to synod explained that the conclusion of the deputies in their report was premature with the sending of only one letter and that deputies have not completed their mandate.

### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 49 - Canadian Reformed Churches (Refer Articles 35, 36)**

Discussion continues regarding the sister-church relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches.

##### **I. Decision:**

1. To continue sister church relations with the CanRC according to the established rules.
2. To discharge deputies, thank them for their work and to appoint new deputies with the mandate to:
  - a. monitor developments within the CanRC for mutual benefit according to the established rules and keep the churches informed;
  - b. stay informed on the developments concerning the potential merger between the CanRC and the URCNA, including changes to the Church Order, Creeds, Confessions, Forms and Prayers Forms;

- c. encourage the CanRC to support the FRCA as much as possible in our discussions with the RCNZ;
- d. stay informed of the sister-church developments in North America (URCNA, OPC, RCUS and ERQ); and
- e. send two delegates to the next CanRC General Synod scheduled in Carman West during 2013, pending finances.

**Grounds:**

1. The Canadian Reformed Churches give evidence of continuing faithfulness to the Word of God, maintaining the Reformed Confessions and Church Order.
2. We need to foster mutual understanding and support regarding matters that our respective federations face, including their sister church relations in North America.
3. Rules for sister relations state that “in cases of substantial changes or additions to the confessions, Church Order, or liturgical forms” our preference is that “as much consultation as possible can take place before a final decision is reached.”
4. We value the continuing support of the CanRC in regards to our discussions with the RCNZ.
5. We value our bond with the Canadian Reformed Churches and personal contact at the synodical level reinforces our contact with them.

**ADOPTED**

**Article 50 - FRC Busselton - Proposal to appoint deputies to investigate a name change of the federation (Refer Article 60)**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 8j – Proposal from FRC Busselton that Synod 2012 appoints deputies to provide a future synod with advice concerning the possibility of a name change for our federation of churches.

**II. Admissibility:**

Proposal: to declare the submission of FRC Busselton inadmissible.

Following a round of discussion, this matter is deferred.

**Article 51 - Closing**

Br E Heerema closes by asking all present to sing Psalm 25:2, 4 and 6. After leading in prayer, synod is adjourned.

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**MORNING SESSION**  
**Friday 13 July 2012**

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**Article 52 - Reopening**

Rev S 't Hart invites all present to sing Psalm 80:1, 6 and 8. He then reads from 1 Corinthians 4:6-13 and reads a meditation on these verses. He asks all to sing Psalm 86:4 and the Chairman opens synod.

**Article 53 - Seating of advisors**

According to the Rules of Synod 3.4, officers of synod can submit written proposals on attendance/participation of any advisor, subject to provision of rule 5, which is: "Synod may resolve to admit for the purpose of giving advice, to a full session or advisory committee, any minister from the bond of churches who has not been delegated to synod, as well as any

communicant member from the bond of churches with particular skills or expertise required by synod.”

Upon such a proposal from the officers of synod, synod admits as advisors to the advisory committee and to synod Br W Pleiter, Br B Veenendaal and Br W Spyker as deputies for relations with sister churches in connection with the agenda item dealing with RCN.

Br B Veenendaal is requested to rise to express his agreement with the Three Forms of Unity.

### **Article 54 - Adjournment**

Synod adjourns to allow the Advisory Committees to continue their discussions and prepare proposals for synod.

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## **AFTERNOON SESSION**

### **Friday 13 July 2012**

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### **Article 55 - Reopening**

The Chairman invites all present to sing Psalm 86:2.

### **Article 56 - Acts of Synod**

The Acts of Synod Articles 32-44 are adopted and approved for publishing on the internet.

### **Article 57 - Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Refer Articles 29, 30, 40, 43, 76, 94, 114, 116)**

The draft proposal from the Advisory Committee on the RCN is tabled.

**Article 58 - Letter from Liberated Reformed Church  
Abbotsford (LRCA) (Refer Article 59)**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 8.e.i – Letter from Liberated Reformed Church Abbotsford.

**II. Admissibility:**

Following some discussion, the matter is declared inadmissible.

**Ground:**

Rule 7.3 – “The admissibility of an agenda item shall be decided at the time when the item is scheduled for consideration. Submissions not from the churches, except those allowed by the Church Order, shall be received for information only and require no acknowledgement.”

**ADOPTED**

**Article 59 - Liberated Reformed Church Abbotsford  
(LRCA) (Refer Article 58)**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 8.a.i – Letter from FRC Kelmscott re request regarding material received from the Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford.

Agenda Item 8.b.i – Letter from FRC Armadale re request regarding Abbotsford.

Agenda Item 8.c.i – Overture from FRC Mt Nasura re Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford.

Agenda Item 11.g.iv – Deputies Report for Sister Church Relations: Supplementary Report for Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford.

## **II. Decision:**

Not to agree to the request of the FRC Armadale, FRC Kelmscott or FRC Mt Nasura to investigate the Liberated Reformed Church of Abbotsford and to accept the deputies grounds.

### **Grounds:**

1. The LRCA have requested deputies to make a judgment as to whether the CanRC are faithful or not. However, the FRCA continues to recognize the CanRC as true and faithful churches.
2. The points of contention raised by the LRCA regarding the CanRC entering sister-church relations with the OPC (and other churches) are appeals against decisions of various General Synods of the CanRC (2001, 2004, 2007 and 2010). The FRCA has not objected to these sister-church relationships.
3. It is not appropriate to delve into a local church matter which belongs within the jurisdiction of the CanRC federation of churches.

### ***ADOPTED***

## **Article 60 - Proposal by FRC Busselton regarding federation name change (Refer Article 50)**

### **I. Material:**

Agenda Item 8j – Proposal from FRC Busselton re Federation Name Change.

The FRC Busselton requests that Synod 2012 appoint deputies to provide a future synod with advice concerning the possibility of a name change for our federation of churches.

## **II. Admissibility:**

Not to deal with the submission from the FRC Busselton which requests that synod appoint deputies to study the possible name change of our bond of churches.

### **Grounds:**

1. Synod 1985 which dealt with the same kind of request from one of the churches, decided to reject that submission on the basis that:
  - a. the task to conduct a study of this nature which does not contain clearly formulated proposals does not belong to the synod;
  - b. a study of this nature can be undertaken by the Church at any time, which can then submit its report containing specific proposals to a synod.

### **ADOPTED**

2. The matter proposed by FRC Busselton is a new matter which requires to have been received by the churches 4 months prior to the start of synod (Rules for Synod 1.1, page 13). The proposed material was dated 30 May 2012.

### **ADOPTED**

3. Synod 2006 dealt with a request from Classis South which requested a name change for the bond of churches from FRCA to ARC. This 2006 request differs from the current request in that it came through the Classis and was thus first considered by the churches and deemed to be a matter for the churches in common (Art 30). Furthermore, the 2006 request was for a specific name and not for a 'study by deputies'.

### **DEFEATED**



4. New matters such as proposed by FRC Busselton should come to the synod via the Classical assembly. There it can be determined if the proposal has general support and is properly formulated and substantiated. This avoids synod dealing with immature proposals and subsequently disappointed proposers.

### ***DEFEATED***

#### **Article 61 - Press Release**

The press release for week 1 is read and adopted.

#### **Article 62 - Adjournment**

Synod is adjourned until the evening session.

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### **EVENING SESSION Friday 13 July 2012**

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#### **Article 63 - Reopening**

The Chairman reopens synod by inviting all present to sing Psalm 138:1 and 2.

The Chairman gives an overview of the agenda items for the evening for the benefit of the audience.

#### **Article 64 - Response to address of Delegates of RCN(r) and RCNZ**

The Chairman gives Br W VanderVen the opportunity to respond to the address of Br A van der Net of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Restored) (RCNr) (Refer Appendix 1o).

Rev J Kroeze then responds to the address of Rev P Archbald of the Reformed Churches in New Zealand (RCNZ) (Refer Appendix 1p).

**Article 65 - Letter from Delegates of Sister Churches (Korea)**

Rev PKA deBoer reads the greetings and address of Prof HM Yoo of the Kosin Presbyterian Churches of Korea (PCK) (Refer Appendix 1q).

**Article 66 - Presbyterian Churches in Korea (Kosin) (PCK)**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11.g.v – Deputies Report for Sister Church Relations – Presbyterian Churches in Korea (Kosin).

**II. Decision:**

1. To continue sister-church relations with the Presbyterian Church of Korea (Kosin).
2. To encourage the PCK (Kosin) in their resolve to maintain the unity of the Church.
3. To make the Churches within our bond aware of the Presbyterian Church (Kosin) Australia.
4. To honour the agreement with the RCN and CanRC by sending them a copy of this report as well as our decision regarding the Korean Presbyterian Church.
5. To discharge deputies, thank them for their work and to appoint new deputies with the mandate to:
  - a. to maintain the sister church relations according to the adopted rules;
  - b. to keep contact with Presbyterian Church of Korea (Kosin) along with the RCN and the CanRC in the context of taking turns (once every three years) to send, upon available funds, one delegate to a General Assembly in 2013.

**Grounds:**

1. The Presbyterian Church of Korea (Kosin), as far as can be known continues to show faithfulness to the Lord and upholds its confessions.
2. The Lord clearly teaches in His Word that the Church should be one and churches should be united. While the PCK speaks about various *branches* of the true church, unscriptural schism should not be considered acceptable.
3. There is an agreement among the Australian Churches that any possible contact with other Churches should be initiated by the Churches (not deputies).
4. There is a standing agreement together with the RCN and the CanRC that we take turns visiting the PCK General Assembly on an annual basis and exchange reports.

**ADOPTED**

**Article 67 - Free Reformed Churches of South Africa (FRCSA)**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11.g.vii – Deputies Report for Sister Church Relations – Free Reformed Churches of South Africa.

**II. Decision:**

1. To continue sister relations with the Free Reformed Churches of South Africa according to the established rules.
2. To appoint an auditor for the financial records of the support provided.
3. To discharge deputies, thank them for their work and to appoint new deputies with the mandate to:

- a. coordinate responses to any requests for support received from the Deputies for Needy Churches in South Africa, and to involve the Australian churches as appropriate;
- b. keep the Australian churches informed regarding the support provided, both directly to consistories as well as to the broader membership via *Una Sancta*;
- c. send two delegates to their next synod and, if possible, to visit the church(es) where support is provided.

**Grounds:**

1. The Free Reformed Churches of South Africa give evidence of continuing faithfulness to the Word of God, maintaining the Reformed Confessions and Church Order.
2. Our visits to South Africa and their visits to us have proven to be very beneficial in terms of mutual support and encouragement.
3. Our South African sister churches are receiving our support and will continue to do so in the future. Request for support need to be responded to and coordinated in a timely manner.
4. It is appropriate to ensure that our churches are well informed regarding the support provided to South Africa. Financial accountability of the support provided is important.

**ADOPTED**

## **Article 68 - Training for the Ministry (Refer Article 69)**

### **I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11.e – Deputies Report for Training for the Ministry.

### **II. Amendment:**

Delete recommendation 4k “continue to investigate the feasibility of offering the Freshman (i.e. First) Year of theological study to the churches in Australia”.

#### **Grounds:**

1. Deputies have reported the results of their discussion with Dr C VanDam that these are “significant challenges in moving in this direction” (Report 6.4).
2. Involving ministers of the FRCA in teaching the subjects of the Freshman Year would come at the cost of their work to which they have been called in their local congregation, and which is their primary task.
3. Theological students will be best served by receiving sound theological training from professors at the Canadian Reformed Seminary who have been specifically trained and called for this task. This theological training has served us well, and receives our ongoing and significant financial support, and continues to be available.

#### ***DEFEATED***

### **III. Decision:**

Synod decides to accept the deputies' recommendations:

1. Request the churches to contribute A\$65 per communicant member per annum for the maintenance of Hamilton as from 1 January 2013.

2. Set aside \$7,000 per trip (currently \$6,000) from General Synod funds for the costs of a visit to Australia by a guest lecturer from Hamilton or Kampen, together with his wife. Also, it is recommended to invite a guest lecturer once every two years, rather than every three years. This would mean two visits between this Synod 2012 and Synod 2015, but then only one visit between Synod 2015 and Synod 2018.
3. Set aside \$4,000 (currently \$3,000) from General Synod funds for travelling and accommodation costs of a delegate of Deputies to attend a meeting of Hamilton's Board of Governors and the Convocation between Synod 2012 and Synod 2015.
4. Discharge Deputies and to appoint new deputies with the mandate to:
  - a. continue to collect funds for "Hamilton" and forward them to the College;
  - b. continue to correspond with "Hamilton" in order to maintain contact and obtain information, and to send notification of new deputies for the purpose of communication with "South Africa", "Kampen" and "Korea";
  - c. continue to collect funds for theological training;
  - d. continue to oversee the Library Fund;
  - e. continue to 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;
  - f. 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 as amended by Art 56 of Acts of Synod 1994;

- g. continue to make arrangements for a guest lecturer from one of the theological seminaries of our sister churches once every two years;
- h. continue to be as closely involved in the work of the Board of Governors of Hamilton as practically possible;
- i. monitor the effectiveness of the Pastoral Training Program of the Hamilton College within the Australian Churches by seeking feedback from the ministers and students participating in this program;
- j. collect and disburse funds for the Pastoral Training Program in accordance with the Australian adaptation of the Guidelines for the Pastoral Training Program; and
- k. continue to investigate the feasibility of offering the Freshman (ie First) Year of theological study to the churches in Australia.

***ADOPTED***

**Article 69 - Overture re Training for the Ministry (Refer Article 68)**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 8.h.iv – Overture from FRC Darling Downs re Training for the Ministry.

**II. Admissible:**

Item is declared admissible.

### **III. Overture:**

Having perused the Report of the Deputies for the Training for the Ministry, the Church at Darling Downs overtures synod to mandate the deputies to:

1. Sort out and catalogue the materials that have already been donated to the theological library.
2. Look into using some of the money collected so far to purchase dissertations and other important materials published by professors and ministers in our sister Churches.
3. Look into using some of the money collected so far for subscriptions to important theological journals.
4. Give the present material more publicity.

### **Grounds:**

1. We have material already donated. It would be good to make this more accessible to the broader church community.
2. We already have some money set aside for a theological library.
3. It is important to stay informed with theological developments in our sister churches. One way of doing that is by reading what their leaders are publishing. Sometimes it is hard to track these things down and the books can be expensive. A central library can be of great benefit here.
4. There are many good journals which it would be helpful to subscribe to.

### ***DEFEATED***

### **Article 70 - Closing**

The Chairman speaks words of appreciation for the presence of the delegates of the RCN churches as they leave our synod.



Br J de Jong, delegate of the RCN, expresses appreciation for the time they could spend among the brothers of synod.

The Chairman also expresses appreciation for the presence of the delegates from the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Rev A Souman speaks words of appreciation for the hospitality and the warmth of the bond. He comments that the Canadian Reformed Churches treasure the relationship with the FRCA and hope to continue to make visits to the Australian assemblies.

The Chairman also expresses appreciation for the attendance of Rev M Biha and gives him the opportunity to respond. In the Indonesian vocal style Rev M Biha said farewell by singing Psalm 134.

Br M Hoogerdijk requests the assembly to sing Hymn 41:1-4 and closes in prayer.

And so the first week of synod draws to an end. And while the brothers are pleased to head home at the end of a tiring week, there is appreciation that all could work in good harmony.

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## **MORNING SESSION**

### **Monday 16 July 2012**

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#### **Article 71 - Reopening**

Synod begins the new week by continuing its work in the three advisory committees for the duration of the morning session.

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## **AFTERNOON SESSION**

### **Monday 16 July 2012**

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#### **Article 72 - Reopening**

After lunch Rev W vanderJagt opens synod by asking all present to sing from Psalm 5:1, 2 and 4. Following the reading

of Psalm 5, he gives a short meditation, led in prayer and then asks all to sing Ps 5:5 and 8.

### **Article 73 – Reformed Churches of New Zealand (Refer Articles 25, 26, 89)**

The draft proposal of the advisory committee for the RCNZ is tabled and a round of discussion is held.

### **Article 74 - Marriage Act**

#### **I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11b – Marriage Act Nominating Authority.

#### **II. Recommendation:**

To appoint new deputies officially designated as the Nominating Authorities to discharge duties under the Marriage Act 1961.

***ADOPTED***

### **Article 75 - Proposal to amend Synod Rules**

#### **I. Material:**

Agenda Item 8.b.iii – FRC Armadale Proposal to amend Synod Rules 1.3 to 1.5.

#### **II. Amendment:**

To add to Rule 1.4 and 1.5: “To provide one unbound and unfolded printed copy to each of the delegates and alternates who desire one.”

***ADOPTED***

#### **III. Decision:**

To alter Synod Rules 1.3 to 1.5 to read as follows:

1.3 After the closing date for the Provisional Draft Agenda, provide each of the churches access to

an electronic copy of the document, at least three months prior to synod commences.

1.4 As soon as classes have appointed delegates to Synod:

- provide each of the delegates and each of the alternates access to an electronic copy of the Provisional Draft Agenda;
- provide one unbound and unfolded printed copy to each of the delegates and alternates who desire one; and
- as further material becomes available, provide access to an electronic copy to each of the delegates and alternates.

1.5 After the closing date for the Final Draft Agenda:

- provide access, with minimum delay, to each of the churches electronic copies of the Final Draft Agenda, together with access to electronic copy of all material received after the closing date for the Provisional Draft Agenda; and
- provide one unbound and unfolded printed copy to each of the delegates and alternates who desire one.

Confidential matters must be provided to delegates and alternates only.

**Grounds:**

1. As Synod we can be more efficient in our costs and time by use of electronic means and thus reduce the use of paper and the need to print and mail out multiple copies.
2. Churches are moving to the use of “dropbox” or other electronic means of issuing materials for

meetings. Therefore delegates do not have to wait for the paper copies to arrive before starting to prepare for synod. Having access to electronic copies allows them to work with the submissions in the best way possible.

3. By using the open term “electronic copies” we can leave it with the convening church to use the most efficient and up to date means of distributing the materials for synod at that time.

### **ADOPTED**

#### **Article 76 - Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (Refer Articles 29, 30, 40, 43, 57, 94, 114, 116)**

The draft proposal of the advisory committee for the RCN is tabled and a round of discussion is held.

Synod is adjourned until the evening session.

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### **EVENING SESSION Monday 16 July 2012**

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#### **Article 77 - Reopening**

The Chairman invited all present to sing Psalm 16:1 and 3.

#### **Article 78 - Book of Praise (Refer Articles 18, 19, 39, 106)**

The draft proposal of the advisory committee for the Book of Praise is tabled and several rounds of discussion are held.

#### **Article 79 - Closing**

Rev J Kroeze asks the assembly to sing from Psalm 87:1 and 2. He then reads from Acts 21:1-33. After a meditation on these verses, he asks all present to sing Psalm 87:4 and 5 and then leads in prayer.

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**MORNING SESSION**  
**Tuesday 17 July 2012**

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**Article 80 - Reopening**

In opening Rev T van Spronsen requests the delegates to sing from Hymn 35:1, 2 and 3. He then reads from Matthew 26:57-68 and Revelation 19:11-16 and leads a meditation. After prayer we sing Hymn 35:5.

**Article 81 - Advisory Committee meetings**

Synod adjourns to continue committee work.

**Article 82 - Acts of Closed Session**

Synod adopts Article 17.

Discussion continues in closed session until lunch.

Synod is adjourned for lunch recess.

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**AFTERNOON SESSION**  
**Tuesday 17 July 2012**

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**Article 83 - Reopening**

The Chairman requests all present to sing Psalm 140:5, 9 and 10.

**Article 84 - Adoption of Acts**

Articles 45-62 are adopted.

**Article 85 - Reformed Churches of the Netherlands  
(Restored) (Refer Articles 98, 99)**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11.f.ii – Deputies Reports for Relations with other Churches – Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (Restored) (RCNr).

Agenda Item 8.c.vi – Overture from FRC Mt Nasura.

**II. Admissibility:**

The items are declared admissible.

After several rounds of discussion this matter is deferred.

**Article 86 - Reformed Churches of Indonesia (GGRI)**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11.g.ii – Deputies Report for Sister Churches – Reformed Churches of Indonesia – GGRI.

**II. Amendment 1:**

Add to deputies mandate point 11:

Deputies to encourage the churches to assist the FRC Mundijong with pulpit supply when their minister lectures at the college in Sumba.

**Grounds:**

The visits and assistance given by Rev A vanDelden has proven to be valuable for the College in Sumba. The FRC Mundijong should be supported so that these visits are possible.

***DEFEATED***

**III. Amendment 2:**

To replace Mandate 1 with:

1. To thankfully acknowledge the developments in the GGRI with respect to the establishment of a larger federation consisting of the three regional synods, (to acknowledge the new federation as our sister in Christ) and to carry out that relationship in accord with the established rules; to report to the churches

with a clearer picture of the federation of churches in Papua and the federation of churches in Kalimantan Barat that have united and formed one federation with the GGRI-NTT in February 2012, confirming their Reformed character, and the implications of this union.

**Ground:**

The change within the GGRI with respect to their federation needs to be acknowledged.

***ADOPTED***

**IV. Amendment 3:**

To replace Mandate 2 with:

2. To visit the regional synods and conferences of the GGRI subject to available finance when invited.

**Ground:**

We have never before visited all the regional synods of the expanded GGRI.

***ADOPTED***

**V. Amendment 4:**

To replace Mandate 3 with:

3. To investigate ways of interacting with the other two church provinces of the expanded GGRI and serve the churches with recommendations as to how the FRCA can give expression to this expanded sister relationship.

**Ground:**

1. The expanded GGRI deserves our full attention, not just the NTT province with which we have interacted in the past.

***DEFEATED***

## **VI. Decision:**

1. To thankfully acknowledge the developments in the GGRI with respect to the establishment of a larger federation consisting of the three regional synods and to acknowledge the new federation as our sister in Christ and to carry out that relationship in accord with the established rules; to report to the churches with a clearer picture of the federation of churches in Papua and the federation of churches in Kalimantan Barat that have united and formed one federation with the GGRI-NTT in February 2012, confirming their Reformed character, and the implications of this union.
2. To visit the regional synods and conferences of the GGRI subject to available finance when invited.
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 continue to support the plans to establish a Theological Seminary in Sumba and make funds available for this cause. In light of the importance for the GGRI to maintain their own college to thoroughly train their ministers, deputies should encourage and work with the Dutch and Canadian sister churches in this matter as much as possible. The deputies shall see to it that there are no conflicts of interests among those involved. The deputies should offer additional support of the FRCA deputies in the monumental task of upgrading both the educational level and the buildings of the theological college.
5. To encourage the GGRI (via their deputies and the Board of the Theological College) to seek the help of those involved in the establishment of the Indonesian Reformed Theological Seminary in



Kupang (which is supported by the CanRC in Smithville).

6. To financially support two students/ministers to come to Australia during the inter-synodical period to study English and to familiarize themselves with the Australian churches for three months subject to a financial arrangement with the Dutch deputies and subject to available funding from the churches.
7. To see to it that effective communication with the people involved is possible and if necessary also to make limited financial support available.
8. To monitor and report developments on the unity of GGRI with the GGRC. Where possible, to bring this to the attention of the regional and general synods of the GGRI so that they are willing to actively seek this federal unity with the GGRC.
9. To keep in contact and share information with deputies of our Dutch and Canadian sister churches regarding the GGRI churches.
10. To encourage the churches and their members to provide the means of support for the mandate of deputies detailed in points 2-8.

### ***ADOPTED***

## **Article 87 - Reformed Churches of Indonesia (GGRC)**

### **I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11.g.ii – Deputies Report for Sister Church Relations – Indonesian Churches – GGRC.

### **II. Decision:**

Synod decides:

1. To continue contact with the GGRC, and to help them wherever possible to strengthen the reformed

character of these churches by advice or other means such as seminars.

2. To continue to visit the synods of the GGRC subject to available finance.
3. To encourage the GGRC to strongly work towards federal unity with the GGRI and thus a sister-church relationship with the FRC Australia.
4. To encourage the churches and their members to provide the means of support for the mandate of deputies detailed in point 2.

**ADOPTED**

Synod is adjourned for dinner.

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**EVENING SESSION**  
**Tuesday 17 July 2012**

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**Article 88 - Reopening**

The Chairman requests all present to sing Psalm 108:1 and 2.

**Article 89 - Reformed Churches of New Zealand (RCNZ)**  
**(Refer Articles 25, 26, 73)**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11.f.i – Deputies Report for Relations with other Churches – Reformed Churches of New Zealand.

Agenda Item 8.f.ii – Overture from FRC Byford regarding RCNZ.

Agenda Item 8.h.ii – Overture from FRC Darling Downs re RCNZ.

Agenda Item 8.c.iii – Overture from FRC Mt Nasura regarding RCNZ.

**II. Recommendation:**

The recommendation of the advisory committee is tabled.

### **III. Decision:**

Synod decides:

1. To confirm what was said by Synod 2000 (Acts Article 93), namely, to recognize that the RCNZ are true churches of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to express our continued resolve to work towards the goal of a sister church relationship, and thereby bring our unity in faith to practical and visible expression.
2. To continue to encourage our local churches to exercise practical support and interaction wherever possible in areas that are not reserved for relationships between sister churches.
3. To acknowledge that the RCNZ decided to change its relationship with the CRCA (Minutes of the Acts RCNZ Synod 2011, Art. 93 pp1-24) “... 3. *To discontinue the sister church relationship with the CRCA and establish instead a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship.*”
4. Not to accept the deputies proposal to enter into fraternal relations with the RCNZ.
5. To discharge deputies, thank them for their work and to appoint new deputies with the mandate to:
  - a. convey Synod’s decisions to the RCNZ and provide to the RCNZ a copy of the Acts of Synod Armadale 2012;
  - b. observe and report on the continuing faithfulness of the RCNZ in doctrine, church polity, discipline and liturgy;
  - c. determine how the nature and practical implications of the RCNZ’s new relationship

of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the CRCA differs from their previous sister church relationship and evaluate how this impacts on the impediment identified by previous Synods;

- d. encourage the RCNZ to continue to be consequential in their relationship with the CRCA;
  - e. invite delegates of the RCNZ to our next Synod;
  - f. upon invitation attend the next Synod of the RCNZ with two deputies and endeavour to meet with the inter-church relations committee of the RCNZ at least twice within the inter-synodical period, in order to stay well-informed about the RCNZ (pending budget constraints);
  - g. provide information about the RCNZ to the membership of our churches and keep the churches informed about the decisions of the RCNZ and the work of the deputies.
6. That these decisions adequately address submissions from FRC Byford, FRC Darling Downs and FRC Mt Nasura.

**Grounds:**

- 1. There is no reason to question the continuing faithfulness of RCNZ.
- 2. In our continuing recognition of the RCNZ as a true church it is important for deputies to provide details of ongoing faithfulness as would normally be done in a sister church relationship.
- 3. Synod West Kelmscott 2006 (Art 102) decided:  
*"To encourage consistories to take note, and act*

*on, Synod's positive view towards the RCNZ in regard to practical support and interaction where these are not restricted to those between sister churches only, eg application of membership from former members of the RCNZ, matters pertaining to the mission field and theological and Christian education" and this is being implemented.*

4. Synod Rockingham 2003 (Art 72) decided "*not to proceed with the decision in principle to offer fraternal relations*" on the grounds that "*From the responses of the churches to the decision of the 2000 Synod and from the appeals of the churches it becomes clear that the offer of fraternal relations does not find general acceptance. The RCNZ have rejected this offer as well.*" The recommendation of deputies to offer fraternal relations has not sufficiently demonstrated that these grounds are no longer valid.
5. Synod cannot determine at this time whether the RCNZ's new relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRCA remains an impediment to enter into a sister church relation since the RCNZ rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship have not yet been finalised. Synod RCNZ 2011 (Art 93.2) "*decided to adopt provisionally the proposed Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship as the rules for this new relationship*".
6. It is beneficial to meet together to convey greetings, discuss matters and come to understand each other and to develop regular contacts.
7. Synod 1990 decided to concentrate on relations and contacts with churches which are geographically closer to us (Art 58), which requires allocating a certain measure of priority and resources to our growing relationship with the RCNZ.

8. Synod 1996 (Acts, Art 53.4) observed that *“Synod 1985 decided that our declaration of another church as being “true and faithful church of the Lord Jesus Christ ... has as direct consequence that a sister-church relationship can be established without disregarding the fact that historical developments may well give cause to several stumbling blocks still lying on the road to a practical realisation of unity” (Article 67, Acts Synod 1985).* Therefore there is urgency to remedy the present anomaly of recognising a church to be true and faithful without a sister church relationship.

### **ADOPTED**

## **Article 90 - Amendment of Synod Rules re Visiting Delegates**

### **I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11.g.i – Deputies Report for Sister Church Relations – proposal to amend synod rules.

Agenda Item 8.c.v – Overture from FRC Mt Nasura regarding amending synod rules.

Agenda Item 8.g.i – Overture from FRC West Albany regarding Rules of Synod – Visiting Delegates.

Agenda Item 8.i – Supplementary report from deputies with letter from BBK deputies.

### **II. Admissibility:**

Agenda Item 11.g.i is declared inadmissible.

Agenda Items 8.c.v (FRC Mt Nasura), 8.g.i (FRC West Albany) and 8.i (Supplementary report from deputies with letter from BBK deputies) are declared admissible.

**Grounds:**

Changes to synod rules must come from the churches (synod rule 12).

**III. Overtures:**

- FRC Mt Nasura proposes to add a new Synod Rule 6.5 to read as follows: Visitors delegated by other churches must be male in order to be accorded the privileges outlined in Rules 6.1 and 6.2.
- FRC West Albany proposes to add to article 6 of the Rules of Synod: as synods are ecclesiastical assemblies of male ordained office bearers, female delegates and visitors from other churches will not be granted synod privileges.
- Supplementary report from deputies sister church relations with letter from BBK deputies requesting synod to amend the policy concerning foreign deputies and award them an advisory role, a role that in principle can be fulfilled by all deputies from sister churches in the same manner.

**IV. Amendment:**

To include Rule 6.3 and 6.4 to the proposal of FRC Mt Nasura.

***ADOPTED***

**V. Decision:**

Synod decides:

To add a new Rule 6.5 to the Rules of Synod as follows:

Visitors delegated by other churches must be male in order to be accorded the privileges outlined in Rules 6.1 through 6.4.

***ADOPTED***

## **Article 91 - Bible Translations**

### **I. Material:**

Agenda Item 8.d – Letter from FRC Legana re developments in NIV Bible translations and use of ESV.

### **II. Admissibility:**

The Agenda Item is declared admissible.

### **III. Overture:**

1. Synod appoint deputies to monitor developments with respect to the NKJV and the NIV.
2.
  - a. Synod decide, in the interim, that specifically the NIV 2011 edition be disallowed for use in the church services.
  - b. Synod charge their deputies with an evaluation of the NIV 2011 edition, with particular focus on its feminist leanings so that synod 2015 can come with a definitive decision.
3. Synod charge deputies to evaluate the ESV with a view to allowing the ESV to be used in the church service, and for study, instruction and family purposes.

### **Grounds:**

1. The NIV has changed dangerously and the danger is always there also for the NKJV.

### **IV. Amendment 1:**

Change item 3 to read: “3. Synod charge deputies to evaluate the ESV with a view to allowing the ESV to be used in the church services.”

### **ADOPTED**

### **V. Amendment 2:**



Change item 1 to read “Synod appoint deputies to monitor developments with respect to the NKJV” and also to amend Ground 1 to remove reference to the NIV.

***DEFEATED***

**VI. Amendment 3:**

Delete words “in the interim” in point 2a.

***DEFEATED***

**VII. Decision:**

1. Synod appoint deputies to monitor developments with respect to the NKJV and the NIV.
2.
  - a. Synod decide, in the interim, that specifically the NIV 2011 edition be disallowed for use in the church services.
  - b. Synod charge the deputies with an evaluation of the NIV 2011 edition, with particular focus on its feminist leanings so that synod 2015 can come with a definitive decision.
3. Synod charge deputies to evaluate the ESV with a view to allowing the ESV to be used in the church services.

**Grounds:**

1. The NIV has changed dangerously and the danger is always there also for the NKJV.
2. The ESV has received a positive evaluation from many in reformed churches and it would be worthwhile to properly evaluate its strengths and weaknesses.

***ADOPTED***

## **Article 92 - Closing**

The Chairman advises the agenda for Wednesday.

Br J Plug leads the closing devotions and invites all to sing from Ps 19:1 and 2 and then leads in prayer.

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**MORNING SESSION**  
**Wednesday 18 July 2012**

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**Article 93 - Reopening**

Br W VanderVen leads in morning devotions asking all to sing Psalm 57:1 and 4. He then reads Philippians 1:12-19 and Mark 9:38-41 and reads a devotion on this passage. After leading in prayer all sing Psalm 57:5.

**Article 94 - Reformed Churches in the Netherlands  
(Refer Articles 29, 30, 40, 43, 57, 76, 114, 116)**

The draft proposal from the advisory committee on RCN is tabled for a further round of discussion. The matter is referred back to the committee.

**Article 95 - Indexing Synod Decisions (Refer Article 121)**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11.c – Deputies Report for Indexing Synod Decisions as they relate to the Church Order.

**II. Deputies' Proposal:**

Deputies propose to terminate this project

**III. Decision:**

Synod decides to mandate deputies:

1. continue the work of the late Rev G Van Rongen in collating the decisions of Synod as they relate to articles of the Church Order;
2. publish these decisions on the official web page of the FRCA;
3. notify the churches of any changes when these decisions are updated;

4. make all the published acts of the general synods since the start of the FRCA available in electronic form.

**Grounds:**

1. Despite the fact that Acts of more recent synods are readily available electronically, the churches are well served by having a single document which indexes all synod decisions relating to specific matters, and compile them together in one place together with the text of these decisions.
2. It is important for the churches to continue to maintain previous synod decisions, and to have ready access to them.
3. The deputies have done good work in continuing the work of the late Rev G VanRongen in this regard.

**ADOPTED**

**Article 96 - Adjournment**

Synod adjourns to continue its work in the advisory committees.

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**AFTERNOON SESSION**  
**Wednesday 18 July 2012**

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**Article 97 - Opening**

The Chairman invites all to sing Ps 103:1 and 8.

**Article 98 - Overture from FRC Mt Nasura regarding RCN(r) (Refer Articles 85, 99)**

The chairman gives opportunity for the delegates from the RCN restored to respond in more detail to several questions that were asked of them in a previous round.

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 8c.vi – Overture from FRC Mt Nasura regarding RCN Restored.

**II. Admissibility:**

The Agenda Item is declared admissible.

**III. Overture:**

1. Synod appoints delegates to attend the synod of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (restored).
2. Recommendation 2 of the deputies report be deleted.

**IV. Decision:**

Both items are ***DEFEATED***.

**Article 99 - Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Restored) (RCNr) (Refer Articles 85, 98)**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11f.ii – Deputies Report for Relations with Other Churches – RCN(r).

**II. Amendment 1:**

To make the following changes to the deputies recommendations:

Delete the word ‘groups’ and the word ‘various’ in recommendation 1.

***DEFEATED***

**III. Amendment 2:**

Amend 3a to read: “to keep contact with the RCNr and to visit their synods subject to available finances.”

***DEFEATED***

**IV. Amendment 3:**

To add to mandate: “to discuss with the RCNr their objections against the RCN whether they are in line with our reservations and gravamen of Synod Armadale 2012 towards the RCN”.

***DEFEATED***

**V. Amendment 4:**

Reword Deputies Recommendation 3a:

“To keep contact with the RCNr and be receptive to contact from other churches (like the Voorlopig Kerkverband) who have split off from the RCN and the RCNr, and report on further developments in this regard.”

***ADOPTED***

**VI. Amendment 5:**

To add the mandate:

To allow the deputies to invite the RCN(r) and those they have contact with from other churches who have split from the RCN and the RCN(r), under the privileges of 6.3 of the Rules of Synod.

***DEFEATED***

**VII. Decision:**

Synod decides:

1. To beseech the Lord by His grace and blessings to grant true ecclesiastical unity based on His Word and as maintained in the confessions among the various Reformed churches and groups in the Netherlands.
2. To acknowledge that the RCNr’s relationship with the Liberated Church of Abbotsford may be an impediment to a future sister church relationship.

3. To discharge deputies, thank them for their work and to appoint new deputies with the mandate:
  - a. to keep contact with the RCNr and be receptive to contact from other churches (like the Voorlopig Kerkverband) who have split off from the RCN and the RCNr, and report on further developments in this regard; and
  - b. to work in close contact with the CanRC deputies regarding these developments.

**Grounds:**

1. There have been other groups, ministers and churches that have left the RCN but have not joined the RCNr.
2. The RCNr has made it clear that further meaningful contact will only be possible once the FRCA break their sister church relationship with the RCN.
3. Synod 2012 maintains the position of Synods 2006 and 2009: “We hear in the voice of the brother of the RCNr a strong desire to remain reformed” (Synod 2006 Acts 92.III.5.a).
4. The RCNr in their evaluation of the legitimacy of the Abbotsford group’s separation from the CanRC, by inference appear to have judged the CanRC as no longer being true according to God’s Word as maintained in the confessions.

**ADOPTED**

**Article 100 - Archives**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11.j – Deputies Report for Archives and Library.

**II. Decision:**

Synod decides:

1. To accept the report of the deputies and thank them for their work.
2. That in the next edition of the Synod rules, the rules of the archivist will be appended.

***ADOPTED***

**Article 101 - Days of Prayer – Article 66 of the CO**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11.h – Art 66 of the Church Order (Days of Prayer).

**II. Decision:**

Thank deputies for this work.

***ADOPTED***

**Article 102 - General Secretary's report**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11.a – General Secretary's report.

**II. Amendment:**

Amendment to 1c:

Be responsible for and regularly update the website of the FRCA.

***ADOPTED***

**III. Decision:**

Synod Armadale discharged current deputies and reappoints new deputies with a renewed mandate to:

1. take care of the central post office box;
2. distribute the mail;



3. be responsible for and regularly update the website of the FRCA;
4. acknowledge correspondence not applicable to deputies, and if necessary to pass it on to the churches; and
5. collate all deputies reports (apart from that of the Treasurer) and have them printed in a bound format similar to that for the Acts. Deputies' reports are to be submitted in an appropriate format six months prior to the next synod so that they can be printed and distributed to the churches as per the Rules of Synod.

***ADOPTED***

**Article 103 - Regulations for Speaking an Edifying Word (Preaching Consent)**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 10.a.ii.iii – Report from Classis North regarding Rules for Preaching Consent for Students of Theology and Candidates for the Ministry.

**II. Admissibility:**

Synod decides to declare this submission admissible.

**Ground:**

This request comes from Classis North thus meets the requirements of CO Article 30

**III. Decision:**

Synod decides:

To adopt the proposal of Classis North, as amended, as the way to deal with requests for extending permission to speak an edifying word (sometimes called preaching consent) and consider it as an extension of Synod 1996

decision Acts Article 27 as amended by Synod 2000 Article 43 as follows:

Regulations for extending the Permission to Speak an Edifying Word

1. Introduction:

These regulations apply only when permission to speak an edifying word has already been granted previously, either to:

- a. Theological Students (according to the Acts of the 1996 Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, Article 27 and as amended by Synod 2000, Article 43);
- b. Candidates for the Ministry of the Word (according to Article 5B of the Australian Church Order).

2. When a brother requests an extension to speak an edifying word he shall:

- a. make his request in writing;
- b. address his request to the classis of the church of which he is a member.
- c. in his request (a) affirm that it is his definite intention to enter the Ministry of the Word in the Free Reformed Churches or one of our sister churches (b) indicate how he is presently working towards that goal; (c) explain how speaking an edifying word fits into that framework;
- d. present to classis a certificate from the classis which originally granted him permission to speak an edifying word.

3. Classis will grant the extension if Classis is satisfied that granting the extension fits into the framework of Training for the Ministry.
4. In the case of Theological Students:
  - a. who have not been examined by a Classis in the preceding two years they will not be granted an extension without being examined by classis. This examination will consist of a Sermon Proposal and an Examination in Confessions and Creeds.
  - b. Classis shall appoint a minister for the theological student to take on a supervisory role similar to that described in Synod 1996; *"The student shall submit his sermons to a minister appointed by Deputies for the Training to the Ministry who in turn will give a report to the Professor of Diaconology at the theological college."*
5. In the case of Candidates for the Ministry:
  - a. who have not been examined by a Classis in the preceding three years they will not be granted an extension without being examined by classis. This examination will consist of a Sermon Proposal and an Examination in Confessions and Creeds;
  - b. who have not received a call within a year can receive an extension to the permission to speak an edifying word and will be placed under the supervision of one of a minister in the same way as point 4.b above;
  - c. who coming from overseas with preaching consent from a sister-church shall apply for an extension to classis within twelve months

regardless of the length of the period of consent previously given.

6. If classis grants an extension:
  - a. that extension shall be valid for no more than twelve months;
  - b. Classis shall provide the examinee with a certificate; and
  - c. Classis shall require of the examinee that he make a solemn promise to teach nothing that is contrary to Scripture or the Reformed Confessions.

**Grounds:**

1. Synod 1996 already made provision for granting permission for speaking an edifying word but gave no regulation for extending this permission.
2. Since this is a matter that concerns admission to the pulpit the churches should agree to be uniform in practice as to the procedure by which this should happen

**ADOPTED**

**IV. Relevant synod decision from Synod 1996 as amended by Synod 2000**

**Decision:**

1. To grant permission to speak an edifying word/preaching consent in the churches to theological students who satisfy the following set conditions:
  - a. the theological students shall present such a request to Classis;
  - b. they shall have completed at least two years of theological studies at one of the

- theological colleges of our sister churches (not including the introductory year, that is, they still complete three years of training at the theological college). The faculty of the theological college shall give a certificate that they have successfully completed two years of theology proper (or three years);
- c. they shall present a good attestation from the church to which they belong;
  - d. they shall deliver a sermon at Classis and shall be examined on reformed doctrine; and
  - e. if the result is satisfactory Classis shall grant permission to speak an edifying word (sometimes called preaching consent) for a period not more than twelve months.
2. To accept the decision of classes of sister churches to grant theological students the right to speak an edifying word/preaching consent in the churches here and to allow these students to deliver an edifying word in the churches. They must present a certificate from the Classis of the sister church.
  3. The student shall submit his sermons to a minister appointed by Deputies for the Training to the Ministry who in turn will give a report to the Professor of Diaconiology at the theological college.

**Grounds:**

1. The reason for extending preaching consent to theological students is to give the students practical experience. More accent is placed on this today. Even as teachers and others are required to have practice in their fields, so also theological students undergo practical experience during or

after their formal training. Thus far consistories can ask them to teach catechism classes, but preaching consent has not been offered.

2. The FRCA have decided to accept the preparatory classical examinations which theological students undergo in our sister churches. This would imply that the FRCA should also accept the classical examinations of our sister churches in which theological students are given permission to speak an edifying word in the churches.

(Kelmscott 1996, Article 27, amended after Synod West Albany 2000's decision to form classes, Acts Article 43.)

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## **EVENING SESSION**

### **Wednesday 18 July 2012**

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#### **Article 104 - Reopening**

The Chairman invites all present to sing Psalm 150:1, 2 and 3.

#### **Article 105 - Acts of Synod**

Synod endorses Acts of Synod Articles 63-79.

#### **Article 106 - Book of Praise (Refer Articles 18, 19, 39, 78)**

The advisory committee tables their proposal on the Book of Praise and after several rounds of discussion synod votes on a number of amendments.

##### **I. Amendment 1:**

Add the following decision between item 3 and 4:

To also permit the continued use of the 1984 Book of Praise of interim.

***DEFEATED***

**II. Amendment 2:**

Delete decision 8f.

**Ground:**

Synods 2006 and 2009 have acknowledged the desire of the churches to have their own Book of Praise.

***DEFEATED***

**III. Amendment 3:**

Remove from decision 6 “nor in line with the Church Order (Article 30)” and remove Ground 4 which supports this.

**Ground:**

1. The church of Armadale first brought this to attention of synod in the proper church orderly way.

***DEFEATED***

**IV. Amendment 4:**

Remove Decision 8g and Ground 5.

**Ground:**

These elements require overturning the decision of Synod Legana 2009 Art 24.

***DEFEATED***

**V. Amendment 5:**

To delete Recommendation 5.

**Ground:**

Recommendation 4 already passes on the decision of Synod and it is not necessary to supply extra limitations.

***DEFEATED***

## **VI. Decision:**

Synod decides:

1. To discharge the deputies and thank them for their work.
2. To adopt provisionally the 150 Psalms as revised in the Provisional Book of Praise (2010) for use in the churches.
3. To adopt provisionally the 65 Hymns which we have in the current Book of Praise (2004 edition) with the changes made in the Provisional Book of Praise (2010) for use in the churches.
4. Not to adopt the 19 additional Hymns as provisionally adopted by Synod Burlington 2010.
5. To inform the churches that the 19 additional Hymns may not be used in the worship services.
6. That it is not desirable, nor in line with the Church Order (Article 30) to be tied to the new hymns being adopted or considered by the CanRC, in accordance with the overtures of Byford, Darling Downs, Kelmscott and West Albany.
7. To endorse the guidelines listed under Appendix 1 as a starting point in the evaluation of proposed hymns.
8. To appoint deputies with the mandate to:
  - a. Monitor developments with the Canadian Book of Praise.
  - b. Interact with the Canadian SCBP to ensure that Australian input is taken into consideration.
  - c. Keep the churches informed of developments with the Canadian Book of Praise.



- d. To submit relevant material already received from the churches to the Canadian SCBP for consideration.
- e. To study the use of capitalization for personal pronouns referring to God.
- f. To invite input from the churches regarding the desirability of having an Australian version of the Canadian Book of Praise.
- g. Recommence investigations regarding copyright, printing costs and feasibility of producing an Australian version of the Canadian Book of Praise, in the event that a future Synod will decide to go that way, which would include:
  - i. 150 psalms as printed in the Canadian Provisional Book of Praise 2010.
  - ii. The 65 hymns as found in the current Book of Praise (edition 2004) with the changes made in the Provisional Book of Praise 2010.
  - iii. The Ecumenical Creeds as printed in the Provisional Book of Praise with the deletion of the word “Christian” from the Apostles Creed.
  - iv. The Three Forms of Unity as printed in the Provisional Book of Praise with the changes authorized by FRCA Synods over the years.
  - v. Orders of Worship as printed in the Provisional Book of Praise.
  - vi. Liturgical Forms as printed in the Provisional Book of Praise with the

changes authorized by FRCA Synods over the years.

- vii. The Church Order as adopted by the Australian Churches.

**Grounds:**

1. The Deputies concluded that the revisions to the 150 Psalms and the 65 Hymns in the Provisional Book of Praise are an improvement on the present version in the Book of Praise 2008.
2. The CanRC has not made a final decision regarding the 19 'new' Hymns in the Provisional Book of Praise (2010).
3. Although, in 2009, some churches indicated that they wanted to stay in line with the Canadian Book of Praise, it has not been shown that the actual desire to have more hymns is alive in the churches.
4. The FRCA should only be obliged to consider new hymns if and when these are put forward by the Australian churches.
5. It can be argued that, in practice, Synod 2009 (Article 24) restricted the decision of future Synods to consider an Australian version of the Canadian Book of Praise.
6. Deputies recommend that Synod adopt the "Principles and Guidelines for the Selection of Music in the Church as used by the Standing Committee for the Book of Praise (SCBP) of the Canadian Reformed Churches", in line with the mandate given to them by Synod 2009 (Article 42.2.f).

7. Some churches questioned the lack of capitalization of personal pronouns referring to God.
8. It is prudent to invite input from the churches regarding an Australian version of the Canadian Book of Praise.

**ADOPTED**

**Article 107 - Closing**

Rev R Pot invited all to sing Psalm 98:1 and 2 and then led in prayer.

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**MORNING SESSION**  
**Thursday 19 July 2012**

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**Article 108 - Reopening**

Br G 't Hart invites all to sing Psalm 1:1 and 2, read Psalm 1 and Rev 22:1-5 and then meditates on these verses. After leading in prayer all sang Hymn 55:1 and 4.

**Article 109 - Closed Session**

Synod continues discussion regarding Br J Bruning's request in closed session.

**Article 110 - Report of Deputies for Articles 48 of the Church Order**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11.I – Report of Deputies for Article 48 of the Church Order.

## **II. Deputies Propose:**

1. Synod decide that it is within the task of deputies Article 48 to receive assurance that ministers of the word that are released from their task within the churches (emeritus or otherwise) received honourable care and support.
2. If synod decide “1” above that Synod then also decide to mandate new deputies Article 48 to, as yet, obtain documented evidence from Classis South whether the ministers granted release received honourable care and support.

### ***DEFEATED***

#### **Grounds:**

Despite the fact that the Form for Emeritus Declaration makes reference to the involvement of Deputies Art 48 CO, Synod will not make a decision that finds insufficient support in Art 13 CO.

## **III. Decision:**

3. Release deputies from their task and appoint new deputies in the following manner:
  - a. appoint one deputy and one alternate from each classical region; and
  - b. decide that when a classic region requires the advice of deputies article 48, it request one deputy from each of the other classical regions (thus, when Classis Central request these deputies, the deputy of Classis South West and the deputy of Classis North attend. When Classis South West requires these deputies then those of Classis Central and Classis North attend and if Classis North require them then a deputy of Classis Central and Classis South West attend).

**Grounds:**

1. It is the task of the churches in common to see to it that all the Lord's servants receive support and care that is honourable to Him and the bond of His churches.
2. Deputies report that Classis South questioned this belonged to their mandate and consequently has not been done.
3. Now that there are three Classical Regions in the bond of Churches, it is wise to direct this deputyship in such a way that through it the greatest number of churches within the bond are involved.
4. By appointing deputies and alternates in this way, there is at least one alternate from each region (avoiding the need to appoint an alternate, ad hoc – as was done from the Classis North region).

***ADOPTED***

**Article 111 - Audit of Synod Archives and Library**

**I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11k.i – Deputies report for auditing of synod archives and library.

Report from FRC Byford to audit synod archives and library was not received.

**II. Decision:**

FRC Byford to audit synod archives and library from Synod 2009 and onwards.

***ADOPTED***

## **Article 112 - Audit of Deputies for Training of the Ministry**

### **I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11.k.ii – Deputies Report for Training of the Ministry Art 17 and 18 of the Church Order.

### **II. Decision:**

To accept the report that the accounts for the Hamilton Theological College, the Needy Student Fund and the Theological Library are in good order.

***ADOPTED***

## **Article 113 - Audit of Synod Treasury**

### **I. Material:**

Agenda Item 12 – Report from FRC Kelmscott: Auditor of the Synod Treasury.

### **II. Decision:**

To accept the report of the auditor for the Synod Treasury that the books were found to be in good order.

***ADOPTED***

## **Article 114 - Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Refer Art 29, 30, 40, 43, 57, 76, 94, 116)**

A further draft of the advisory committee is tabled for discussion.

## **Article 115 - Farewell**

The delegates from the RCN(r) speak words of farewell.

Synod is adjourned for lunch.

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**AFTERNOON SESSION**  
**Thursday 19 July 2012**

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**Article 116 - Reformed Churches in the Netherlands**  
**(Refer Art 29, 30, 40, 43, 57, 76, 94, 114)**

A proposal is received from the advisory committee:

**I. Decision:**

1. To present to the RCN an official admonition stating our concerns.

This admonition will be a statement of weighty objections with respect to the doctrine and practice of the RCN in line with the rules for sister church relations.

2. To appoint an advisory committee consisting of brothers chosen by synod to formulate the admonition paying special attention to items that have had deputies' special attention such as:

- a. Hermeneutics
- b. Ethics
- c. Sacraments
- d. Ecclesiology
- e. Church government
- f. Liturgy

The committee is to take into account the responses already received from the RCN. This is to be done in consultation with the Canadian Reformed Church deputies CRCA according to Article 86, Synod Burlington 2010 and the DRCA of the FRCSA according to Article 19.4 of Synod Pretoria 2011.

3. The advisory committee is to report to synod delegates by 1 March 2013.
4. Synod is to reconvene on 22 April 2013 so that this official admonition can be tabled for adoption and so that synod can formulate its decision on how to proceed with our relationship with the RCN.

**Grounds:**

1. Over time the FRCA synods and deputies have clearly expressed their concerns and called upon the RCN synods and deputies to remain faithful. The present deputies have presented evidence that the RCN does not reject all errors contrary to the word of God.
2. The seriousness of these concerns requires an official admonition that will have consequences.
3. The RCN have clearly communicated to the FRCA:
  - a. that they don't recognize themselves in the image described in the Acts of Legana 2009;
  - b. that they request substantiated reasons supporting our concerns; and
  - c. that they are willing to listen to them.
4. Our rules for sister church relations require mutual assistance, encouragement, exhortation, and care. Although the deputies report as well as previous synod decisions and reports to synod have substantiated many of our concerns it is important to go the extra mile to ensure that our concerns are accurately and properly formulated and understood, particularly when our Dutch sister churches are requesting this.



5. The RCN have clearly communicated to us that they would like communication of official concerns to be addressed directly to their synod, as is the intent for the official admonition.
6. We need to ensure that our concerns are clearly and carefully formulated in the form of a weighty document, making use of the expertise in our churches, and existing work done.
7. Other sister churches share these concerns and have decided to work in consultation with us. (See article 86 of Synod Burlington 2010: Consideration 3.10 “The fraternal delegates of the FRCA and the OPC at Synod Burlington-Ebenezer requested that our deputies work together with theirs in reaching out to the RCN.” Decision 4.4.5 “To work in consultation with the deputies of the FRCA and the OPC.”)

### ***ADOPTED***

## **II. Decision:**

(To only publish the headings in Item 2 in the Acts. Details under the headings to be forwarded to the Advisory Committee.)

## **Article 117 - Amendment to Synod Rules**

### **I. Material:**

Agenda Item 8.g.v – Overture from FRC West Albany re Rules of Synod regarding Deputies for Synod Treasury.

FRC West Albany requests that the Rules for Synod be amended as suggested by the Deputies for Synod Treasury, by adopting the changes in the draft proposal for amendment found in Appendix 3o in the Acts of Synod 2009 (pp. 186-196).

## **II. Admissibility:**

Item is declared admissible according to Art 30 CO.  
Refer to Acts Legana 2009, Art 85.ii.3.

## **III. Decision:**

To adopt the proposal of West Albany “that the Rules for Synod be amended as suggested by the Deputies for Synod Treasury, by adopting the changes in the draft proposal for amendment found in Appendix 3o in the Acts of Synod 2009” (pp 186-196).

### **Ground:**

1. The suggested proposal found in Acts Legana 2009 does not include any grounds. The suggested changes are sensible and practical, and they will benefit the efficiency of the work of the Synod Treasurer.

## **ADOPTED**

## **Article 118 - Synod Treasury Report**

### **I. Material:**

Agenda Item 11.i.a – Synod Treasury Financial Report.

Agenda Item 11.i.b – Synod Treasury Financial Statement.

### **II. Decision:**

1. Accept the Synod Treasurer’s Financial Report which comprises a Report, Statement of Receipts and Statement of Expenditure for 1 April 2009 to 30 April 2012.
2. That Deputies for Infrastructure/Venue may also place a claim for loss of wages.
3. Set the rate for reimbursement of motor vehicle travel at 45 cents per kilometre.

4. Set the rate for reimbursement of loss of income at \$210 per day.
5. Adopt the 2012-2015 Budget as amended by Synod.
6. Adopt the cost sharing arrangement for the churches as amended by Synod.
7. Thank the Treasurer for the work done, and discharge him from his mandate.

**ADOPTED**

**Article 119 - Report from Deputies for Infrastructure and Venue**

**I. Material:**

Report from Deputies for Infrastructure and Venue.

**II. Decision:**

1. To thank the deputies for the work done and discharge them.
2. To appoint new deputies with the mandate to:
  - a. provide and operate an audiovisual system which includes the ability for delegates and audience to follow the discussion clearly;
  - b. provide and maintain a computer system for delegates which includes but is not limited to:
    - i. central data storage
    - ii. convenient printing capability;
    - iii. secure internal email facilities;
    - iv. data backup;
  - c. liaise with convening committees and coordinate the audio-visual/computer matters of the Synod venue preparations;

- d. be present and able to assist at all Synod sessions;
- e. provide full computer and sound support;
- f. Provide a general logistical support role during Synod for delegates.

**Grounds:**

1. Synod must be able to do its work smoothly through the provision of technical equipment that allows that:
  - a. delegates must be able to clearly understand each other;
  - b. the audience to be able to follow the discussion;
  - c. flexibility to expand as the number of delegates changes;
  - d. a computer system that can service Synod with:
    - i. email facilities;
    - ii. central storage so that all delegates can access documents/reports they require;
    - iii. printing service to print documents and reports;
    - iv. central backup system.
2. This role has been of great benefit in enhancing the smooth preparation and operation of Synod.

**ADOPTED**

## **Article 120 - Deputy Appointments**

### **I. Decision:**

The deputies for sister churches Indonesia recommend that the exemption clause re the term of being a member of a deputyship be applied to the experienced members of the deputyship.

### ***ADOPTED***

Synod thanks the previous deputies for their work and makes the following appointments:

### **Advisory committee to Synod 2012 to prepare letter to synod of RCN:**

Rev R Pot  
Rev P de Boer  
Br W Spyker  
Br B Veenendaal  
Br W VanderVen  
Alternate: Rev S 't Hart

### **General Secretary Deputy**

Br JL Van Burgel (convenor)  
Assistant General Secretary: Br J (Jack) den Boer  
Website: Br M Pot

### **Deputies for Relations with Sister Churches (Canada, Netherlands, Korea, South Africa)**

Rev PKA de Boer (convenor)  
Br W Pleiter  
Br W Spyker  
Rev S 't Hart  
Br W VanderVen  
Dr RD Anderson  
Alternate: Rev T van Spronsen

## **RCNZ**

Br M Bax  
Br R (Rick) Eikelboom  
Rev R Pot (convenor)  
Br A Vermeulen  
Alternate: Br J Bruning

## **Indonesia**

Br B Bosveld  
Br B Kramer  
Br E Heerema  
Rev A van Delden  
Rev W VanderJagt (convenor)  
Alternate: Br T de Vos

## **Brazil**

Rev J Kroeze (convenor)  
Br J (John) Wielstra  
Alternate: Br J Hidding

## **Singapore**

Br S Fokkema  
Rev E Rupke  
Rev T van Spronsen (convenor)  
Alternate: Rev W Huizinga

## **Deputies Book of Praise**

Rev C Vermeulen (convenor)  
Br A (Aart) Plug  
Br E (Elton) Swarts  
Br S (Stephen) Houweling  
Alternate: Br D (Derek) Swarts

## **Deputies Bible Translation**

Rev J Kroeze (convenor)  
Rev M Retief  
Alternate: Dr RD Anderson

### **Deputies Training for the Ministry**

Br R Heerema  
Br M Hoogerdijk  
Rev E Rupke (convenor)  
Br J (Jim) van der Plas  
Alternate: Br B (Bruce) Huizinga

### **Deputies for Indexing Synod Decisions**

Br R (Rob) Eikelboom  
Br J (Jelte) Numan (convenor)

### **Deputies Nominating Authorities**

Br T (Tim) Houweling (convenor)  
Br H Faas

### **Deputies for Synod Venue and Infrastructure**

Br E (Eric) 't Hart  
Br A (Alan) van der Wal

### **Deputies re Art 48 of the Church Order**

For Classis South-West: Rev RE Pot (alternate: Rev S 't Hart)  
For Classis Central: Rev W van der Jagt (alternate: Rev A van Delden)  
For Classis North: Rev. PKA de Boer (alternate: Rev J Kroeze)

### **Deputy Synod Treasurer**

Br E Eikelboom  
Alternate: Br D Bonker

### **Deputies Archives and Library of Synod**

The Church of Mount Nasura

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

The Church of Launceston

**Deputies for auditing the books for Deputies for Training for the Ministry**

The Church of Mount Nasura

**Deputies Inspection of Archives and Library**

The Church of Byford

**Deputies Auditors for Synod Treasury**

The Church of Kelmscott

**Article 121 - Synodical Indexing (Refer Article 95)**

**I. Decision:**

That deputies for Synodical Indexing are also mandated to update the Synod rules and make them available in electronic format on the website.

**Article 122 - Synod 2015**

Reconvening of this Synod will be in Armadale on 22 April 2013 DV.

Synod appoints FRC Baldivis as convening church for synod, to be held July 2015, DV.

**Article 123 - Censure according to Article 47 Church Order**

The Chairman states that there is no need for censure in this sitting of synod.

**Article 124 - Personal Questions**

No one has any questions.



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**EVENING SESSION**  
**Thursday 19 July 2012**

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**Article 125 - Reopening**

The chairman invites all present to sing Psalm 46:1 and 2.

**Article 126 - Adoption of the Acts**

Articles 80 – 124 of the Acts are amended and adopted.

**Article 127 - Adoption of the Press Release**

The press release is amended and adopted.

**Article 128 - Farewell Delegates FRCSA and RCNZ**

Rev Breytenbach delivers his farewell address on behalf of the FRCSA.

Rev P Archbald delivers his farewell address on behalf of the RCNZ. The Chairman thanked them for their words.

**Article 129 - Closing Address**

The Chairman delivers his closing address (Refer Appendix 1r).

**Article 130 - Closing**

The Vice Chairman thanks the Chairman for the good and brotherly way that he chaired synod. He then invites all present to sing 72:1, 3 and 10 and then leads in closing prayer. The Chairman declares the 25<sup>th</sup> Synod of the Free Reformed Churches adjourned until 22 April 2013.

# **ACTS OF SYNOD**

## **Armadale - July 2012**

### **APPENDICES**

Speeches

Supplementary Reports

## **Appendix 1: Speeches at Synod**

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### **Appendix 1a: Meditation text of Br M Bruning, Chairman of the convening church of Armadale**

Brothers and Sisters,

As convening Church for Synod 2012 of the Free Reformed churches of Australia, it was our mandate to call together the FRCA churches to this Synod. To see you all here tonight is evidence that that calling not only went out, but it also means that there is a response and there is a willingness and obedience to live and work as Brothers and Sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ and His universal Church gathering work.

Tonight we as the Convening Church also have the task to bring the Synod before God's throne in prayer for His blessing, guidance by His Holy Spirit and a completion to His glory.

And we do so, lead by His Word, in a Spirit of understanding, love and humility toward our only Saviour Jesus Christ and His anointed body.

Brothers and Sisters, we just read from Romans 15 and I wish to draw you briefly to verses 6-7. Here the apostle Paul provides words of direction to the readers (or hearers) of his letter. In the context of his letter to the Romans, Paul has arrived at a juncture where he turns all the instructions to the attitude of Christ. He has spoken to the Romans at length about the Gospel of Grace, faith through belief in Jesus Christ alone, and he then leads to the practical aspects of the fruits of that faith, without which the faith is futile.

The practical application of that faith, by those who have been justified through Christ's sacrifice, should show in their lives; gratitude, devotion and praise to the Triune God and towards their fellow men.

Already in chapter 12, Paul speaks about the practical means, namely the presenting of a holy life, using our differing God given talents to the honour of Him and our neighbour. About

being hospitable, obedient to those in authority, walking in the light, (Chapter 13); bearing with each other's weaknesses, and to be without judgement when God's people serve and Honour Him in their conviction, whether weak or strong (Chapter 14).

So we come to Paul's directive in this chapter. As Christ humbled Himself to death for us, taking on Himself our sins, accepting us as we are, defiled and clothed in filthy rags, and then presenting us to His Father totally new, so we too need to live in that likeminded way. We are to receive one another with all our sins, shortcomings, illnesses and without discrimination! As Christ accepted us, in our sinful state, so we must accept each other. As Christ is working in His Church, so we too should work and deal with each other. As Christ did not come to destroy but to redeem, so we must also seek to build and restore each other in love! Our lives, our work and our worship should not be spoken of in a negative or evil way, but of righteousness, peace and joy in and thru the Holy Spirit. Also to the Philippians in chapter 2 Paul writes in detail a message of unity in Christ with all humility in love and consideration for others.

Brothers and sisters, the differences of opinions, differences in practices are to be considered in the full light of Christ's work of redemption. Paul exhorts in verses 5 and 6 that all must be united in the one mind and the one mouth, to glorify God the Father and our Saviour Jesus Christ, and that is, to be humble, to receive all those who believe and confess in our only Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Let not the precepts of man, or the opinions of man, or matters that divide be a cause to prevent the glory of God in our works, words and actions. Bearing with one another, edifying one another with comfort and patience through the truth of God's revealed will, let us continue in hope. Paul exhorts us his readers to endure with one another, and with ALL goodness, with ALL knowledge (understanding each other fully in and through the scriptures) be able to edify and build each other including the necessary admonition done in the true Spirit of

Christ. Let me quote a portion from our catechism concerning this attitude, “In court and everywhere else, I must love the truth, speak and confess it honestly, and do what I can to defend and promote my neighbour’s honour and reputation.”

May the work done at Synod 2012 also be done with the mindset of Christ’s humbling work and teachings.

Brothers delegates, may the Word of God given to us in the teachings of Christ as proclaimed by Him be your principle guide in the weeks ahead.

### **Appendix 1b: Opening address by the Chairman of the convening church of Armadale**

Brothers and Sisters, Delegates, Invited visitors, observers,

Welcome to 25<sup>th</sup> synod of the FRCA.

My research in preparation for tonight’s opening address took me back to the Armadale Church archives where I found copies of the previous 24 Synod acts. In them I found a few interesting items which I thought would be nice to remember and share with you tonight.

- Armadale was also the convening Church of the inaugural synod held in 1954 in the little Wungong Church building, now no longer standing!
- But still active and standing although not here tonight as he lives in Tasmania, is Br J van der Ros, a delegate at the first synod held (58 years ago) making him quite a number of years old!! Or he was extremely young 58 years ago!
- Interesting is that he represented the Launceston Consistory in his capacity as deacon.
- Synod started with 3 congregations, Albany, Armadale and Launceston. With just 6 delegates!

- We are now three classis, with 5 congregations in each and 18 delegates! Perhaps we need to go back to bi-annual synods just to ensure each church has a turn to be convenor! Because the rate of Churches being established exceeds the Synod calendar.
- Acts were typed in Dutch till 1964, then we had English with a Dutch translation, but in reading them it was probably Dutch with an English translation!! Until 1975.
- In 1966 the Synod convened in the lesser Hall of the Armadale town hall, and the organist of tonight, led his grade 6 and 7 by foot from the JCS to witness the proceedings, yours truly being in that class can confirm that! As to what was on the agenda then I don't dare ask my teacher in case he asks me!
- Armadale's percentage share of costs for Synod has reduced from a whopping 60% in the first years to just 12% in the current budget, and we are working on that!!
- The Tri-opoly Synods of the FRCA was broken in 1981 with approval of institution of Kelmscott, who was immediately appointed as convening Church for the 1983 Synod ..... Mundijong being the youngest Congregation, be prepared!!
- And also in 1983 were the first photos of delegates caught in the Acts!!
- Ministers left since 2009: Dr J Smith in 2009 and more recently, Rev R Eikelboom.
- Ministers arrived since 2009: Rev T van Spronsen just in time to be a Synod delegate, and Rev D Anderson, despite driving a very fast car, just too late to be a delegate!! Welcome Brothers.
- Ministers yet to arrive; the Lord willing, Rev Alkema due to arrive in Albany later this month and Rev A Hagg due to arrive here in our Congregation on 28<sup>th</sup> August as their

visas have now been approved. Which means we have 2 vacant churches in the bond, namely Launceston and Bunbury.

We hope you will all be comfortable during Synod. My memory as delegate in 2006 here in this building was of extremely cold feet; well the new air conditioning with heating should alleviate that for you. Also our brothers and sisters at Kelmscott were charitable to loan us some furniture, so any discomfort will no doubt mean Kelmscott will be off the convening list for the next Synod!! Thank you Kelmscott!

I would now like to extend a welcome to the FRCA delegates appointed by the 3 classis to this Synod.

Also a warm welcome to our overseas visiting delegates; for the benefit of our audience tonight I will introduce you and allow you also to come to the Synod table after we have finished the checking of credentials and the voting of Synod officers.

I would now like to invite to the table the delegates to synod. Our venue committee has prepared pin on name tags and we have them laid out for you to pick up as you come to the synod table. Not that you are strangers to each other, but with so many overseas visiting delegates it would be useful for them to be able to put faces and names into perspective at the start of Synod.

Welcome Brother delegates. The Church services here in Armadale are conducted with a free seating policy and we would like to extend that to the Synod table arrangements.

The next item on the opening agenda is the signing of the attendance register.

We now come to the examination of the credentials of the delegates as issued by their respective Classis;

Classis North  
Classis Central  
Classis South West

It is also the task of the convening Church to prepare and conduct the voting of Officers to Synod, being:

Chairman, Deputy Chairman, 1<sup>st</sup> Clerk and 2<sup>nd</sup> Clerk

As the voting is now complete, I call on our visiting delegates to join the Synod table,

So; from our South African Sister Churches, Rev Breytenbach from the congregation of Bethel.

From our Canadian Sister churches, Rev Souman of the congregation at Willoughby Heights; and Rev W Wielenga from the congregation of Lynden in the US. Rev Wielenga is the son of the late Rev JD Wielenga who served in Albany quite a few years ago.

From our Dutch Sister Churches; Br J de Jong from Ede, as a Deputy in the BBK (BBK being the acronym for the deputies for sister Church relations), Br K Wezeman from Haren, as chairman of the BBK and to arrive in Australia tomorrow will be Rev P Meijer from Hardenberg/Baalder as Deputy chairman of BBK.

A bit closer to home from our Indonesian Sister Churches, representing the GGRC Churches, Rev Yonson Dethan and Ev Ruben Rehyard and representing the GGRI Rev Mada Biha. All three brothers are from West Timor.

As invited guests to the Synod, I welcome Rev P Archbald from the RCNZ, and from the RCN(r) Br A van der Net and Br J Houweling.

### **Appendix 1c: Speech by Rev P Meijer on behalf of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands**

Mr Chairman, dear brothers in our Lord Jesus Christ, delegates to this synod, and fellow delegates from foreign sister churches,



On behalf of Deputies BBK, we, Br De Jong, Br Wezeman and I, thank you for your invitation to attend this synod.

We came from far, and yet, are we not near to each other?

Perhaps someone would make the remark that our churches and your churches are less near to each other than 20 years ago. Admittedly, there have been growing tensions between us. We will refer to them in the course of this address.

Yet, are we not near to each other if we think of the message of Psalm 148?

At the end of the Book of Psalms we enter into the atmosphere of full adoration. The whole creation is involved in this adoration, says Psalm 148.

Angels, of course, but also sun and moon, oceans and mountains, fruit trees and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations, young men and women, old men and children, the faithful servants of Israel, the people close to his heart.

Do we not belong to that people, you in Australia and we in The Netherlands?

Yes, we do. At least, that is the conviction of the three of us.

We belong to the people close to God's heart.

We are one in adoration since we confess together with Psalm 148:13 that God's "splendor is above the earth and the heavens".

Breath-taking is His majesty.

Breath-giving as well, we live and breathe through our Creator.

We bow for Him.

Brothers, this is the heart of a sister relationship between Reformed churches.

If it is not, then the word 'sister' is void.

But we do wish to speak in this address on the basis of what we see as the heart of the sister relationship, our common, our joint adoration of God according to His Word.

General Synod of Harderwijk 2011-2012 gave us the task to maintain the sister church relationship with your churches.

In the light of the report of your Deputies for Sister Church Relations, sent to this synod, with its proposal (I quote) "To place our continuing sister relationship with the RCN under strain" (end of quote), we specify the task that our synod gave to Deputies BBK, as follows:

*To urgently call on this synod of Armadale to decide to continue our sister church relations without any condition or reservation.*

We make this call on you based on what our Synod expressed with regard to 33 sister churches including the FRCA (I quote) "...to maintain the sister church relationship... in order to learn from each other, to support each other and to praise together Christ's name" (end of quote).

We would like to dwell on, for a moment, this threefold purpose of a sister church relationship.

a) **Learning from each other.** This includes, in our understanding, that sister churches may warn each other, admonish each other and criticize each other, in a fair way of course.

For this reason, the fact that the report of your Deputies for Sister Church Relation is of a quite critical nature towards the RCN is not a problem in itself. Problems arise when criticism is lacking a sound basis.

This happens in our opinion when your deputies refer to a decision of one of the classes within the RCN, regarding infant baptism and blessing.

Your deputies recognize that this is not a decision of a General Synod. Exactly, brothers! It is not your task to monitor

ecclesiastical bodies in foreign sister churches, except for the GS. Nor is it our task to monitor the FRCA ecclesiastical bodies apart from the GS.

Deputies continue saying (I quote) “this decision (of a particular classis, PKM) is nonetheless functioning within the churches” (end of quote). Our comment is this: such a decision is not functioning as a binding decision for other classes and/or consistories.

And also not functioning as an example of how unreformed the RCN is.

Please, be careful, especially when you do not know the background of decisions nor their follow-up. Even within a church federation you have to refrain yourself from conclusions if you can only judge decisions of a certain classis on the basis of a press release.

We like to add the following from our letter sent as a response to the report of your Deputies – we assume that all the synod delegates received a copy of it – I quote from page 2 (my copy): “...the monitoring is concentrated at the level of the General Synods and deals with matters pertaining to the churches in general as written in specific synodical decisions. It would make our sister church relations clearer if you (Deputies of the FRCA, PKM) were to hold yourself to these rules” (end of quote).

Nevertheless, we have to be willing to learn from you. We have to answer the question behind the report of your deputies: do you, RCN, still know what it means to be Reformed?

Our answer is ‘yes’, with all the concerns that many church members have about certain developments.

Yes, there is a certain amount of diversity within the RCN, but it is not fair to say that the RCN is in a state of flux (cf. Report of your Deputies, Grounds, item 1).

It is easy to point at some negative matters. It is easy to make a list of incidents. But does this justice to the over-all situation of the RCN, its ministers, its consistories, and its members?

The sum of critical remarks on certain matters in our church life does not warrant an over-all judgment that the RCN is no longer to be trusted.

As deputies BBK we see that the report of your deputies gives a one-sided picture of our church life.

We had hoped that the report of your deputies would include some positive impressions about the special day of 'learning' at the TU in Kampen, on March 30, 2011.

Unfortunately, we do not see them in the Report (p.59-60, Appendix 3), cf. page 20: (I quote) "We saw a tendency where the context we live in today receives greater dominance than what Scripture teaches" (end of quote).

This judgment is disappointing and does not reflect the teachings of that day nor the ongoing teaching in Kampen.

Or is this the situation that Australian Reformed people can no longer learn anything from the RCN? We can hardly believe that.

Brothers, let us nurture this aspect of a sister church relationship, learning from each other.

A second aspect is: b): **supporting each other.**

We can be rather short about this aspect since it is linked with the previous item.

Supporting each other has to do with our common task as Reformed family worldwide to give a Reformed testimony to the world.

Let us pay attention to how we can reach out within our countries and on foreign mission fields.

Let missionary boards and workers meet each other to share knowledge and experience. We did so in the past with Canadian boards and workers.

Supporting each other also means reciprocity. Which help can we give each other, mutually? For example on the theological field of hermeneutics.

Let us elaborate Reformed principles. There is no standstill in Reformed theology.

In this context we would like to invite you to join the RCN and the Canadian churches in a conference to be held in Hamilton, in 2013. To be more exact, it is an academic conference, set up by Kampen and Hamilton.

Why shouldn't theologians from your churches give their contribution? Let us support each other.

Of course, it is not a matter of support for the sake of support. The ultimate goal – and third aspect -of a sister church relation is **to praise together Christ's name**.

It is the heart of each sister church relationship.

Now, exactly, at this point, your Deputies for Sister Church Relations, in their proposals to this synod, show distrust regarding the capability of the RCN to praise Christ's name together with you. This is especially clear in the proposed Decision 3.

Brothers, frankly, if this Synod is going to accept these proposals 2 and 3, the term 'sister church relation' will lose its credibility and our relationship is then 'de facto', no longer a sister church relationship.

It may sound like a threat, but, the only purpose of expressing ourselves this way is to assure you that the RCN does wish to continue the normal sister church relationship.

With the ultimate purpose that we together praise the name of the Lord.

Finally, we will address a few subjects, some of them already having been mentioned in our recent letter to your deputies.

1. *The matter of female deputies from churches abroad.* The RCN asked for clear rules regarding the participation of female deputies during synods. Your deputies made a proposal to this Synod regarding these rules. We are thankful for that. Nevertheless, we wonder what to do with male foreign delegates who are not elders. Our letter strongly suggests an amendment, namely to give all foreign delegates only an advisory role.

Please note, that is custom in the RCN to have sisters be appointed as deputies to various committees of our general synods. This is certainly biblical.

2. *The role of BBK.* Your deputies complained about the role of our deputies. The point is that substantive objections regarding doctrine and life must be made directly from church to church, that is, from GS to GS, not from committee to committee by means of subjective and not-binding reports (which may not have the support of the GS). The role of BBK is a limited one. BBK does not have the competence nor the authority to defend synodical decisions or to defend what might be going on at the TU.

Cf. “Grond van Besluit 3, GS Harderwijk” regarding the work of Deputies BBK. See also p.17 of the Report of your Deputies regarding this same matter, under second item 2.

3. *Proposed Decisions and its grounds in the Report of your deputies.* In connection with the previous item about the role of BBK and of GS, we see an omission in the Report. What we miss, especially of many pages of critical comments, is a clear wording of the objections in a proposal for decisions with its grounds, that your Synod can and should convey to our Synod. It is not

enough to mention a few key words (Ground 1) to state that the RCN fails to reject errors contrary to the pure Word of God.

4. Another observation should be made. Your deputies quote from many reports of Dutch deputies in order to back up your concern or accusation that the RCN is adopting a new approach to hermeneutics that takes its starting point in man rather than in God's Word. But you have to substantiate this in a different way, showing that synodical decisions contain this new hermeneutics. From our part, we wish to state that there is not something like a new official hermeneutics in the RCN or at its TU. The special day at the TU in Kampen that two of your deputies attended on March 30, 2011 is a clear testimony of this.
5. Regarding *the participation of Deputies DKE in the so-called 'National Synod'*, a few more remarks. First, this whole matter receives too much attention, the real problem in the RCN is the influence of evangelical and charismatic groups. Second, it should be clear that this participation was *not* on behalf of the RCN. Deputies made this very clear, they were there on a personal basis. Third, GS 2011 made it very clear that future participation is not a matter of promoting church unity. Your Deputies fail to see that and jump to weighty conclusions on p.27, line 3 and 4 from the top. From our side, we fail to see that this whole matter is evidence of a new approach to hermeneutics. (Ground 1 of the Report of your deputies).
6. *The discussion on the role of Male and Female in Church.* It may suffice at this moment to refer to our latest letter as Deputies regarding this matter. In this letter we clarify that concerns were brought to our synod because of the report of former deputies Male/Female. Acts of GS Harderwijk state that Synod decided to appoint new deputies. Synod disapproved the way of

thinking in the report of former deputies M/F. In this situation it is only fair to say that the RCN is not moving toward the ordination of women as elders or ministers.

Much more could be said but this address is already long enough.

We wish you, delegates to this Synod, the wisdom of the Spirit in the Word, the biblical zeal and love for truth and unity.

A final remark, Mr Chairman: I tried to speak English, perhaps you noticed that. But more important is that you noticed our intention to speak the language of truth and unity.

Thank you.

#### **Appendix 1d: Speech by Rev W Wielenga on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches**

Thank you, Mr Chairman

Esteemed brothers, members of synod and guests

It is a privilege for Rev Souman and myself to be here to bring you greetings on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches and to attend this synod of our sister churches in Australia to become better acquainted with you and perhaps encourage you and to learn from you the things you are busy with and that concern you in the service of the Lord.

We thank you for your invitation to be here and for the hospitality you have shown and are showing. We do, then, bring you greetings on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches, churches which are allowed, by God's grace and in Christ our Head, and through the same Spirit, to be one with you in the bond of faith.

Being here in person, we say not only 'Hello' and 'It is good to see you in person', but even more, 'May it be well with you', and yes: 'May the Lord continue to deal graciously with you



and show you his favor and give you his peace.’ May you be enjoying God’s blessing in his churches, and on the office bearers, and in all your labors.

You are busy, together with us, in the same cause, the glorious cause of the Son of God who conquered sin and death, and now lives whose Spirit works on through the gospel among the nations for the gathering of the church who is working onwards in victory to the glory of his kingdom. It is a great privilege to be caught up in that cause and kingdom, a privilege with the responsibility to be engaged, on guard, and faithful. And it is evident that you are thankful for the privilege and serious about the responsibility.

The Free Reformed Churches of Australia are close sisters of the Canadian Reformed Churches. In families it is not wise to speak about favorite sisters, so we will not say that you are our favorite sister. That you are a close sister is evident in the contacts which are made and continued over the miles between members of the churches. The miles between us have not hindered relationships, marriages, and families from being established. That we are close is also evident in the calling and movement of ministers of the Word.

No doubt, some of that comes with pain and disappointment when ministerial vacancies are left. Nevertheless, the fact that it happens as smoothly and frequently as it does, that we readily look for ministers in each other’s backyard – or somewhere there – testifies to how close we are.

We have a Yearbook of the Churches which contains not only the information and statistics of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches, but also that of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia. A curious addition. Again, we cannot speak about a favorite sister – you are after all a sort of appendix in our Yearbook but it is clear that the information is published there for good reason.

Those who travel from us to you, or from you to us – and it happens more and more frequently – can readily find the

information needed for visiting or joining the church of the Lord. And it is good to have that resource there, black on white, reminding us which of your ministers we can still call.

Over the last few years, we have missed a couple of opportunities to see you face-to-face, and we are sorry for that. Please do not take offense. When it is left up to a committee to decide to send, or not to send, a fraternal delegate it is not always so easy. Where to send delegates, how to use resources? For something seemingly as simple as that, a committee can run a bit stuck and err on the side of caution, and would rather have a clear mandate. We were mandated by the last synod to send one delegate here, and now we are two. Perhaps that helps alleviate some of your concern.

It might be a concern for us.

By way of disclaimer, I wish to state that Rev Souman and I do represent the Canadian Reformed Churches, but we do not have all the information. As with your own federation, much of the work of the federation is divided up between deputies – for us committees – and that means no one person holds all the keys. That's good. In a place like this, that can be tricky.

We are both on the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad, and that is why we are here. As it is, our qualifications, and the nature of our attendance here means we will likely learn much more from you than you will from us.

We do not thereby wish to discourage you from asking information from us about the CanRCs, but we do think it's good to be realistic. It is also not a surprise to you. It is evident from your deputies' reports that you have had contact with CanRC committees other than the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad.

### Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary

Of the few things that we wish to mention here tonight, the one at the top would be our sincere thanks to the Free Reformed

Churches for your loyal commitment to what is now called the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary in Hamilton. It is not just an institution that you support, but also the principle that the churches maintain an institution for the training for the ministry. We express our sincere thanks and deep appreciation for your love and support – increased financial support – for all that the seminary stands for and does.

The Lord has blessed the seminary with a good supply of able and diligent professors. This you also know from the fact that professors of the college have visited here, and one of the current professors comes from here.

### URCNA

There may be some concern from your side when you hear / read rumblings about non-federational institutions for the training for the ministry being talked about in our discussions with the URCNA.

At Synod Burlington our commitment was reaffirmed that a seminary governed and operated by the federation would continue to have a solid place. Whatever would come of a union with the URCNA, and whatever configuration of training for the ministry would be agreed to for a united federation, this important piece would remain.

Which brings us to the topic of the unity of the Canadian Reformed Churches with the United Reformed Churches.

They are our close sisters at home. Many Canadian Reformed Churches are in fairly close proximity to United Reformed Churches. Members sit at one another's Lord's Supper celebrations. The pulpits are open for one another's ministers, and in places ministers from both United and Canadian Reformed Churches are included together in the regular monthly pulpit exchange.

This is all functioning within the context of sister federations side by side.

Whether there is clear movement forward at the level of becoming one federation is another matter.

There were three combined committees set in place ... one was for a Common Song Book. This committee does not seem to be active at the moment, though much work has been done. Its work seems to be on the shelf.

Another committee was for a Joint Church Order; such a document has been proposed – known as the Proposed Joint Church Order. This committee seems to be finished most of its work. Its work, too, is on the shelf at the moment.

It should be said that this Proposed Church Order has no function outside of a future united federation. It does not presently have a life of its own in the churches.

Though persons and/or churches might have attractions to or reservations about some of the content of that proposed church order, it is not a functioning document among us.

Our current Church Order functions well in our CanRC context and any changes to it would have to come in the church orderly manner.

The third committee was the Theological Education Committee.

This committee's work seems to have run stuck because of the different approaches to theological education in each federation. It appears that after an initial flurry of activity with these committees and in the churches, there is now some settlement and less activity, though there is a general appreciation for, and appropriation of, how far we have come together.

Perhaps it is a natural breather to assess where we are so far. Perhaps there are reservations about going further forward. Time will tell. And the Lord will lead his churches.

We are thankful to have sisters as ecclesiastically and geographically close as the URCNAs are. They are vibrant

churches beside us in the service of the Lord in North America.

### Book of Praise

Going on to another area: the Book of Praise.

From your deputies' report, and the short discussion this afternoon, it is evident that you are well-acquainted with what the Canadian Reformed Churches have in the Authorized Provisional Version of the Book of Praise. You have worked through some of the content.

It is being widely used in the Canadian Reformed Churches in a period of testing before the next synod.

Your deputies have had some contact with the Standing Committee for the Book of Praise. And your deputies appear to be disappointed in the apparent inability to contribute meaningfully to the production of an eventual new Book of Praise in Canada. We would encourage you to press on in exactly the way you wish to do, in terms of influencing the review process.

Although our last synod may have put a time-line on the final approval, and although the Standing Committee for the Book of Praise may have its own way of working and expectation, ultimately both we and you would want the best Book of Praise possible in the end.

Many of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches, and many of the schools, are using a bound copy of the authorized provisional Book of Praise. A nice production, and the binding still has some good years in it.

If the churches have to use this provisional version for six years instead of three – for testing, reviewing, gathering feedback – some might argue that that would be getting our money's worth out of a book.

We say: please do as our Synod Burlington suggested / invited you to do. Let your frustration turn into a serious and zealous contribution to our Book of Praise.

There may be many things to speak about, but we limit ourselves to one more:

### Relations with churches abroad

As I read it last week in one of the local bulletins here: relations with churches abroad are perhaps the biggest item on your agenda. And you have your concerns. It is as with other areas of life – where relations are good and things are running smoothly it is a rich blessing to all involved. It is in the forming of relations, establishing on the right terms, and then when relations are tense, where the hard work is, and it is sometimes painful.

Our last Synod saw the need for a more dedicated and intense level of attention to our sister churches in the Netherlands because of our concerns with developments there. A sub-committee of the Committee on Relations with Church Abroad was formed. The sub-committee has been doing its work. Visits have been made, letters written, meetings held. At the moment, it seems that the concerns with our sister churches in the Netherlands continue in our sub-committee.

You, too, have been paying close attention in Holland. It is difficult for those who are the objects of such close attention.

May the Lord grant His grace and the refreshing work of His Spirit, and give you the courage and the love to stand in the truth for the cause of Christ, the cause to which our mutual sister in the Netherlands has also been called, our mutual sister from whom we have both received so much.

In New Zealand we have more recently established a sister-church relationship, which we also call ecclesiastical fellowship. But they don't. I think we are still their sister church.

The Reformed Churches of New Zealand have lately introduced a new relationship, ecclesiastical fellowship, with the Christian Reformed Church of Australia. And this ecclesiastical fellowship is deliberately not a sister church relation. So it can become a little confusing – not to them, but to us.

Also perhaps confusing for us as to what it might really mean with their relation with the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia (CRCAustralia).

We still have to come to a discussion on that with the RCNZ.

It should be said that when we entered into a relation of ecclesiastical fellowship with your neighbors of interest, the RCNZ, it was, among other things,

1. with the clear understanding that their relation with the CRCAustralia was under strain and going in a certain direction, and
2. we would stand beside you in expressing concern with regard to their relation with the CRCAustralia.

We have expressed our concern.

As the RCNZ relation to the CRCAustralia has changed, it is going to be important for us also to see what it is. It seems from their side ecclesiastical fellowship is the next step down from a sister church relation under strain. Perhaps not. But from our side, it seems ecclesiastical fellowship is a better and less strained relation than a sister church relationship under strain.

One might be forgiven for interpreting this not as a downgrade in relations but an upgrade of sorts. It remains to be seen what it is, and perhaps we will learn more when we are here among you.

We would, anyway, wish to assure you that your concern was ours, and was conveyed, and we have not changed in our

level of concern with a relationship of the RCNZ with the CRCAustralia.

Beyond these few items, we can report that we are thankful to the Lord of the church for His care and provision for the Canadian Reformed Churches. The Word is proclaimed, baptism and the Lord's Supper are administered, many members of the next generation respond to the promises of their covenant God. The churches continue in the work of mission. It used to be that we could mention all the mission endeavors in a short list. Now I don't dare to start that, other than to say that you and we do have a more acute interest in each other's contacts and work in China and Indonesia.

We are thankful for what the Lord in His grace has given, not just to us, but to so many others, who receive the Word and rejoice that Jesus is Lord and that through the forgiveness of sins in his name, there is eternal life.

Brothers, may the Lord bless your assembly and give you what is needed to do the difficult but necessary work of the churches before you, for the honor of the Head of the church, and for the blessing of His churches in the bond here, and for the extended benefit of your sister churches abroad.

#### **Appendix 1e: Speech by Ev R Rehyard on behalf of the Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Calvin (GGRC)**

Esteemed Brothers,

It is a great joy for me to address you in this Synod on behalf of the Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRC).

First of all, I would like to praise the Lord our Triune God, for His love and protection that we may be here in your midst.

Secondly, I would like to thank you for your invitation. We are so happy to be here. We thank you for your help and support that we can come here in your synod.



If we count well, now our relation with your church has been going on for more than 20 years. Through that contact and relationship, we have learn a lot in order to grow in reformed characters. That was already happened via Rev A J Pol and the coming of Rev Eli Fangidae and Rev Yonson Dethan to Perth in year 1991. We thank the Lord that through your help, Rev Yonson Dethan could go to Canada and studied there and that Rev Yonson Dethan has become a great blessing for us in GGRC. Through his knowledge that he got from Waimarangu under the teaching of Rev Pol and his time of having practical observation and orientation in here and then later on at the college in Canada, he has shared so much knowledge for the Reformed churches as well as the communities in Indonesia. We thank the Lord for his talents and love and reformed teaching and leadership through seminars, running reformed schools (as well as theological school), preaching and visiting, the Lord has prepared many future leaders for our federation and for many other people in the community in our province and even for the Indonesian government. We thank you for that since that was also your formal plan, when you planned to send him to Canada in order to prepare future leaders as you mentioned in your letter in year 1992 and synod decision in the year 1995. The only think that has still not been realized is that your synod decision in year 2006, in which you decided to utilize Rev Yonson's knowledge and get Rev Yawan and other young minister to spend some time here. We hope that through this opportunity, we still able to continue this relationship in order to help prepare the future leaders of the church and communities as well as the member of our federation to keep growing in biblical teaching as it is summarized in reformed confessions. WE also hope that as the churches grow, we may keep giving witness to others and bring the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to many pagans in the surrounding islands of Timor, Rote, Sabu, Sumba and Flores as well as many muslim in this more than 240 million people of Indonesia. Now, we are also opening some wings for GGRC and bring the reformed teaching to Jawa in cities of Jakarta and Malang in order to

win Indonesia. There are three federations in Java that have asked Rev Yonson for his teaching at their local churches as well as at their theological College to be one of their professor there. This is a golden opportunity in order to bring the reformed teaching in Indonesia. It will be nice if some time you could also join with this effort and new challenge of GGRC in order to win Indonesia. Please pray for us brothers as we love to grow more and more in reformed teaching. Please help and support us brother if you have time for that.

Up until now we as local church as well as church federation are function well. Your delegates have seen that. We thank you for coming to our synod last year in NBS. We are still planning to continue our synod this year yet. We will let you know as soon as we are ready. We were so glad that every time we have synod, you always sent your delegates to come to our synod. We notice you always faithful to come to our Synod, since our synod in the year 1991, 1993, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2002, 2004, 2007 and our recent Synod in the year 2011. We thank you for your faithfulness in attending at our synod. You were not only attending at our synod, but also notice that you also helped and supported us. We praise the Lord and thank Him for your wisdom, help and support and advice. Also through this relation with you here, we as federation may grown more and more in reformed teaching and characters. God is Great and amazingly your delegates came to our recent synod in NBS last year, they have seen how our church are function well as a federation.

We thank the Lord for the reconciliation with Rev Fangidae and GGRM (Galilea Church). Your delegates have seen that even too. We hope that this church (Galilea church) that has joined us will stay reformed and hold the confessions and that they will not have women in office as they have promised us in the letter of reconciliation and as it was confirmed in our previous synod last year.

Now we already have two classis. One is in Rote Island, while the other is in Kupang and Sabu Island. The one in Rote

Island have met last year and is going to be held again this month. The one in Sabu is planning to be held in this coming month of October. These Classis are very productive for us. We are planning to have the classis meeting every three months if we have enough fund for it, but if not then we will do it at least once a year. We have some mission post on the islands of Rote and Sabu. Last year we established a new local church in Rote Island. There are so many people there are so interest in Reformed teaching. Thus we are also putting some time in reaching this people. On the other hand, the churches and mission post in Sabu Island are also in our focus. Our problem is that we do not have enough fund for that, but even though there is not much fund, the Lord is always great and we use our own ability and potentials in reaching the pagans in and nominal Christian in the island of Sabu, Rote and Timor. So far all our local churches are growing very well and we thank the Lord for that.

You might be wondering about our relationship with GGRI. Yes, we do have a sister church relationship with the brothers from GGRI, but it seems that there no much cooperation between us yet. From our side we thing that it will be nice, if we can do some practical cooperation together as sister church. It was too bad that in their recent national synod in Papua the brothers did not invite us to attend at their national synod otherwise it could be a good opportunity for us to share the knowledge, tight the relationship and or discuss together on how can we work together hand in hand to build the church of our Lord and to fulfill one of our desire and dream which is to win Indonesia.

Finally, let me close this speech the word of God from Psalm 23:

“The LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.” (NIV)

Brothers, thank you for your welcome and hospitality. May the God grand you wisdom and strength for your synod. May the

Lord also bless our relationship and contact. On behalf of deputy for relationship with churches abroad of GGRC.

Toot ziens

With humbly submitted, Ev Ruben Rehyard.

**Appendix 1f: Response to the address of Ev R Rehyard by Rev W van der Jagt**

Esteemed Br Evangelist and principal Ruben Rehyard, Br Reverend Yonson Dethan, Delegates of the Calvinist Reformed Churches in NTT, that is with churches mainly on the island of Timor (Kupang), Sabu, Roti and Flores; brother chairman, brothers and sisters,

Thank you for you being present here at our synod and thank you for addressing us on behalf of your churches. In your address you mentioned a few facts from the history of the relationship between the GGRC and the Free Reformed Churches of Australia. And you can be sure that we as Australian churches are thankful that it was possible to support you in the past and at present. The deputies thankfully reported to our synod that it was possible at the Synod 2011 of your churches to restore the unity between what is called the Gallilea church with at that time Rev Fangidae as minister and the GGRC. Your synod in 2011 could not finalize some of what we would call the 'church orderly' aspects of this unity. And you can be sure that we as Australian churches look forward to the finalization of that unity between two church groups that separated in the past. It is a work of the Lord when further unity can be established.

Some listeners to your address have probably noticed that there is a little bit of a gap between the visit of our deputies to your Synod in 2007 and to your Synod in the year 2011. There is a reason behind the fact that we had less contact. For a while the deputies of the Australian churches got the

impression that the GGRC were less interested in contact with our churches, that the contacts between the GGRI and the GGRC were somewhat restrained and that establishing a common theological college in Indonesia did not receive the attention and cooperation as desired. For, and that is important also for the people in the public gallery, the GGRC churches and the FRC Australia have not established a full sister relationship as churches.

This has to do with what the Lord says about the church and the way the Australian churches have applied God's Word towards our approach of sister-relationships as churches. The Australian churches take their point of departure God's Word for instance in Ephesians 4 as almost summarised in the Words of the Lord as incorporated in John's gospel 'that they all may one.' (John 17: 20). Or as the Holy Spirit expresses Himself in the words of the Apostle Paul: "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." And according to these directions churches that recognize each other as true and faithful churches as to put their efforts in becoming one. The fact that we as FRC Australia do not have a full sister relationship with your churches has to be seen and a strong encouragement to put every effort in working together as GGRC churches to seek this unity with the GGRI. As Australian churches we realise that seeking unity takes time. The desire and actions to become one has also to come from the GGRI and at a personal level we often have to restrain personal ambitions and imperfections. But we have the encouragement of the same apostle Paul when he writes that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ "would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the

inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; ... (and) to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think ... be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.” And as you can read in the previous decisions of synods and the proposals of our deputies you can be sure that the Australian churches will encourage your churches efforts in seeking this unity with everything we are able to do.

It is exciting when you mention in your address that you have even contact with Reformed colleges and Christians in other parts of Indonesia. You can be sure that our deputies are also very interested in hearing about them so that we can be helpful in promoting the preaching of the gospel in your country. This is also very close to our heart now. We will hear at synod from our deputies that there is the request to have a sister church relationship in the three parts of the bond of churches of the GGRI in the province Sumba-NTT, the province Papua (previously Irian Jaya) and the province Kalimantan Barat. And further unity would be a great blessing also for the theological college of the GGRI. Brothers of the GGRC, just pass on our strong encouragement to become one with the GGRI, our sister-churches in Indonesia and your own bond of churches and we all will greatly benefit of the unity of the church.

Seeking the unity of the churches is an enormous task ahead of us and together with the fact that tomorrow you have to travel back to your home country I will close with the words of Psalm 121: “I will lift up my eyes to the hills – From whence comes my help? My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth. ... The LORD is your keeper; The LORD is your shade at your right hand. ... The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore.”

Brothers delegates at Synod, brothers and sister let us encourage our brs delegates from the GGRC with the four verses of Psalm 121.

**Appendix 1g: Speech by Rev N Biha on behalf of the Gereja-Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia (GGRI)**

Esteemed brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ,

First of all, we should praise the Lord, our heavenly Father, who always takes care of us and protects us as His congregation. It is through His grace and providence that we can meet each other as fellow believers, from the FRCA and delegates from other sister-churches as well, who attend the event of the assembly of the national synod of the FRCA, here in the church of Armadale.

Of course, we are here on the invitation of the deputies of the FRCA on the contact with the Reformed Churches in Indonesia (RCI). Therefore we express our gratitude, because the invitation really underlines the close and long-lasting sister-relation between the FRCA and the RCI, and we believe that this relation will be strong until our Lord Jesus Christ will come back, because we have strong belief in the Gospel (Rom 1:17) and with the help of our Lord Jesus Christ and the grace of the Holy Spirit we are committed to be faithful to the truth of the Word of God as confessed in our documents of creed (3 Forms of Unity).

Further, at this happy day, I may explain that, where in the past until now the FRCA had a sister-relation with the RCI just in the NTT province (GGRI-NTT), at this moment I am representing not only RCI-NTT, but also Reformed Churches in Indonesia as a whole, which consist of 3 regional synods, namely RCI of the NTT-province, RCI of the Kalimantan Barat province and RCI of the Papua-province. We have agreed to form a National Synod, which was held in its first assembly in Papua February 21-24 2012. At that historical meeting, the FRCA was represented by Rev Arthur Van Delden who made the statement that as the national synod of the RCI was formed, the FRCA enter into a sister-relation with the whole RCI in the 3 provinces via the deputies on relations of the National Synod of the RCI.

On behalf of the whole RCI, I express our gratitude for the presence, participation, encouragement and good advice which were given by your delegation at the national synod of the RCI in Sentani-Jayapura. We hope that the establishment of your relation with the national RCI will result in a role and participation of the FRCA not only in the NTT region but also in the RCI Kalbar and RCI Papua as well. A way of support we are hoping for, is that you as synod of the FRCA may consider to support our deputies on relations, appointed by the first synod in Sentani, in order to make their job useful and fruitful. We have to admit that our national deputies at this moment do not have an operational budget yet. Our financial capacities are very limited, therefore we will ask for support to our 3 sister-churches, FRCA, Can RC and RCN.

Esteemed synod,

Reflecting the recent developments in the RCI, we should praise our Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the church. Although there are ethnic differences, and quite a local distance, we feel urged and called to be united in the unity of the true faith, and we have experienced that ethnic differences and a local distance do not become a hindrance for us to unify, according to the prayer of our Lord Jesus in his prayer as record in **John 17:20-21**: *"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me."*

We realize that indeed the logical consequence of the unity in doctrine and church order we adhere to, makes the unity and community of the RCI something for sure. Therefore, let me invite the Calvinism Reformed Churches of NTT (CRC-NTT), whose delegates were present too, and the Reformed Churches whose predecessor for the moment is the Smithville Reformed Church of the CanRC, to see what the Lord has done in the midst of the RCI. We as RCI, 3 regional synods, are united and became a national synod. We do believe that it



will be beautiful in the eyes of our Savior when the CRC-NTT and the Reformed Churches which is under the care of the Smithville Reformed Church, will be united with the RCI. Yes. We will become a federal synod. Aren't we sister-churches already? We live in the same area, don't we? Our Creed and church order is the same. There is no reason not to unify. Therefore, we hope that the deputies of the Can RC and the delegates of the CRC-NTT who were here at this nice moment, will pay attention to our calling. We are informed that the deputies of the CRC are striving for a sister relation with the Can RC at the synod of the CanRC next year. We are on the opinion that such a step will be counterproductive for the unity of the CRC and the RCI. We think that it will be a wiser step to consider to encourage the CRC to join the RCI and then, in the future the FRCA, the Can RC and the RCN will have a relation with one just federation, the RCI, which is their sister church already.

Further, we should praise and thank for the commitment of the FRCA to support the RCI building up their churches in a reformed character, especially the support for the theological education, personally and financially. At the National Synod level, the RCI have decided to establish a Reformed Theological College (STT) for the whole RCI in Waingapu, East Sumba. Although the campus facilities and the other infrastructure is just temporarily, the STT is showing progress, with the help of the Lord, it consists of 15 students and 5 postgraduate students at other colleges. The prospective for the next course 2012/2013 is 20 new students who have enrolled already, includes 3 students from Papua according to information from the RCI-Papua. It means that there will be more than 25 students then. There are 6 fulltime lecturers, 11 part time, and 2 flying lecturers (Rev van Delden from FRCA and Rev Boersma from RCN). The STT RCI is not yet officially registered, therefore the STT RCI signed a MOU with STT Salem in Malang, which is officially has been registered. There the students from the STT RCI can finish their bachelor degree. We consider STT Salem is healthy in doctrine. This

college is supported by the Presbyterian Kosin church in Korea, a sister church of the FRCA. Three students have just finished their postgraduate study there.

It is clear that the RCI really needs their own STT which is truly reformed and well qualified both regarding its campus as its lecturers. We do hope that the building of the campus can start this year.

On this point we must mention too the presence of the Theological College which is built by the missionary of the Smithville Church by the Rev Edwar Dethan in Timor. Although the CanRC and the RCI are sister-churches already, no cooperation has been achieved yet between the two institutions of theological colleges. Therefore, we hope that, soon in the future will be held a meeting between the two institutions to obtain cooperation which will strengthen each other, and even the unification of the two colleges. We believe that if the CRCA will recommend the synod of the CanRC to encourage the church of Smithville and his missionary Edwar Dethan to join the RCI, the perspective of the STT RCI will be better, more solid and stronger which result in producing a clearer and stronger voice of the reformed doctrine in the NTT in particular, and Indonesia in general. We are afraid that if we continue on our own path as we are doing now, there will no voiced be heard but only the noise.

In this way the original purpose of the scholarship for study in Hamilton on behalf of the FRCA to Br Rev Yonson Dethan and to Br Rev Pila Njuka and on behalf of the RCN to Br Rev Edwar Dethan will be reached, ie to build a Reformed Theological College for the RCI.

At this point I urge, in the framework of sister-church relation and cooperation, the three sister-churches FRCA, CanRC and RCN not to hesitate to continue advising us and stimulating us, and facilitating us to unify. I thank the Lord that at the moment we were preparing our speech to this synod, the CRCA sent us a letter with the purpose to facilitate RCI and CRC to unify.

Beloved brethren,

The last point I would like to put forward is that really the call to all the churches of the Lord in this world to apply the truth of the Word of God, will always heavily be obstructed. Although Indonesia is the nation with the most numerous muslim population in the world, I am from a Province whose community are 80% Christian people. But from 80% Christian, just a small part of it is still faithful to the Word of the Lord. The greatest challenges for us are liberalism, pluralism, syncretism and the charismatic movement. For example, we are often scorned as old fashioned churches and discriminating people, because we don't allow woman-office bearers in our churches. We are considered to be sectarians because we don't erect a Christmas tree on December 25th. But we realize that our brothers and sisters in the FRCA experience the same challenges, although in a different manner. May we together keep faithful to the Word of the Lord and pray for each other.

May the FRCA, via this synod assembly, continue to express the commitment to be faithful to the word of the Lord. And then, in a mood of togetherness we as sister-churches will continue to do what we have to do, ie to support each other and to advice each other. We believe that the Holy Spirit will grant the blessing of His wisdom to all the delegates, with the result that all decisions will be based on the Word of God, to the up-building of His Church, and the honor of His name only. To the FRCA-deputies on relations with the RCI whose period will end at this synod, we say thanks for our good relation during a long time, and to the new deputies which will be appointed by this synod, we wish you a good start. With the help of our Lord Jesus Christ we are ready to continue our sister-relation. May the synod do a nice job, and may our Lord Jesus Christ, our King and the Head of the church, bless you all. Amen.

**Appendix 1h: Speech by Rev JA Breytenbach on behalf of the Free Reformed Churches of South Africa (FRCSA)**

Esteemed Chairman and Brothers in our Lord Jesus Christ,

***Introduction***

On behalf of your sister in South Africa I greet you with brotherly love and affection! I do this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of the Church.

I am delegated by the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa to your synod. We are tied by family ties to many South African immigrants in this vast country of yours, especially in Western Australia. Our loss is your gain. With the church of Armadale we are also connected in another way. Reverend Hagg, whom has been called by Armadale, grew up in South Africa. He was theologically trained by our churches.

***I want to point to some challenges of our Federation of Churches.***

The Free Reformed Churches in South Africa (FRCSA) are mostly Afrikaans speaking Churches. In the past ten years our Lord blessed our mission work in such a way that three former mission churches have been instituted and became part of our Federation. The two churches in the Pretoria region are Sotho speaking and the former mission church in Belhar, Cape Town is Afrikaans speaking.

All the older churches of the federation use Afrikaans in their worship services. But in Classis North, the official language at our classis meetings is English. The official language at our classis meetings in Classis South is Afrikaans. The official language at our synods is English. Generally speaking, the younger generation in our churches is proficient in the English language. We have the privilege as community of Free Reformed Churches in South Africa, that we may follow the development of church life and theology in Southern Africa as well as in Australia, Canada and the Netherlands with ease.

That is because of historical ties we have, but also because of our cultural diversity and the need to use different languages to communicate to each other in the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa. For most Afrikaans speaking members of our churches Dutch literature is easy to read. We therefore benefit from both the rich theological heritage from the Dutch speaking reformed churches as well as from the English speaking reformed churches.

There are eight instituted churches in our Federation. Seven missionaries, six in Pretoria and one in Cape Town, are doing mission and church planting work.

We are called to evangelise our surrounding world in South Africa... and therefore we may not stay in the comfort zone of our own culture or longing for the church culture of our Dutch origins or the church culture of relatives in other parts of the world. The challenge for our churches is not only to be one organisation with our former and present mission churches, but to be one true church community in our South African situation with our protection guaranteed in our Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ.

You will recognise our challenges. You also live in a secular country and in a pluralistic society. Our population consists of about 75% nominal Christians. Knowledge of the true Gospel and obedience to God is decreasing in our country.

The reformed faith was planted in South Africa in 1652. However, by studying the sermons from the seventeenth century onwards, we can conclude that most sermons were from a rational point of view. And up to this day reason influence many traditional Afrikaans speaking nominal Christians.

And we as churches may not boast. The evangelical movement attracts many Christians. We have to struggle against paganism and syncretism. Individualism and the secular society, in which we live, place threats to our members. Self-directed religion is typical in our cities as well

as in our towns. People want to be comforted in their material wellbeing. People are seeking God, but at the same time they seek their own fortune and try to make their own future.

A democratic government could not provide to the masses the wealth they hoped for. Poverty, HIV/AIDS, violence, crime and many injustices characterises our society. Where many people are leaving the unfaithful church, to live without any ties with any church, our churches have still a challenge to proclaim the Gospel for the glory of God.

### ***The Growing interaction***

In the past decade there was growing interaction between the two church federations of the FRCA and the FRCSA. Reverend Retief was called as minister of Kelmscott and recently Reverend Hagg accepted the call as minister of Armadale.

Your generous and ongoing support and encouragement of our churches make us thankful. You have a special bond with the church of Bethal. In the past you supported the work regarding the “verontrustes”.

When Bethal needed a Minister, you have supported the congregation to buy a manse. Your churches committed yourselves to a substantial amount of money every year, for funding a minister for Bethal. Without your support the congregation would suffer without regular ministry of the Gospel. We pray that through your support and encouragement the Lord will bless the work in the church of Bethal and that the Gospel will be expanded in the town and surroundings.

### ***Needy Churches***

We live in a difficult economic situation in South Africa. The political situation and the high crime rate do not stimulate economic investment. People are losing jobs. Living costs are rising. Our churches are directly affected. We are depended on support from our sister churches abroad for

much of our work as federation. We receive 95% of our income for mission work from our sister churches abroad. For that we are thankful. However we are not able to justify that any more churches totally depended on funding from outside, be instituted.

The budget for the work of each of our different Deputies had been revised by our Ad Hoc Synod Pretoria April 2012. In future all Deputies should include a properly motivated and sustainable operational plan with at least a three year budget in their synod reports. Criteria such as dependency on money from abroad, the federation's own ability to contribute, and the availability of resources should be reflected. The ground of this is that as part of our stewardship we need to be accountable how and for what purpose we use the financial gifts provided to us. Sustainability can only be considered if all Deputies (because all is interlinked) present a proper budget, including running costs and capital expenditure and resources. The different Deputies will communicate information concerning needed funding to the consistories on an annual basis.

A differentiated contribution model for funding the work of the federation will be phased in, based on the contribution ability of congregations. Needy churches that do not contribute at the moment should be encouraged to contribute according to the new model. Also mission churches that have not yet been instituted, have to contribute.

In the past the ministers of our Churches were properly supported and cared for, based on Western standards. However, we are living in a very diverse country and difference in wealth and income is a reality. The Federation discussed this issue thoroughly. The norm should be to "take proper care" and not to compare stipends within the federation. Therefore stipends should be based on what the needs for the minister are and not what the minister wants. The principle should be to support a minister based on the average income levels of the congregation he is serving. However a number of

elements of the stipend that are not related to the income level of the congregation should be supported by the churches via Art 11 Deputies for Needy Churches. Basic elements like food, clothing, housing, and electricity, for the minister and his family should be provided by the congregation.

The level of ownership and responsibility of members of needy churches is often low. It will be difficult to change the present practices regarding supporting ministers via Art 11 but we want to avoid becoming a needy church federation. Following this approach the support by Deputies Needy Churches should reduce. The Federation hope to be less dependent on financial support by sister churches abroad.

### ***Training for the Ministry***

Training for the ministry is an important item on our agenda as well as on yours. The expansion of the Gospel as well as the protection of the flock is dependent on the sound reformed training of ministers.

Regarding Theological Training our situation is complex.

Our training for Afrikaans speaking brothers started in 1997, with the motivation that theological training should be by the churches for the churches. The Sotho speaking brothers of our mission churches have been trained at Mukhanyo Theological College (MTC), an institution of the Reformed Churches of South Africa (RCSA). For our brothers of the mission churches, after completion of their studies at MTC, there was a Plus-program that was lectured by ministers of our Churches, developed and coordinated by one of our missionaries.

The coloured Afrikaans speaking brothers in Belhar, Cape Town were trained by the ministers of our churches with the help of George Whitefield College (GWC) of the Church of England in South Africa and other individual lecturers of Reformed persuasion that were contracted.



However, our training for the Afrikaans speaking brothers was dissolved in 2005. In the place of the training for our Afrikaans speaking brothers by our churches, Synod Cape Town 2008 implemented a Ministerial Training Structure (MTS), coordinating and developing the training in the Federation, building capacity and see that all our students are being trained on the same standards. Two coordinators, responsible to Deputies Curators, were appointed. Mentors for the students have also been appointed.

Our Sotho speaking brothers are still trained at MTC, an institution of the RCSA.

And our Afrikaans speaking brothers of the mission churches in Cape Town are trained by GWC. Our Deputies Curators signed an agreement with GWC. According to the agreement, we may replace some of their “church specific” subjects for the B Th degree with some of our own, and we may lecture it, and GWC’s students may take it as elective subjects.

Our Afrikaans speaking brothers from the older churches were always advised to go to Kampen or Hamilton for theological training. However as decided by our synod Pretoria 2011, we now advise our Afrikaans speaking brothers to go only to Hamilton.

And we are still working towards a coordinated training for all our churches. We let our brothers from the mission churches go to Hamilton as part of the completion of their studies.

In 2010 we came involved in the Reformed Theological Training Initiative (RTTI). The RTTI was initiated by a few RCSA (Reformed Churches in SA) churches in Pretoria to set up an institute with a focus on training for ministers, missionaries and office bearers in Africa. It should be a decentralised model with agreements and relationships with different training institutions, where students should study at different places depending on their needs and location.

Synod Pretoria 2011 decided to participate in the initiative for the RTTI: working towards a single and local training institution

suitable for all the theological students from the FRCSA, in line with the decisions being made regarding the (MTS) Ministerial Training Structure. It was decided to continue to work towards a Ministerial Training Structure with uniform standards for all students in the federation, starting to compile a training manual with profiles, outcomes and learning goals.

Unfortunately our churches had to withdraw from the RTTI initiative at the end of 2011 because of internal difficulties in the RCSA churches. It is our observation that regarding the training of ministers for the churches, this initiative had failed.

Our brothers will be trained by Hamilton in future. We are thankful for the invitation to make use of their training. The theological institution of our Canadian sister is important to us. However, because of practical reasons not all our brothers will be able to study in Hamilton all the time.

Will it be feasible to offer the first year of (Hamilton's) theological training in South Africa? Are there possibilities of distance theological training from Hamilton with the use of facilitators in South Africa, given the context of our brothers in the mission churches?

We ask this and other questions. Therefore we will follow your deliberations and the progress of your training for the ministry with interest. Later this year our federation will have an "indaba" (or meeting), planning for the future of our training for the ministry. Much should be gained by learning from your decisions.

### ***Contacts with Churches inside South Africa***

The Free Reformed Churches in South Africa (FRCSA) have regular contacts with the Reformed Churches in South Africa (RCSA).

We also have contacts with the Free Church of South Africa. These churches are the fruit of the mission work of the Free Church of Scotland in the Eastern Cape during the nineteenth century.

Through the theological training of our students in Cape Town with George Whitefield College, we have contacts with the Church of England in South Africa (CESA). CESA seceded from the Anglican Church at the end of the nineteenth century in reaction to the Liberal Theology and criticism of Scripture by the Bishop Colenso.

The RCSA with whom we have contacts for years now, turned down the plea for installing women in office of elder, however women deacons are being installed in the RCSA federation by some of the churches.

The FRCSA focus on local contacts with the RCSA, and our Deputies for contacts with South African Churches have to stimulate, monitor and assist churches in local contacts. During the past years there were growing contacts in Pretoria between the two Afrikaans speaking Free Reformed Churches and three of the Afrikaans speaking RCSA Churches. Local discussions should be from the point of view that both churches are prepared to be subject to all that the Lord asks in His Word on church unity. Churches should report to classis and ask for advice from classis. Discussions should be inside the framework of what our Federation decided on church unity. We are in the situation that our churches as well as the RCSA churches have sister church relations with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, although we and the RCSA churches are not sisters.

### ***Relationships Churches Abroad***

May the Lord guide you in all your relationships and may He bless your relationships with sister churches abroad – learning from each other and where much patience is required of you. With God's Word as your guide you may continue full of hope. He brings together and holds together those who belong together. *John 17:11:* <sup>11</sup> Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.....

Brothers we are inspired by your faithfulness to the Lord and His Word. We observe your courage and pray that you make wise decisions in your deliberations regarding sister churches abroad and that it will serve the true unity in Christ.

### **Conclusion**

Thank you for your hospitality.

Past Sunday in Byford, I could experience the beautiful unity with brothers and sisters in our Lord, listening together to the voice of the Good Shepherd.

Thank you that you gave me the privilege to follow your deliberations and your decisions, and that I could address you on behalf of the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa. May God bless you in the daily life of your churches, the Free Reformed Churches of Australia. May you always be under the peaceful reign of God.

We pray for our Lord's guidance in your deliberations at this Synod. We pray that your decisions will be to the benefit of the Gospel and to the glory of God.

I conclude with Romans 5:1-5:

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup>and perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup>Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

**Appendix 1i: Response to the address of Rev P Meijer  
by Rev PKA deBoer**

Rev Meijer, brother de Jong and brother Wezeman; fellow delegates and guests:

We can appreciate, Rev Meijer, how in your speech you began with focusing our attention on praising the LORD for His wondrous deeds in creation. You referred to what we are taught to sing in one of the last Psalms, Psalm 148. It is indeed good to be united together as churches and the sheep of His flock in many places of this world to rejoice in Him. The unity of praising Him is gift and blessing. To receive this blessing and come to this unity we also realise how the LORD directs us in the very first of these Palms to grow like a tree beside the living streams of water. These streams of water is to delight in His law. What the LORD teaches us to sing in this Psalm is foundational to our life as His children. We know that we often fail in keeping it and are therefore very thankful that He has sent His own well beloved Son to render the obedience that we have not given and pay for the guilt of all our transgressions.

We thank you for the contacts that that we as deputies could have with you these past three years. The exchange of letters, face to face meetings, while direct, were brotherly. The hospitality shown to our delegates at your Synod Hardewijk and the work you did to organise the *Foreigners Week* was much appreciated. It was good for all of us to now meet with you face to face here at our synod.

When our previous synod we expressed concern for you; our sister churches in the Netherlands, we did so with great sadness and much prayer. We asked the churches to frequently remember you in prayer. We sought the LORD to grant that you might respond positively to our exhortation and embrace God's Word in both confession and practise. Included in the task of this Synod is to judge whether there has been such a positive response.

When we as in our deputies' report again express further concern and even propose to put our relation under strain, please do not perceive that as if we think ourselves so much better than you. We often fall very short. We confess our full reliance on Christ and forgiveness through His blood.

In your speech, Rev Meijer, we heard that you understand how in a sister-church relation there may be a proper place for admonition and criticism. You added that such admonition and criticism need sound basis suggesting that there was something lacking here. As an example you refer to our mention of a classis that made a decision about permitting members to have their children blessed instead of baptised. You say that this was not a decision of your General Synods. You say to us that it is: *not your task to monitor ecclesiastical bodies in foreign churches, except for the General Synod*. We will leave it to the delegates of this Synod to read and consider our report and determine whether we as deputies have overstepped our bounds. However, we are confident that you will agree that any ecclesiastical relation must rest on the true confession of God's Word.

When referring to our confessions and what the Lord teaches in His word, we know very well that at times things happen within a bond of churches that would not meet general approval should it receive attention at the major assemblies. At times, it may also happen among us. We certainly are not out on a hunting expedition to see whether we can find some possible sin or weakness with which we may accuse you. You mentioned and acknowledged the increasing diversity among your churches. You also acknowledge influence of the evangelical and charismatic movement. We too, are not immune from those influences, and notice that in this regard we as bonds of churches in the world face common challenges. Our society is not so different from yours. In this regard we can discuss and listen to each other also as we look at the life of our local churches and members.

We find it very sad that churches found it necessary to leave your bond; first in 2003 to form their own bond and more recently some have left forming their own temporary bond. Among those that have left, we hear an earnest cry for you to return to the truth of God's Word as upheld in the confessions. In the past we have warned you as a bond of churches regarding various matters. While we appreciate that we could speak to you about all these things in the past and at times, some concerns were somewhat alleviated, it appears to us that as a bond of churches you are beginning to travel in a different direction.

Your Synod Hardewijk showed the kindness of arranging a meeting at the Theological University to talk and speak about hermeneutics. While we appreciate it, we did not find it all that helpful for such a meeting has no ecclesiastical status. You furthermore invite us to a conference set up by Kampen and Hamilton in 2013 to elaborate on the reformed principles of hermeneutics. Such conferences will be of benefit in discussing matters and understanding each other better, it again does not alleviate our desire to discuss these matters directly with your churches.

We have pondered long over the things happening among you and certainly do not want to come to hasty conclusions. As you well know, it is not only us, the FRC who voice these kinds of concerns; our common sister-churches in Canada, we were informed, have set up a special subcommittee to look at what is happening among you. Two bonds of churches, the Orthodox Presbyterian Churches and the United Reformed Churches in America have declined your offer to enter into sister-church relations while expressing similar kind of concerns. We are aware that there are many faithful in your churches, who truly desire hold onto the Word of God as summarised in the confessions. We wish to humbly encourage them to remain faithful and boldly confess the truth. And so we, as your sister, wish to stand beside you in that struggle, in a loving and caring way.

May the Lord strengthen and encourage you to praise the Him in the work of His creation while growing in true faithfulness and may you be nourished by the rich blessing of God's law and the gospel of salvation.

**Appendix 1j: Response to the address of Rev W Wielenga by Br W Pleiter**

Reverend Wielenga and Reverend Souman, Mr Chairman and brothers of Synod Armadale 2012, Good evening to you, and to the brothers and sisters of the audience.

On Tuesday evening, we had the pleasure to receive greetings from Rev Wielenga, on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches. As a member of the Deputies for Relations with Sister Churches, it is now my privilege to respond, not only to receive your greetings, but indeed to offer our warm regards to the brotherhood in Canada and the USA.

Indeed it is good to see you both in person, in fact it gives us great joy to have you among us. Yes, it has been a while, but perhaps it was the words of the second letter to John, verse 12, that helped you to make your way down under. It reads:

“Having many things to write to you, I did not wish to do so with paper and ink, but I hope to come to you and speak face to face that our joy may be full.”

Thanks for being among us, and for being available to talk with us, face to face. We trust you will feel at home amongst us, and that our Aussie hospitality will keep you from missing your families and loved ones too much, at home in Canada and the USA.

When we think of our sister in Canada – we too, do not wish to speak of favourites. Yet we would agree that we are close sisters – and that we share a unique connectedness amongst our federations – our bonds of churches. This connectedness



is evident on the personal level as you mention, but also in the activities we are involved with - connected to.

Let me share one example of this personal connectedness for one of the delegates. I had the opportunity to take Rev Wielenga on a tour through the South West, on to the destination of Albany. Some 35 years earlier, he was a young lanky lad that grew up in beautiful surrounds of Middleton Beach, when his father was minister in Albany. During our brief stay, it was amusing how many members in Albany referred to Rev Wielenga as the 'son of'. 'The son of Dirk' – there is almost a biblical sound to that. Reverend Bill, the son of Dirk Wielenga!

While we can smile at these personal antidotes, we can also recognise how the Sovereign Lord binds us together around his the preachers and the preaching of His Word. Brothers and sisters connected with each other, yet all connected in Christ to our Heavenly Father.

Yet, it is around the activities of our church federations, that we find further evidence of connectedness, evidence of the increasing matters we share in common.

It is hard to pass by our love and support for the Theological College in Hamilton, which since Synod Burlington 2010 is official known as the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary. Deputies once again have served Synod Armadale with glowing recommendation to strengthen our support of the Seminary and our interaction with your Board of Governors. With the blessing of Synod Armadale, provision will also be made for us to enjoy more guest lecturers – and these types of visits are well received by our churches. We particularly have fond memories of the stimulating speeches from Prof VanDam in 2010 and Prof de Visser in 2011. We are thankful for the appointment of Dr Smith to the Seminary, and while it has been a loss for the church at Albany and for us in the bond of churches, we are well aware that his contribution at the Seminary will be a gain for us as sister churches.

The Book of Praise is another matter of connectedness we share. For many decades we have benefited from the beauty of the rhymed versions of the Psalms and Hymns, our common Reformed confessions and liturgical forms. In many ways, this book of praise, book of worship has impacted our members in a very personal and emotive well. So when there is change to this Book of Praise, all of us have a vested interest, we all take notice with varying biases. Overall, our deputies have been impressed with the changes – but we do have some reservations regarding some of the hymns. So we deeply appreciate that in your address you urge us to take seriously the decision of Synod Burlington 2010, which invited our input in this important feedback process. We are not frustrated with the process as such, and neither do we wish to frustrate or slow down the implementation of the new Book of Praise. Rather, it is our desire to contribute to a new Book of Praise that would be best for both our bonds of churches. How wonderful it would be if we could indeed continue with a common Book of Praise that ‘can sufficiently meet our needs’ (Art 24, decision 2) for many years to come. As to an Australian version of that Book of Praise, that is a matter from Synod Armadale to decide.

As for others areas of connectedness – you are right that many more things could be raised particularly in the areas of mission and relations with mutual sister-churches. While we cannot mention them all now – it is good for us to keep in mind how we can benefit each other, learn from each other, and remain connected together.

Thank you for the updates on the URCNA and the RCNZ. For most of our members in Australia, your relationship with the URCNA is not well known. Yes, you are sister churches with the URCNA, but the only matter that we are aware of was the joint committees for church order and common book of praise – and of course these are matters that we are interested in. Thank you for sharing the status of these initiatives, and from an outside perspective it appears that the work, while being

done, has been placed on the shelf, hopefully not to collect dust.

However, while the merger talks may be on a holding pattern at this time, it is good to be reminded of Psalm 133, which speaks of unity amongst brothers who dwell together – who live together in communion. May indeed, the Lord continue to work the desire in the CanRC and URCNA to bring this unity to full expression, to His Glory in His time and in His way.

We appreciate your frankness in regards to the RCNZ, another bond of churches that we have in common. You have a sister church relationship with them – we are working toward that. Like you, the deputies and more so, the churches, are finding the change in relationship between the RCNZ and the Christian Reformed Churches in Australia somewhat confusing. As I understand it, some clarity was provided by Rev Archbald earlier today. What it all means, will be the work of Synod Armadale – but having the support and understanding of the CanRC is very important to us. In the meanwhile, it is our desire to continue to work toward a sister-church relationship with the RCNZ, and one day, we hope that this relationship will be another area of connectedness between us.

Brothers, to those who have listened to my address, you will notice a common theme of connectedness. And in this light, I must say I am somewhat confused by Rev Wielenga description of the FRCA as ‘an appendix of sorts’. As a young lad, I had my appendix removed and the doctor assured me that I could live a long and happy life without my appendix...!’ Perhaps the true meaning of Rev Wielenga’s meaning is in the qualification – an appendix *of sorts*....

Rev Wielenga, Rev Souman, we deeply appreciated your presence amongst us – indeed we are blessed for the interest and support of our favourite Canadian sister. It is our desire that your time amongst us will strengthen and increase the bond that exists between the Canadian and Australian churches.

Allow me to end this address with an adaption of the greetings the apostle Paul gave to the churches in Corinth – but this time as greetings to the Canadian and American Reformed Churches:

“The churches in Australia send you greetings, together with the church here in Armadale, send you heartily greetings in the Lord. All the brothers send you greetings.” of 1 Cor 16:19.

**Appendix 1k: Address by Rev H Archbald of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand**

Dear Synod Delegates, Foreign Delegates and Gallery Audience,

I bring you greetings from the Reformed Churches of New Zealand.

This is now my third time at your synods, though only as a delegate on the last 2 occasions. This time, as previously, I have enjoyed a warm welcome and fine Christian hospitality – though the weather for which Perth is famous could be warmer.

At your synod Legana I provided some details about RCNZ history and nature, which I will not repeat now. I would like, however, to update you on a couple of matters. I mentioned in Legana that we had many vacant churches at that time, and that the character of our churches would no doubt be influenced by the filling of those vacancies. Our churches are thankful to the Lord that we now have only one vacant church. In terms of the men who have accepted calls to our churches, most have come from either the URCNA, the OPC, or they are NZ men who have been trained at MARS (the seminary, not the planet). One is from the PCA (in the US). If I am correct, that makes about 5 ministers trained at MARS (Mid-American Reformed Seminary), and 2 (or 3) at Greenville Seminary, a conservative Presbyterian institution in the States.

I also indicated at Legana that our 2011 synod would be deciding about both the future of our relationship with the CRCA and the RTC (Reformed Theological College, Geelong). Nothing much has changed in our arrangement with the RTC, but significant changes have taken place in our relationship with the CRCA. We are no longer sisters, we now have a new relationship called “ecclesiastical fellowship.” Our sister-church relationship with the CRCA has been a barrier to your churches entering into sister-relations with us. While it might now seem that the barrier is removed, you now have questions about the new relationship we have with the CRCA. Have we granted too many privileges to a non-sister, while removing too much mutual accountability? Our synod was aware of some similar internal concerns at the time, and made the rules provisional. Now our Inter-Church Relations Committee is working on modifying the rules for this relationship, in order to bring the matter back to our next synod. You will have to decide whether this is enough for you to enter a sister-relationship with us at present.

That aside, I am convinced that our churches do love the Reformed faith and Confessions. We do seek to uphold the Scripture and the Confessions, though we do so as sinners who are far from perfect. No doubt you would say that our churches are not rigorous enough in upholding the “uniformity”; you probably think we do not militate enough against error; we might have some worship practices of which you would not approve; or some views you might find odd. But whatever our weaknesses, like you, we do desire to uphold the Truth and to oppose error, for the sake of the Lord’s Name and the welfare of His church. Your churches have acknowledged that by officially recognizing us as true churches, as we have done with you. I therefore hope that we can take a step towards becoming sisters, rather than a step back – especially in light of the more recent developments in our churches as outlined above. I believe this is especially urgent as the time in which we live – not to mention the general ecclesiastical climate of both Australia and New Zealand – places many

pressures on the faithful to compromise. There is much pressure to disregard God's commandments, the doctrine of Creation, the inerrancy of God's Word, the uniqueness of Christ, the doctrines of grace summed up by the 5 Points, and many other matters. On such matters, our churches are clear and so are yours. But we need to help each other to remain constant. We need the Lord's help above all, but He does use His people to bring His help to us, especially as we bring the Word to bear upon each other. It is my hope that we can help each other in that way in the future, even more than we have thus far.

Thank you, and may the Lord bless you richly.

**Appendix 1I: Address by Br A van der Net on behalf of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (Restored)**

Esteemed chairman, delegates, brothers and sisters,

Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. *We* cannot do otherwise and we *may* not do otherwise.

I will get back to these words later.

Brother Chairman, we thank you for the invitation to attend the General Synod Armadale 2012 of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia and for the opportunity to address this Synod.

Brothers, it is an unusual experience for me. During the years 1980 – 1987 I lived here among you and I was allowed to serve as elder for a number of terms in the congregation of Kelmscott. Now I am here again and I repeat: Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. *We* cannot do otherwise and we *may* not do otherwise.

Brothers, you will no doubt understand what I wish to say with these words. At the time we were of one mind and now, 25

years later, although I am certainly thankful for this opportunity to speak, and I also say this on behalf of the Deputies Contact Churches Abroad of The Reformed Churches (restored) in the Netherlands, I feel obliged to defend our church and our standpoints.

For we stand on the same foundation, we are united in faith, and yet, we are not able as brothers and sisters to celebrate that unity in the celebration of the LORD's supper. And why not? I, and with me the members of The Reformed Churches (restored) in the Netherlands, wish to serve the Lord faithfully and keep His Word faithfully. Because the Lord asks this of us, we had no option but to liberate ourselves from the Reformed Churches liberated, and by doing this we are not recognized by you as a sister-church. Because we want to serve the Lord faithfully, according to His Word, people here and there look askance at us. That *can* hurt, because there has not really been any discord between brothers and sisters. But we are suddenly looked upon with suspicion as though we have changed, and as if there's something wrong. We should not really be surprised at this, it has been foretold. Just read God's Word, you will find this in 1 Peter 4:12, 13, where it says:

*Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. (NKJV)*

So far this text.

The last official discussion we had as deputies Contact Churches Abroad, was with Br W Vanderven, one of your deputies Contact Churches Abroad.

Since then, there have been no specific changes in The Reformed Churches (restored).

Discussions with the Reformed Church (dissenting) at Dalfsen are still in progress.

Maybe we had expected more from the Liberation of 2003. We had hoped for more growth, but the opposite occurred. Some people left us again. If you have empathized with us, you will have heard about this and will also know the reasons for this. Also today we have to deal with the autonomous person. People nowadays want to do things in their own way, that which seems right in their own eyes. If one wants to live in obedience to God's law, then one is quickly accused of radicalism. Let us not forget what is written for us in the book of Revelation:

*Revelation 22:18, 19, where we read:*

*"For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book".*

Do we realize the seriousness of these words or do we read over this lightly?

As I said earlier, some people left us again. At the time you asked: "We wonder why", but you can know now. I would also like to refer to an article in our internet magazine 'Reformed Continua' titled "The life and struggle of The Reformed Churches (restored)" by Dr P van Gurp, where he deals with the causes of the schisms, and I quote: "The church history teaches us that almost always the cause for schism is to be found in the matters of the doctrine and of the church government. That is also the case now." End of quote. Independentism plays a major role here – one prefers not to be bound too strongly to a Church Order. Perhaps you should read the whole article!

We have read your deputies' report, about what is written about the Reformed Churches (lib.), and we also read about an impediment where it concerns a sister-church relationship



of The Reformed Churches (restored) with the Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford, Canada.

You were given a lot to digest at the synod of Harderwijk. We have read your reports. The Reformed Churches (restored) have been accused of not being willing to talk, however, the opposite is true. Brothers, as Synod Emmen, we wrote a long and friendly but appealing letter, dated 21st May 2010, with as topic: "An appeal and a wish". This letter was translated into English and published in our internet magazine "Reformed Continua", volume 5, dated January 2011. Brother Vanderven also received a copy of this letter. The result was merely a very short and a very disappointing answer. The Reformed Church liberated decided to only take note of this letter from the General Synod Emmen and to further sadly resign itself to the, in their opinion, rejecting attitude that this letter conveys and not to respond substantially any more. Please judge this for yourselves. As is clear from your deputies' reports, you are faced with a similar response and lack of interaction, as the most important part of the discussion, namely the grounds and contents of concerns expressed for their straying from the Truth of God's Word, are, directly or indirectly, evaded or rejected.

However, in spite of the short answer we received, as Synod, we again sent a reply.

I would like to pass across to you a passage from this reply and I quote:

"Your answer grieves us. Our letter of 21st May 2010 was inspired by our love for you. We have been together for so many years. So many of our relatives, friends and acquaintances belong to your church community. We miss you all. But above all, it grieves us that as church community we see you stray from God's Word. We would so much like to live to the honour of our God together with you again. That is why we wrote to you, gave you extensive evidence that your churches are more and more leaving the only sanctifying foundation of God's Word."

Thus far the fragment from the letter to the forthcoming synod of the Reformed Churches liberated. Therefore please do not say again: They, The Reformed Churches (restored) do not want to talk.

I would also like to comment briefly on the impediment about which your deputies write. We were able to enter into a sister-church relationship with the Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford. It did not go in the manner that Rev Clarence Stam, in a not too friendly way, wrote in the Clarion and that's putting it mildly. You are, hopefully, well-informed as to why a liberation took place there in Abbotsford. After thorough study of all relevant documents and a visit by two deputies of Contact Churches Abroad of The Reformed Churches (restored), Synod Emmen came to the following decisions:

*The synod of The Reformed Churches (restored) in the Netherlands, assembled at Emmen on the 14th November 2009, decides to recognize the Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford as a true church and to enter into a sister-church relationship with it on the grounds of their doctrine, service and discipline.*

The grounds for the decisions are:

1. The Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford is faithful in doctrine, service and discipline to our God.
2. The entering into a sister-church relationship of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches (CANRC) with both the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) and the United Reformed Church (URC) has brought errors (church, covenant & preaching) into the church, which office bearers had not seen or did not wish to see.
3. These members of the CANRC have, according to canon law, submitted their objections, appeals and second appeals in a lawful manner.

4. The CANRC have indicated that they put peace in the church above the right of Christ in not honouring the submitted objections.
5. The errors affect the heart of the gospel and the whole life in the church community.

Brother Chairman, also these brothers and sisters could not do otherwise. Brothers, we pray for unity with all those who wish to serve the Lord uprightly, but then, only in truth and unity, without compromising.

Surely you are familiar with the facts of the liberation in Abbotsford? But it appears that our recognition of the Liberated Reformed Church can be an impediment for recognizing our churches in the future as a sister-church.

Brothers, are we upright before the Lord in everything? Do we stand firm in our church life?

You have been richly blessed over the past 25 years. In 1980 there was only one church here in Armadale. One church with two wards and two ministers, Rev Bruning and Rev Hur, and there was one congregation in Albany and one in Launceston, Tasmania. And now, when we look around us: such luxury, such riches. "Prosperity is not for weak legs" or you could also say: "Good days need strong legs".

A sister-church relationship with The Reformed Church (restored)? My parents-in-law came to live here in 1952 to join the other migrants. So much time and effort was put into the work by those early migrants. Don't get me wrong, this is not idolizing the people. They are all rich blessings from the Lord and now *you* may reap the benefits. But are you thankful to the Lord for all this? Surely you do not now say: Oh, let those brothers and sisters of The Reformed Churches (restored) in Holland fend for themselves, for if we interfere in this matter or get caught up in it, then..... yes, what then? Brother chairman, there are lots of temptations coming to all of us and now you may think: Oh well, Holland is so far away. However, Holland is only a click of the mouse away, and heresies that

occur in the churches there and anywhere in the world can also come here with one click of the mouse!

I would like to point to the article of the Church Order about Churches Abroad: The relation with the Churches abroad shall be regulated by the General Synod. With foreign Churches of *Reformed Confession* a sister-church-relationship shall be maintained as much as possible etc.

We cannot do otherwise, yes, we are not allowed to do otherwise. The Lord asks of us to serve Him faithfully, where it concerns the fourth and the seventh commandment, where it concerns the practicing of discipline, where it concerns criticism of Scripture and the toleration of heresies, where it concerns the liturgy. In the worship service the Lord comes to us with His Word. It is not something that must be pleasant and that draws lots of people by introducing a band in the church, or stage productions and drama. We must sing to the glory of His Holy Name and not sing hymns and songs that bring impure doctrine into the church. We must celebrate the Lord's Supper in a pure manner and keep the table holy. How do we deal with attestations for visitors partaking? Do we all go together as churches to visit the National Synod in Dordt? This is something that your deputies also stumble over and they have come to the following conclusion: The decision by Synod Harderwijk to participate is a matter of grave concern. Unity is expressed with other churches which do not confess the truth of God's Word as summarized in the confessions. This is a departure from the reformed principle, as it has always been confessed and maintained, that church unity must be based upon the full truth of God's Word. Departure from this principle constitutes a false ecumenism.

There is so much more that can be mentioned.

Brothers, it would be so nice if we could again find each other in true unity. You are aware of what our decisions were concerning the bonds with the FRCA. But we pray, also in Holland, for unity. Not to become large again in number, nor to grow. But to serve the Lord together in faithfulness and to

make His Name great. Some things will have to change and we may even have to cut into our own flesh. Maybe we will have to deal with less respect and may have to face many difficulties and tribulations. But also that is not strange, and according to God's Word.

Brother Chairman, I hope you will gain the right insight and that you do not 'mark' us as a group of stubborn people and dissenters. I can also speak for the brothers and sisters of Abbotsford here.

We, as The Reformed Churches (restored) have a wish and we also mentioned this in the letter to the Reformed Churches liberated.

We wish that the prayer of *Psalm 25:4 and 5* will also be your prayer and will become reality, so that we and the sheep entrusted into your care will again be able to sing together to our Almighty Father with the words:

*Show me Your ways, O Lord;  
Teach me Your paths.  
Lead me in Your truth and teach me.  
For You are the God of my salvation;  
On You I wait all the day.*

We know and believe that:

*"No one who waits on You shall be ashamed, those who deal treacherously and without cause shall be ashamed." (Psalm 25:3)* If we wish to remain faithful to God's Word, that can include that we have to suffer for Christ's sake, but we do have the promises. Here I would like to refer to Mark 10:28-30. It reads:

*Then Peter began to say to Him: "See, we have left all and followed You. So Jesus answered and said: "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time – houses and brothers and sisters and*

*mothers and children and lands, with persecutions – and in the age to come, eternal life.”*

Thank you for your attention.

### **Appendix 1m: Response to the address of Rev M Biha by Br B Bosveld**

Response to the address to the Reformed churches of Indonesia (RCI)

Thank you chairman and brothers of synod for requesting me to respond to the address given by Rev Madah Biha last night to 25<sup>th</sup> synod of the FRC of Australia held here in Armadale in the year 2012.

First of all I like to thank you, Rev Madah Biha, for addressing our synod last night, doing so in the English language passing on the greetings from our sister churches in Indonesia and informing synod of the blessings of the Lord in the wonderful developments between the three federations of Papua, Kalimantan and NTT becoming one federation. In this we see God's work in showing the unity of the Church.

Rev Madah Biha, in your address you spoke about the GGRI's desire to become one federation with the GGRC so that the true unity of the body of Christ can also be experienced between the GGRC and the GGRI as both these federations are of close proximity to each other.

The desire you expressed in your address for unity between the GGRC and the GGRI has also had our attention for many years. Looking back through the acts of the Australian synods I read that we first came into contact with the GGRC which was previously called the Musyafir Church in 1987 when 2 of our delegates namely the late Rev K Bruning and brother C DeMan visited the 2<sup>nd</sup> synod of the GGRI in Mau Maru in 1987. As a result of this visit, synod 1990 of the Australian churches mandated the deputies for contact with Indonesia

along with other things the following; to seek contact with the Musyafir church on Timor to see whether we can recognize them as true and faithful churches according to our confessions.

Our 1992 synod again discussed the contact we have with the then Musyafir church and made the following decision: to continue contact with the Musyafir church on Timor to see whether we can recognize them as true and faithful churches according to our confessions, with the following consideration: The FRCA should not recognize the Musyafir church as a true and faithful church until the GGRI have mutually done so. This same mandate was given to our deputies until synod 2003. Between synod 2000 and synod 2003 the Musyafir churches changed name and became GGRC, during this time they were also recognized by the GGRI as sister churches.

Each Acts of the Australian synods since synod 2003 has repeated the mandate to deputies to encourage the GGRC and the GGRI to work towards true unity and to become one federation. It is for this reason that the FRCA has not pursued a sister church relationship with the GGRC (although we have recognized them as a true church) because we feel that the two bonds of churches in Indonesian living so close together should become one bond of churches and in that way we will also become a sister church with the GGRC.

We could hear the same desire from the address that was given by the delegates from the GGRC, but in their address they also felt hurt that they did not receive an invitation to the first National synod of the three federations of the GGRI. They expressed their feelings that the GGRC sometimes have the impression that the desire to become one federation is only expressed in words and not in deeds!

It is good to hear that our Canadian sister churches have the same desire to encourage the GGRC and the GGRI to become one federation. Rev Souman has been mandated to visit Timor next week as part of that encouragement. Both the

GGRC and the GGRI need our encouragement to work towards true unity, not only with words but also with deeds.

Our sister church relationship with the GGRI has become more meaningful for both federations especially over the past 10 years. We have visited every synod held in the GGRI, we have been able to encourage and support the re-opening of the Theological College in Waingapu. Rev van Delden has also been able to teach at the College over the past few years, this work is greatly appreciated and the GGRI are very hopeful that Rev van Delden can continue to do so each year. Perhaps this synod could make a special request to the FRC of Mundijong to allow their minister to be involved in this very important work and to provide sufficient time for preparation and recuperation.

We have been able to support a number of brothers from the GGRI to come to Australia in order to study English, a number of our deputies have also studied the Indonesian language so that communication has become more understandable and therefore more meaningful.

The FRC of Rockingham together with the FRC of Baldivis are also busy supporting 2 churches in Sumba with their mission projects, and then we can also think of the work of mission aid, Children of Light and the Amos Aid program. All this work has strengthened our relationship with our sister churches in Indonesia. Yesterday in the other addresses we also heard that we can't speak of favourite sisters, so I won't use these words either, but the GGRI bond of churches is certainly a close sister, in more ways than one.

We in Australia are a small bond of churches and have limited resources, with the 3 federations of churches in Indonesia becoming one federation, it will be difficult for us to give the same level of support and attention to the churches in Kalimantan and Papua, but we will continue to remember the whole bond of churches in our prayer and give support where we can. It is our prayer that the GGRI churches also pray for



us the Free Reformed Churches of Australia “that God will also protect and defend us as His Bride”.

It is our prayer that the Lord will continue to gather, defend and preserve His church all over the world, and may God also be with you, Rev Madah Biha, when you travel home again coming Monday, so that you may be re united with your family.

We hope your time among us will also be a blessing to you and strengthen our bond so that we may continue to work together in praising our Wonderful Creator.

Thank you.

### **Appendix 1n: Response to the address of Rev H Breytenbach by Br B Veenendaal**

Dear Rev Breytenbach, and brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ,

We thank you very much for your address and greetings from the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa. It is a privilege to have you in our midst and help us to understand something more of your challenging situation in South Africa. We note that it is 2 synods ago that South Africa was last represented here. Upon reflection, I think I do know why. When your churches sent a delegate two years ago, that delegate never returned to South Africa, but ended up staying here and eventually receiving a call (yes, I'm talking about Rev Retief in Kelmscott). So your churches decided that rather than lose another minister, they won't send anyone at all! So I suppose that if we want to receive your delegates again at our next synod, we better be discerning from which country we call our next minister...

Over the years we have learned a little bit about South Africa, and just when we think we are learning more, we find out that we have so much more to learn about your churches and the situation that God has placed you in, as church of the Lord Jesus Christ in South Africa. We hope to hear more about

your churches and the presentations you will give, the Lord willing, in Albany and Perth metro in a few weeks' time. As you indicated in your address, the situation of your churches is challenging, and in some cases this is different from our situation, and in other cases we share those same challenges.

For example, talking about languages, whereas you use Afrikaans, English, Sotho and Zulu as working languages, we only have one: English. Sometimes we think we have a hard time communicating – I am sure you have guessed this just by listening to our deliberations here at synod – so we can appreciate the enormous challenge in your churches. Then, behind these languages, you have the many different cultures that you need to work with: blacks, coloreds, Afrikaaners, Dutch-background South Africans, etc.! Yet you have been able to work with those cultures through various means of theological training that you outlined in your address. The training for the ministry is a challenge, having to separately find a pathway and manage training programs for whites, blacks and coloreds. The Lord has indeed blessed those efforts, and even we could directly benefit from that with Rev Haag soon to arrive in our midst. We pray that the Lord will continue to bless those efforts, given the limited resources and means that you have. You have some questions about possibilities for having the first year of the training program of Hamilton done in South Africa, and the potential of using distance learning. You are aware of similar questions of our own Deputies for Theological Training and maybe together we can find ways of mutually addressing the issues and finding solutions to further the training of ministers by the churches and for the churches.

One challenge that is common between you and us is the need to stand as lights in an environment of nominal and decreasing Christianity. Interesting that you mention that the population of your country is 75% nominally Christian. For Australia, 6 years ago it was at 64% and now it is now at 61% based on the census of last year. And the reality is, that those who truly in word and deed profess to belong to Jesus Christ is

a much smaller number, both in your country and ours. We therefore do need each other to give mutual support and encouragement in standing as lights in the dark secular environment in which we live. It also saddens us to have a prime minister that so openly declares her so-called *atheism*, and in so doing, denying the One who gives her power and authority in this country.

In your address, you referred to the growing interaction between our two church federations. Yes there is continuing to be increasing migration, primarily to Australia. In fact, as you noticed when you were in Byford on Sunday, you could hear a large cohort of Afrikaans-speaking members – and you could be excused for thinking that you were back in South Africa. We have been blessed with many persons from South Africa joining our churches. Like you said, your loss is our gain, but we hope that we can also share our gain for your gain.

You mentioned the meeting of your churches in an ad hoc synod this past April to discuss the financial sustainability of your churches in the matters of theological training, support for students of theology, support for missionaries, and support for needy churches. It is quite a challenge to address the responsibility and accountability of, not just the members in your instituted churches, but also the members of the young missionary posts. We very much respect your desire to be accountable and to teach that accountability when it comes to financial matters and the support of a local minister, and we very much acknowledge your diligence and boldness to address this and make it happen. May the Lord bless those efforts and grant growth, not just in numbers, but also in a covenant commitment to our Heavenly Triune God. At the same time, we have been most willing to assist in supporting you (as we are currently doing with regards to the needy church at Bethal) and will continue to do so according to the gifts and blessings that we have received.

May the lamp of God's Word continue to shine brightly in South Africa, and may your churches stand fast in the secular environment in which we live, and remain faithful to God's Word and the rich covenant promises which we receive by grace. And, to say it in the concluding words of the epistle to the Romans, "...to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen."

**Appendix 1o: Response to the address of Br A van der Net by Br W Vanderven**

Good evening Chairman, Brothers and Sisters, fellow synod delegates.

Good evening Elder Houweling and Elder van der Net and also to your wives.

Tonight I have the privilege of responding to the address you delivered on behalf of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (restored) to Synod Armadale.

But this I found was not an easy task, for our relationship with you is not one of a sister church.

At our last Synod in 2009 deputies were appointed and mandated to remain informed about developments in your churches, and to continue contact and encourage the RCN<sup>r</sup> to discuss the issues and struggles of concern with the RCN in humility and love.

We were able to do this via some email contact, sharing of the Acts of our respective synods, a formal letter from your Synod Emmen 2009-2010 and two meetings were held. As you mentioned I met with you in May of 2011. We appreciate the time you made for this meeting, and the frank discussion we could have in een 'beetje Hollands' and a 'beetje' English.

You spoke of your personal connections with us. I too have personal connections with you. The day we met in May, was

the day my beloved Oma Schelling passed into glory at the age of 97. Her funeral service was led by your Br vanEgmond. And so there are personal connections. But personal connections do not make ecclesiastical unity.

We are sister churches with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. Our synods have consistently and actively involved ourselves in maintaining this relationship. And this continues to have consequences on how we can officially interact with you and with others in the Netherlands.

Br van der Net, you made some comments about your (that is the RCN) dealings with the Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford, which is a matter of interest and which may be a matter of concern for us. In our Synod Armadale decisions, of which you are now aware, we do hold our sister churches in Canada dear to us and continue to actively engage in a sister relationship with them.

Finally;

Synod deals with matters of common interest of the churches. And thus much of Synod's time is spent on relationships with other churches. And this is right. The catholicity of the Church is a great blessing. And yet the focus of the church's work is not in the various church relationships we may have.

The focus is in the local church. And this focus is expressed in the regular, faithful preaching of God's work each Sunday again. It occurs in the regular use of the sacraments providing the assurance of faith. Holy supper is celebrated within the context of the local church. It is with the local brothers and sisters that the unity in Christ is expressed in the first instance. And it is in the local church that believers are to spread the gospel in such a way that we diffuse the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.

And here I think of what the apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 2:14-16.

“Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. <sup>15</sup> For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. <sup>16</sup> To the one *we are* the aroma of death *leading* to death, and to the other the aroma of life *leading* to life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?”

We pray that the aroma of Christ may also emanate from the members of the RCN restored and reach the people in the Netherlands. May many hear the gospel and be saved!

### **Appendix 1p: Response to the address of Rev P Archbald by Rev J Kroeze**

Brother Paul we thank you for your words on Thursday evening in which you explained the situation in your churches. We welcome your presence in our midst as a sign that our contact with the RCNZ has not died and that there is hope for a sister church relationship still. We hope that the reception you have received here and the hospitality offered by our churches will convince you of that.

We hear that you are in the process of change as the makeup of your ministers would suggest. We are thankful that you could tell us that the Lord has provided ministers for the RCNZ and that the former dearth of ministers has come to an end. We pray that they may all be faithful men who can set aside human ties to do the will of God. We pray that they will determine the character of your federation as strongly reformed in the coming years.

You have explained developments with respect to your relationship with the CRCA, how it has changed and how the rules for this relationship are currently under review. We hope and pray that the RCNZ may formulate them wisely and that you might remain ever watchful that it does not lead you away

from the reformed faith. May you remain faithful in the prosecution of this relationship.

We also pray that our relationship may grow and develop into a strong and vibrant one in which we can support each other with the resources our Lord has given us. We have striven for a sister church relationship for many years and we look forward to being able to recognise you as our sister. I had hoped that we might have already come to a decision on our relationship with the RCNZ by now, but unfortunately that is not yet the case. We hope that synod may see its way clear to draw nearer to you and you to us, for the obligation of the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ is to be one. We are struggling to be obedient to this command, and although the way is long and at times difficult, in faith and prayer we persevere that one day the Lord will bless our efforts to be one.

You have said you are not a perfect federation; nor are we. You have seen us working here at synod, warts and all. To make it clear, we do not regard you as a somewhat deviant reformed federation, but we strive for unity between two federations with different heritages, different characters and different problems. Sometimes it takes a lot of talking to understand each other. We pray that it will bear fruit. We recognise that you have your very own background that has made you what you are with its strengths and weaknesses. So we also have our very own background which makes us what we are with our strengths and weaknesses. Let us learn from each other, but let it be by pointing each other to God's word for correction and development on the way of truth. Then we can build a strong and mutually supportive culture between two equal sisters in the Lord.

We live in a world of attack from without and within. As you have said the attacks come from the lie in the world and the church. When our allegiances are not first and foremost to our Good we can be pulled off course. Therefore we need each other. We are exposed to different dangers and similar ones.

You have experience where we do not and we have experience where you may not. We pray that our contact may grow to the point where we may be able to help each other in the coming years to a far greater measure than we do today. We ask you to convey our Christian greetings to your church and to inform them of our ongoing love for them and to our continued desire for unity.

**Appendix 1q: Address of Prof HM Yoo (read by Rev PKA deBoer)**

Dear brothers in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,

I consider it an honour to send greetings on behalf of the Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea (KPCK). We thank you for your invitation to your Synod. The Fraternal Committee of the KPCK has asked me to attend the Synod and deliver greetings in person, but I am also asked by our missionaries in China to give lectures there from 9 to 20 July. Since we were not able to find a replacement, I am unfortunately prevented from doing so. We are so sorry for this.

We pray that the Lord of heaven and earth may bless your deliberations and decisions. May they serve the up building of His church gathering work in and outside of Australia, in unity of faith.

We very much appreciated the presence of your delegation to our General Assembly in 2007 and 2010. In 2007 Rev W Huizinga visited our GA for the first time. He has preached in one of our churches and also in one congregation of the IRC (Independent Reformed Church). In 2010 we welcomed Rev P K A DeBoer to our church. Both of them have delivered warm greetings from your churches and contributed to strengthening the mutual fellowship between our two churches.



The two reports written by myself after I have visited your last two Synods of West Kelmscott and Legana, hopefully brought you and your church life closer to and more familiar with your brothers and sisters.

I'm very pleased with the recommendations of your Deputies to continue the sister-church relation with the KPCK. It is also our wish to have this relation in the same faith in our Lord Jesus.

The rapid church growth in Korea is a story of the past and most denominations are in decline. But thank God your sister church KPCK is stable in growth. These days we have about 1,740 congregations with about 470,000 members, of which 266,400 are communicant members. The KPCK runs Kosin University in Busan with the Medical Faculty and the Academic Hospital. There are about 4 thousand students and about one hundred from abroad. Our Theological Seminary in Cheonan owns a complex of 99,000 cm<sup>2</sup> with about 400 students, who enrol after their undergraduate study. There are 16 full-timers serving our Seminary.

Kosin University is now under pressure from the Government to diminish in size and to decrease in student numbers. Decrease in population and in prospective students as a result in the coming years is an extremely serious issue which will undermine the security and the future of many universities in Korea. Kosin University is heading for a difficult time, and there is current debate about the annexing of the Seminary complex to that of the University. But many of us think that it is not desirable to move the Seminary again to Busan.

The last GA in 2011 adopted the new church policy as well as a new Korean translation of the Westminster Confession and Larger & Shorter Catechism. It accepted the Three Ecumenical Creeds for the first time in the history of Korean church. It also adopted the Preamble which shows itself Reformed in faith and church policy.

As you know, the KPCK is in dialogue with the Hapsin Presbyterian Church (HPC) for union. The HPC which came into existence after the split in the Hapdong Presbyterian Church in 1979, is also Confessionally Reformed and runs the Hapsin Seminary in SooWon near Seoul. This dialogue is making some progress but laboriously. If it yields desirable results, we'll inform you about them.

Nowadays churches in Korea are disturbed by a sect which believes that in its leader the Messiah has appeared. Its members infiltrate into churches secretly and entice Christians away from the church to follow their leader. The KPCK isn't immune to this threat, but is relatively stronger and safer than other denominations because of its Biblical preaching and church education for adult and youth in the Reformed faith.

Concerning the Reformed federations in Korea, we have good relations with the IRCK. We sent messages to the RCK, also on the request of the Canadian Reformed Churches, but have not received any response yet. When Prof Dr C Van Dam of Hamilton, Canada, gave his guest lectures at the Theological Academy of the IRCK last February, our Seminary has asked him to deliver his lecture and we greatly enjoyed his excellent lecture on the Urim and the Thummim.

Lastly, I would like to express the wish that you may continue to being faithful to God and His Word in all that you do, both as a church and as individual members. We are bountifully rich through the saving work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, imparted to us by the Holy Spirit.

### **Appendix 1r: Adjournment Address of Rev A van Delden**

At the end of his life, the Apostle Paul said, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and

not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing” (2 Ti 4:7). What a wonderful promise that is, and what an encouragement those words give us to persevere to the end.

I’m quite sure that right now that we as delegates of synod feel as if we’ve just fought a fight, or just ran a marathon. We all hope, no doubt, that the fight we fought was a good fight—a fight for truth and faithfulness. We all hope, I’m sure, that the course we travelled was the one marked out in the Word of God. For if this is the case, then we will also be rewarded by the Lord for our labours.

If our labour of these two weeks is rewarded, then it will be by grace, and not by merit. For we know that our best works are defiled with sin and merit nothing. Our secret thoughts and our spoken words were not always seasoned with grace. And no doubt our decisions also fall short of the perfection that God requires. We derive peace from knowing that our works are sanctified through the blood of Christ. And we derive hope from knowing that God is able to use our weak efforts for the furtherance of His church and kingdom. We pray that God’s blessings may rest upon the decisions made.

As far as our decisions are concerned, many were important, but none involved a major change in direction. Much of Synod’s time was spent with inter-church relations with foreign churches. Some of the discussions evoked sadness from us. Some of them might have evoked frustration. Some of them brought joy.

In discussing our sister church relations with the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, our emotions rose high. It is evident that we love truth and faithfulness, and at the same time we love our sister. And this prompted us to decide that we would write a weighty letter of admonition to our sister, paying attention to areas of concern that have surfaced in the past.

Another important decision we made pertained to the liturgical book used in the church services. It was decided to adopt in principle the revised 150 Psalms and 65 Hymns for use in the church services. The next synod will have to decide whether we publish an Australian version of the *Book of Praise* that contain our Australian distinctives, or whether we decide to use the Canadian *Book of Praise*. There are different opinions as to which will serve the churches best. But in this we were united, that we love to sing the psalms and hymns of praise to God.

One thing that was rather unusual at this synod was the large number of foreign delegates that attended this synod. Every available seat was occupied around the table. We had three from the RCN, two from the RCNr, one from the Indonesian Reformed Churches, two from the Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia, two from Canada, one from South Africa, one from New Zealand. Had our sister church in Korea been able to send a delegate, we would have had a full complement of churches from all our sisters. In this we experiences a small taste of the catholic church gathering work of Christ. The fellowship which we experienced with our foreign delegates was not perfect and complete in all instances, but we have this promise that the communion which here on earth is broken will one day be made perfect when Christ returns, and all those who belong to God will be one.

As far as the delegates from our own churches is concerned, quite a number of them were 'newbies' including young ministers. They have 'cut their teeth' on some difficult matters and have gotten a taste of what lies in years to come. And a couple of the ministers here will certainly be here for the last time, unless of course they choose not to retire, but stay in active service.

Those in the audience might think that we had it easy, starting at 9 o'clock, having our 15 minute coffee breaks, 1½ hour lunch break and 2½ hour dinner break. Each day we only met for 8 hours. That's a normal work day—no sweat! But those 8

hours often felt like 18, and the 8 days of Synod seemed 80! We set a fairly hectic pace. We have yet to learn the secret of the Reformed kiwi's who are usually able to complete their agenda in 5 days. At times the table of synod got very cluttered with one proposed amendment upon another, and a few counter proposals thrown into the mix. But as cluttered as it was, we managed to work our way from under it all. After one session my wife told me that I had an exasperated look on my face. My apologies for my lack of patience.

We must express our thanks to the convening church of Armadale. They did a superb job in arranging everything that we needed. We are especially appreciative of the reverse cycle heating. In 2006 Southern River used these facilities for Synod, and there was no heat. We brought in little electric heaters and put them under the tables to thaw our feet. But they kept popping the fuses which were not equipped to handle such a drain on the power. But this time we could sit in a comfortably warm building, despite the cold weather outside.

We also want to thank the ladies. Every morning the cleaning crew was there, making sure that the facilities were clean and tidy. And each day we were supplied with refreshments and delicious meals. No doubt we will walk away a little heavier than when we came. Thank you very much Anita, Margaret and your many assistants.

Thanks also to the IT staff, Eric and Alan. Every year we become more and more dependent upon technology. It was good to have you here to help us stay electronically in touch with each other, and making it possible to hear each other. Your work here has become indispensable.

They say behind every good man there is a good woman. While we wouldn't want to describe ourselves as 'good,' we want to acknowledge the 'good' woman behind us. In this instance, I'm not referring to our wives, but to our very capable administrative assistant. Thanks very much Kina for your work. I believe that because of you, our clerk's job is

essentially completed for this session. He has only a little homework to do.

I would also like to thank the very capable assistance that I received from the other officers of synod, putting at my fingertips everything needed, and giving good advice. And thanks for your patience in putting up with my forgetfulness. Too often I needed your reminders—‘Was this proposal seconded, Mr Chairman?’ and ‘Has this been declared admissible?’

Now you might draw the conclusion from this speech that this is the closing speech. But it’s not. This is an adjournment speech. This sitting of Synod will adjourn this evening, and reconvene again on April 22 next year. For there was one matter which we were not able to complete—our weighty letter of admonition to our sister churches in the Netherlands which I referred to earlier. We have appointed a committee to prepare this letter, which will be quite a major undertaking. We pray that the Spirit may endow the members of the committee with the necessary gifts, to make this letter a blessing to our sister churches. So until April 22, 2013 when we will reconvene, I wish you God’s blessings.

Pastor Arthur van Delden

## Appendix 2: Synod budget 2012-2015

FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA SYNOD TREASURY BUDGET 2009/12 / ACTUALS 200/12 / BUDGET FOR 2012/2015							
ITEM	INCOME	BUDGET 2009/2012		ACTUAL 2009/2012		BUDGET 2012/2015	
1	CONTRIBUTIONS FROM CHURCHES (NOTE 1)	\$ 26,434.67		\$13,399.17		71,076.69	
2	REPORTS TO SYNOD / ACTS OF SYNOD			\$5,708.76			
3	INTEREST			\$4,058.25			
			\$ 26,434.67		\$23,166.18		\$71,076.69
ITEM	EXPENDITURE	BUDGET 2006/2009		ACTUAL 2006/2009		BUDGET 2009/2012	
1	SYNOD COSTS						
2	VENUE HIRE / VEHICLE HIRE					\$850.00	
3	FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT HIRE	\$950.00		\$1,625.71		\$1,500.00	
4	STATIONERY AND CONSUMABLES	\$900.00		\$1,198.12		\$1,800.00	
5	CATERING	\$2,000.00		\$909.32		\$2,000.00	
6	TELEPHONE & UTILITIES	\$300.00		\$347.18		\$300.00	
7	PRESENTATIONS	\$500.00		\$636.37		\$500.00	
8	MISCELLANEOUS EXPENDITURE	\$1,000.00		\$354.88		\$1,500.00	
9	LOSS OF INCOME DELEGATES & DEPUTIES	\$15,100.00		\$4,180.00		\$15,000.00	
10	TRAVEL COSTS TO SYNOD	\$8,500.00		\$8,181.73		\$4,000.00	
11	FRCA WEB PAGE	\$1,000.00		\$918.20		\$2,000.00	
12	SYNOD TYPIST	\$2,000.00		\$1,950.00		\$2,500.00	
13	ACTS OF SYNOD	\$1,000.00		\$3,553.78		\$1,000.00	
14	REPORTS TO SYNOD	\$1,000.00		\$3,203.50		\$500.00	
15	DEPUTIES VENUE/INFRASRA	\$2,600.00				\$500.00	
16			\$36,850.00		\$27,058.79		\$33,950.00

Appendix 2: Synod Budget 2012-2015

18	<b>DEPUTIES CONTACT OTHER CHURCHES</b>						
19	TRAVEL COSTS OVERSEAS INDONESIA	\$3,500.00		\$3,500.00		\$5,000.00	
20	TRAVEL COSTS OVERSEAS RCNZ	\$2,500.00		\$775.19		\$4,500.00	
21	TRAVEL COSTS CANADA	\$7,000.00		\$5,486.15		\$8,000.00	
22	TRAVEL COST PC KOREA	\$2,500.00		\$1,702.13		\$2,500.00	
23	TRAVEL COSTS SOUTH AFRICA	\$3,000.00		\$1,911.68		\$5,000.00	
24	TRAVEL COSTS NETHERLANDS	\$6,000.00		\$1,821.29		\$7,500.00	
25	TRAVEL COSTS SINGAPORE					\$2,000.00	
26	UNA SANCTA SUBSCRIPTIONS	\$300.00				\$300.00	
27	INCIDENTALS (postage, telephone, typing, printing etc)	\$150.00				\$500.00	
28							
29			\$24,950.00		\$15,196.44		\$35,300.00
30							
31	<b>DEPUTIES TRAINING MINISTRY</b>						
32	GUEST SPEAKER	\$6,000.00		\$5,794.94		\$14,000.00	
33	TRAVEL BOARD MEETINGS	\$3,500.00		\$3,627.25		\$4,000.00	
34	INCIDENTALS	\$500.00				\$500.00	
35			\$10,000.00		\$9,422.19		\$18,500.00
36							
37	<b>TREASURY ADMINISTRATION COSTS</b>						
38	BANK CHARGES	\$150.00	\$150.00	\$180.78	\$180.78	\$150.00	\$150.00
39							
40	<b>SYNOD ARCHIVES</b>						
41	INCIDENTALS	\$200.00	\$200.00		\$0.00	\$200.00	\$200.00
42							
43	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		\$72,150.00		\$51,858.20		\$88,100.00



Appendix 2: Synod Budget 2012-2015

45	<b>TREASURY OPERATING FUNDS</b>	\$20,000.00	<b>\$20,000.00</b>			\$20,000.00	<b>\$20,000.00</b>
46	(Includes funds required for 2015 Synod)						
47	<b>TOTAL BUDGET AMOUNT</b>		<b>\$92,150.00</b>		<b>\$51,858.20</b>		<b>\$108,100.00</b>
All budget expenditure figures include GST which is refunded							

Note 1 Contributions

Amount levied to the churches in accordance with Synod Acts 2009	26,434.67
Plus payments received owing as at 1/4/09	1,761.54
Less Credit from 2006-2009 overpayments	(10,290.28)
Less net amount outstanding as at 30/4/12	<u>(4,506.76)</u>
	13,399.17

Appendix 2: Synod Budget 2012-2015

FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA SYNOD TREASURY PROPOSED COST SHARING FOR 2012/2015						
ITEM	CONTRIBUTIONS REQUIRED FROM THE CHURCHES					
1		COMMUNTY	PERCENTAGE	2012	2013	2014
2		MBRS 2012		SHARE	SHARE	SHARE
3	FRC ALBANY	234	9.75	\$2,310.96	\$2,310.96	\$2,310.96
4	FRC ARMADALE	277	11.55	\$2,735.62	\$2,735.62	\$2,735.62
	FRC BALDIVIS	138	5.75	\$1,362.87	\$1,362.87	\$1,362.87
5	FRC BUNBURY	61	2.54	\$602.43	\$602.43	\$602.43
	FRC BUSSELTON	41	1.71	\$404.91	\$404.91	\$404.91
6	FRC BYFORD	179	7.46	\$1,767.78	\$1,767.78	\$1,767.78
7	FRC DARLING DOWNS	137	5.71	\$1,353.00	\$1,353.00	\$1,353.00
8	FRC KELMSCOTT	193	8.05	\$1,906.04	\$1,906.04	\$1,906.04
9	FRC LAUNCESTON	147	6.13	\$1,451.75	\$1,451.75	\$1,451.75
10	FRC LEGANA	71	2.96	\$701.19	\$701.19	\$701.19
11	FRC MT NASURA	153	6.38	\$1,511.01	\$1,511.01	\$1,511.01
	FRC MUNDIJONG	105	4.38	\$1,036.97	\$1,036.97	\$1,036.97
12	FRC ROCKINGHAM	171	7.13	\$1,688.78	\$1,688.78	\$1,688.78
14	FRC SOUTHERN RIVER	293	12.21	\$2,893.63	\$2,893.63	\$2,893.63
13	FRC WEST ALBANY	199	8.30	\$1,965.30	\$1,965.30	\$1,965.30
15	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2399</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>\$23,692.23</b>	<b>\$23,692.23</b>	<b>\$23,692.23</b>
16	TOTAL FROM CHURCHES					<b>\$71,076.69</b>
17	<b>ACCOUNT BALANCES 30 APRIL 2012</b>					
19	GST REFUNDS			\$565.00		
21	TREASURY BALANCE AT 30/4/12			\$36,458.31		
22						
23	<b>SUB-TOTAL OTHER INCOME</b>			<b>\$37,023.31</b>		<b>\$37,023.31</b>
24						
25	<b>TOTAL INCOME REQUIRED</b>					<b>\$108,100.00</b>

**A daughter's impression of what dad was doing at Synod.**



**Jessica vS, age 11**