

Press Release 1 of Synod Legana 2009

21st June 2009

On Monday evening 15 June 2009, the chairman of the consistory of the convening church, Rev. J. Kroeze, opened the 24th synod of the Free reformed Churches of Australia with a meditation on Psalm 101 (ref: [text of address](#)). This psalm speaks about God's lovingkindnes (God's mercy) and God's justice. Rev. Kroeze mentioned, the two terms are used together here, for together they summarize how God's people ought to be governed, how God governs His people, and so how His officers should do so also, for God wants righteousness to prevail among His people. A ruler is meant to exercise his authority in the name of the Lord. He is to govern and to maintain the right of all under God's rule and he should do with mercy and compas-sion. Rev. J. Kroeze called the delegates to synod to do their work in that same spirit. Let us judge the matters that are set before us with lovingkindness and justice in obedience to our Lord.

The following brothers were delegated to Synod Legana 2009:

Classis North

Rev PKA de Boer
Rev R Eikelboom
Rev JGR Kroeze
Rev A Veldman
Elder P Posthuma
Elder W Spyker
Elder H Swarts
Elder D Veltkamp

Classis South

Rev E Rupke
Rev J Smith
Rev A van Delden
Rev C Vermeulen
Elder W Geurts
Elder R Heerema
Elder W Pleiter
Elder B Veenendaal

From the foreign churches the following delegates were present:

- Rev. P Archbald from the Reformed Church New Zealand
- Br. J. Bronsema and Br. K. Wezeman from the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (arrived late Friday night and will participate in the discussions next week, the Lord willing)
- Br. P. Drijfhout and Br. J. Houweling from the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (restored)
- Prof. H. Yoo from the Presbyterian Church in Korea

Synod elected the following officers to serve on the moderamen (ref: Acts [Article 3](#)):

Chairman	Rev A van Delden
Vice Chairman	Rev A Veldman
First Clerk	Rev J Smith
Second Clerk	Rev R Eikelboom

During the first week, synod dealt amongst others with the following items:

Training for the ministry (ref: Acts [Article 17](#))

Next to the report of deputies, two churches had come with an overture to synod. Synod adopted a proposal put forward by the FRC Southern River to increase the contribution amount to A \$65 per communicant member per annum. The same church also proposed to discontinue the collection of funds for our own theological library. This proposal was also adopted, even though a previous synod had denied the same request. As new grounds were brought forward that the fund of \$70,000 is an adequate resource from which any necessary materials can be purchased over the next 3 years, should this occur. If additional funds for a Theological Library are required at some time in the future, further money can be collected at that time. In accordance with a recommendation of deputies synod decided to investigate the feasibility of offering a basis year of theology to the churches in Australia, for the purpose of establishing a Theological University in the future. Finally synod mandated deputies to con-tinue to investigate the possibilities of theological training by extension (IT).

Book of Praise (ref: Acts [Article 24](#))

In addition to the Report of Deputies, there were overtures of five churches. Having consid-ered all the material, synod decided that although there is a desire for an Australian Book of Praise, at present the Canadian Book of Praise sufficiently meets our needs. Deputies to be appointed received amongst others the following mandate:

1. Monitor developments with the Canadian Book of Praise.
2. Resume investigations regarding copyright, printing costs 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.

Synod also decided to permit the 2008 interim Book of Praise with NIV prose section for use in the churches.

Canadian Reformed Churches (ref: Acts [Article 36](#), [Article 40](#))

Due to the fact that the Canadian Reformed Churches are sending delegates to the International Conference of the Reformed Churches (ICRC), (which will meet, D.V, in September 2009 at Christchurch, New Zealand), they had decided not to send delegates to Synod Le-gana 2009. Synod received a letter with greetings instead. Having dealt with the report of deputies, synod decided to continue sister-church relations with the CanRC according to the established rules. Deputies to be appointed (amongst others) received as mandate

1. To stay informed on developments concerning the pending merger between the CanRC and the URCNA, including the proposed revisions to the Church Order
2. In the unity discussion between the CanRC and the URCNA, to encourage the CanRC to maintain the principle that the churches maintain a theological college on the basis that we use their college for our Australian churches
3. To encourage the CanRC to continue supporting the FRCA as much as possible in our discussions with the RCNZ
4. To invite the CanRC delegates to combine a visit to Australia with their planned visit to New Zealand in September

Appeals re Art. 94 Acts Synod West Kelmscott 2006 (ref: Acts [Article 50](#), [Article 51](#))

Two churches had appealed the decision Synod West Kelmscott made with respect to the sister church relationship with our sister churches in the Netherlands. The material appealed was mainly the matter of the Fourth Commandment and the observance of the Sunday as a day of rest and the matter of the Seventh Commandment re Divorce and remarriage. With respect to the first matter synod decided to grant the appeal only to the extent of acknowledging that Synod West Kelmscott 2006 had incorrect grounds for the decision: to accept Amersfoort's decision as largely allaying our concerns.

With respect to the matter of the Seventh Commandment Synod Legana decided that the application regarding approval for divorce for reasons that go beyond Scripture, were not endorsed by Synod Amersfoort, but Synod Amersfoort did not give explicit guidance on this matter. Also, phrases such as 'following Christ' (navolging van Christus), 'a lifestyle justifying the coming kingdom' (een levensstijl die recht doet aan het komende koninkrijk), and 'the style of the kingdom' (stijl van het koninkrijk) might give implicit evidence that Synod Amersfoort gives room for the new hermeneutics and Christian ethics and leaves room for divorce for other reasons. However, this does not show that Synod West Kelmscott 2006 was incorrect in stating that Synod Amersfoort did not give explicit guidance to prevent divorce for other reasons, which Synod West Kelmscott 2006 found regrettable.

Presbyterian Church in Korea (ref: Acts [Article 44](#), [text of address](#), [Article 46](#))

Prof. Yoo passed on greetings of the PCK.

Having dealt with the report of deputies, Synod decided amongst others,

1. to continue sister relations with the PCK in accordance with the established rules.
2. To express thanks that visits to the PCK have resulted in continued improved lines of communications
3. To ask the deputies to stay informed about the IRCK + RCK and to offer any help that is possible and practical through the sister relations with the PCK.

Overture re 28 additional hymns to the Book of Praise (ref: Acts [Article 42](#))

Having dealt with the overture of Classis South on this subject Synod decided

1. to invite the churches to scrutinize and test that portion of the 28 additional hymns to be adopted at the CanRC Synod 2010 outside the church services so that a following synod can determine whether to adopt them.
2. To extend the mandate of the Deputies for the Book of Praise to include the following:
 - a. To scrutinise the revised sections of the Book of Praise, especially the completely revised Psalter, and that portion of the 28 additional hymns to be adopted at the CanRC Synod 2010.

- b. To invite comments from the churches on these revisions.
- c. To receive and assess comments from the churches about that portion of the 28 additional hymns to be adopted at the CanRC Synod 2010.
- d. To pass on the findings to the Standard Committee b of the Book of Praise