

Acts of the 1994 Synod

and

Reports to the 1994 Synod

of the

**FREE REFORMED CHURCHES
OF AUSTRALIA**

Byford, Western Australia

14-27 June 1994

SYNOD DELEGATES AND VISITORS

Back row (l-r): Elder H Heys (Launceston), Rev. A van Delden (Bedforddale), Rev. A Veldman (Albany), Elder J.L. van Burgel (Bedforddale), Elder H Olde (Albany), Rev. F.J. van Hulst (Launceston), Elder P Terpstra (Byford), Elder S Reitsma (Legana), Rev MA Flinn (RCNZ), Elder K de Jonge (Rockingham), Elder H Terpstra (Kelmescott), Elder P Posthumus (Kelmescott).
Front row (l-r): Rev E Kampen (CanRC), Rev M van Beveren (CanRC), Rev C Kleyn (Legana), Elder A Slobe (Armadaale), Rev W Huizinga (Armadaale), Rev C Bouwman (Byford), Br. DJ van Wijnen (GKN), Rev. A de Jager (GKN).

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Rev. C Bouwman (Vice Chairman), Elder A Slobe (Sjybol) ~~Officer~~ ~~Bu~~ ~~huizinga~~ (Chairman), Rev. C Kleyn (Second Clerk).

GLOSSARY OF ECCLESIASTICAL ABBREVIATIONS

listed in alphabetical order of the name

CanRC	Canadian Reformed Churches
CGKN	Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland
CRCNA	Christian Reformed Churches of North America
CO	Church Order
DpRCA	Deputies for Relations with Churches Abroad
DpPCEA	Deputies for Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia
DRCSL	Dutch Reformed Church of Sri Lanka
EPCA	Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia
EPCI	Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland
ERCS	Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore
FCS	Free Church of Scotland
FCSA	Free Church of Southern Africa
FRCA	Free Reformed Churches of Australia
FRCSA	Free Reformed Churches in South Africa (VGKSA)
GKSA	Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Afrika
GGRI	Gereja Gereja Reformasi Indonesia di Sumba Timor-Savu
(RCSTS)	
GMMT	Gereja Masehi Musyafir di Timur
ICRC	International Conference of Reformed Churches
NGKSA	Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid Afrika
NGK	Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken
OPC	Orthodox Presbyterian Church
OPCNZ	Orthodox Presbyterian Church of New Zealand
PCA	Presbyterian Church in America
PCK	Presbyterian Church in Korea
PCEA	Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia
PCU	Presbyterian Church of Uganda
PRCA	Protestant Reformed Churches of America
RCN	Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated) (GKN)
RCN(S)	Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Synodical) (GKN(S))
RCA	Reformed Churches of Australia
RCJ	Reformed Churches of Japan
RCSTS	Reformed Churches of Sumba Timor Savu (GGRI)
RCNZ	Reformed Churches of New Zealand
RCUS	Reformed Church in the United States
PCPNG	Reformed Church of Papua New-Guinea
REC	Reformed Ecumenical Council (was RES)
RPCA	Reformed Presbyterian Church of Australia
RPCI	Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland
RPCT	Reformed Presbyterian Church in Taiwan
RPCNA	Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America
VGKSA	Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika (FRCSA)
WCC	World Council of Churches

FIRST DAY - Tuesday 14 June, 1994
Morning Session

ARTICLE 1

On behalf of the convening church of Byford, Reverend C Bouwman opens Synod 1994. He requests the singing of Psalm 25:2,4,6, reads Psalm 25 and leads in prayer.

WELCOMING AND OPENING ADDRESS

For the eighteenth time in the history of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, one of the churches has invited the other members of the bond to a meeting of the churches; this was, in accordance with the adopted Church Order, the wish of the churches as expressed on the last day of the previous meeting in Synod 1992. For the eighteenth time in the history of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, the churches of the Free Reformed bond have responded to the invitation of the calling church and sent their delegates to the prescribed address. It is now my task and privilege, on behalf of the convening church of Byford, to welcome you to Byford and into the midst of our congregation. For our part, we have endeavoured to make reasonable preparations for the mechanical side of this meeting of the churches, and we trust that you will find our efforts satisfactory.

It has been two years ago since the churches last met together in a synod. In the time since the last meeting, the Lord God in mercy has continued to gather, defend and preserve His church. This was mercy indeed, for despite the renewing work of the Holy Spirit in the members of the church, there was so much sin in the midst of the churches in the last two years. Had the Lord dealt with us according to our transgressions, He would certainly not have gathered, defended, and preserved us in His church. With deep gratitude to the Lord, then, we acknowledge His work in our midst over the last two years.

Central to the Lord's continued gathering and preserving of His church has been the fact that He has given into our midst many more of His covenant children; the numerous birth advertisements in *Una Sancta* over the last two years are loud evidence of the Lord's church gathering work. Similarly, in His church preserving work, the Lord has graciously granted that many of the children entrusted into the care of parents at the time of, say, Synod 1975 have made profession of the faith, and so publicly responded in faith to the promises God had earlier given to them. Again, the Lord was also pleased to add to His church some He wanted to save but whom He in wisdom had not caused to grow up in a Christian home, or at least not in a Free Reformed home. Certainly, in the last two years Satan has also done his utmost to tear the churches apart and to rip God's covenant children from His hands. It pains us to note that some have indeed broken with the Lord, but we are assured that Satan has not been able to snatch away from the Father a single one of those whom He had given

to Christ. I don't have the exact numbers, but adding up the membership figures in the Yearbooks suggests that the total membership of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia currently hovers around the 3000 mark. Altogether, then, the Lord has given to us deep reason to thank Him heartily for the growth He has allowed in the churches. Amongst the results of this work of God in our midst is the fact that the number of churches in the Free Reformed bond has increased since the last meeting of the churches. With the institution of the church of Rockingham on 6 September 1992, our bond now consists of eight churches.

These eight churches have all received office bearers from the Lord in the persons of elders and deacons, and most churches are also allowed to have a minister of the Word. By means of these brothers, the ascended Saviour has looked after the sheep for whom He died. In the course of the last two years, the elders and deacons have done much work to tend the sheep of God placed in their respective care, and by the grace of the Lord the members have grown in faith and in love for the Lord and for each other. Though there certainly remains yet so very, very much room for further growth in the congregations, it is fitting, I think, at this meeting of the churches to express thanks to the Lord God for the work which the brothers office bearers were allowed to do and for the blessing the brothers are allowed to see on their labours. It is the Lord who continues to gather, defend and preserve His church, through the broken labours of men.

I take the liberty to mention today too that since the last meeting of the churches the Lord has through death relieved two serving office bearers from their tasks in the churches. The brothers AK Pleiter of Byford and HC Brouwer of Rockingham received from the Lord the unfading crown of glory mentioned in the Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons. It gives again reason for gratitude that the Lord provided other brothers to carry on the work of shepherding God's flock. In the course of the last two years, the Lord has allowed His Word to be proclaimed in all the churches too. In His care for His churches in Albany, Armadale, Bedforddale, Byford and Legana, the ministers assigned by the Lord to these congregations could continue to preach that Word of life by which the Holy Spirit works faith. After Reverend G van Rongen had been allowed to preach the Word in Launceston for nigh onto a year of that church's vacancy, the Lord granted a permanent teacher for the congregation in the person of Reverend FJ van Hulst. Since her institution, the church at Rockingham has extended three calls in an effort to attract a minister, but so far the Lord has not granted a preacher who can devote his energies to this congregation. The church at Kelmscott farewelled her minister when the Lord called Reverend C Bosch to serve one of the churches in Canada. A call extended to a local received an acceptance, with as result that Kelmscott will, the Lord willing, shortly ; receive another minister of the Word. The church at Byford has consequently struck a calling committee. For His gift of ministers of the Word it is fitting again that we express thanks to the Lord. At the

same time we express our hope and prayer that the Lord will speedily supply the churches of Rockingham and Byford with another minister.

* * * * *

The 1994 Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia meets in the year in which we recall what the Lord did 50 years ago in the Liberation of 1944. About that Liberation 50 years ago there is much that could (and should) be said, but this, I believe, is not the right place for that.

With a view to this meeting of the churches, however, there is one aspect of the Liberation that I do wish to lay before you. You may know that the synod convened in Sneek in 1939 continued its existence well and truly beyond the time the churches had agreed in the Church Order. In the course of its existence, this synod received many requests from the churches to shelve the matter of the doctrinal differences until after the war — why? — so that the churches themselves could be involved in the discussions and the accused (Dr K Schilder) could defend himself publicly too. The Synod of 1939-43, however (and it's true also of its successor), did not regard the local churches; this meeting of delegates from the churches chose to act independently of and contrary to the wishes of the churches. In fact, those two synods told the churches what to do and what to believe, yes, they even went so far as to depose office bearers from the local churches. It was this attitude of arrogance on the part of the synod that prompted the break in the churches.

I bring up this tragic scene from the past in order to underline what our task is here. The Synod of 1994 — a meeting of the churches as it is — is ever to recall that it is the local church that is central to Christ's church gathering work. It is on the local level that the Word of life is proclaimed, and it is on the local level that the office bearers Christ gave have their task to nurture the flock. A meeting of the churches has ultimately no other purpose and no other task than to be of service to the office bearers of the congregations in carrying out their tasks among the members of the individual churches. In this year of commemoration, I think it proper that I, on behalf of the convening church, remind this meeting of this lesson of the Liberation: let this meeting keep in mind the local churches of Christ as the agenda is digested.

That agenda: on it are some difficult items, items for which office bearers desire answers so that they can better perform their tasks amongst the members in their charge. As it is, amongst the members there are also strong feelings about some of the items that need to be discussed, feelings that produce unrest in the churches and even distrust in the communion of saints. For the sake of the churches, this meeting shall need to make some difficult decisions. The Lord

teaches us in His Word that “in multitude of counsellors there is safety” (Proverbs 11:14; 24:6), and that’s why it’s good to speak together as churches about the issues that be, yes, that’s also why it is good to have and to expect brothers from overseas sister churches in our midst in the course of this synod.

Brothers delegates to the eighteenth synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia: you were sent to this meeting by churches for whom Jesus Christ shed His blood. Those churches belong to Christ, and so it’s ultimately He who directed your path to this meeting. It is true that the work mentioned on the agenda is not easy, and it is true too that the eyes of the churches are upon you. Do the work God has given to you with the conviction born of faith. The Saviour who gave His blood for the church will surely give to you the strength you need day by day, will give to you also the wisdom and the humility and the courage that is required. May the Lord graciously bless this meeting of His churches in Australia so that the churches benefit and His name in turn be glorified.

With these words, I declare the eighteenth synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia opened.

The meeting sings Psalm 90:1,2.

ARTICLE 2 EXAMINATION OF CREDENTIALS

The chairman of the convening church appoints the delegates of the church of Kelmscott to examine the credentials. After these are scrutinised and checked with the attendance list, these delegates report that all churches are properly represented by their primi delegates, and that all delegates have proper credentials:

Albany:	Reverend A Veldman and Elder H Olde
Armadaale:	Reverend W Huizinga and Elder A Slobe
Bedforddale:	Reverend A van Delden and Elder JL van Burgel
Byford:	Reverend C Bouwman and Elder P Terpstra
Kelmscott:	Elder PO Posthuma and Elder H Terpstra
Launceston:	Reverend FJ van Hulst and Elder H Heys
Legana:	Reverend C Kleyn and Elder S Reitsema
Rockingham:	Elder K de Jonge and Elder T Visser
Visitors CanRC:	Reverends M van Beveren and E Kampen

The church of Albany gave their delegates an instruction.

ARTICLE 3 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following officers are elected:

Chairman	Reverend W Huizinga
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Vice Chairman Reverend C Bouwman
First Clerk Elder A Slobe @DELAGATES = Second Clerk
Reverend C Kleyn

ARTICLE 4 CONSTITUTION OF SYNOD

The chairman declares synod duly constituted and thanks the convening church of Byford for its contribution to arrange for this synod.

ARTICLE 5 AGREEMENT WITH THE THREE FORMS OF UNITY

The delegates, including the Reverend M van Beveren and Reverend E Kampen who are at synod as delegates from our sister churches in Canada, are asked to rise in order to show their agreement with the Three Forms of Unity. All delegates rise.

ARTICLE 6 GREETINGS FROM SISTER CHURCHES

The chairman reads parts of letters from the Free Reformed Church of South Africa, Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia and Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland with greetings to and best wishes for our synod. These are received with thankfulness. Synod is advised that two delegates from the Reformed Church in the Netherlands will attend synod, the Lord willing, from Saturday 18 June.

ARTICLE 7 TIME SCHEDULES AND PROCEDURES

The moderamen proposes:

A. TIME SCHEDULES

Monday	10.00 am to 12.00 noon 1.30 pm to 4.30 pm 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm
Tuesday to Friday	9.00 am to 12.00 noon 1.30 pm to 4.30 pm 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm
Saturday	9.00 am to 12.00 noon

B. PROCEDURES

1. Daily closing of synod will be done by delegates in alphabetical order.
2. Deputies are invited to attend the meetings of synod, when their reports are discussed. Deputies may ask to speak when they deem a clarification to be necessary.

3. All proposals and amendments shall be submitted in writing.
4. The Acts of each day will be adopted, as much as possible, in a full session on the following day.
5. Smoking is not permitted on the premises.

C. MEETING PROCEDURE

MATERIAL:

Proposal by the church of Kelmscott.

DECISION:

1. The synod amend existing meeting procedures by agreeing, for this synod:
 - a. to refer to Advisory Committees only those items that synod as a whole decides would benefit from such referral;
 - b. to exempt at least the chairman and first clerk from serving on an Advisory Committee;
 - c. to dispense with the practice of recording, in the Acts, items under the headings OBSERVATIONS, CONSIDERATIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS and revert to the 1985 decision to use the headings MATERIAL, DECISION and GROUNDS.
2. The synod agree to a general revision of the Rules of synods and the introduction of Domestic Regulations modelled on the Dutch Regulation adopted in 1978, and that synod appoint Deputies to prepare drafts of the suggested new Rules and Regulations for consideration at the next synod.

GROUNDS:

1. The churches digested the proposals forwarded earlier by Kelmscott and agree that an effort to improve the procedures of synod and its Acts is warranted.
2. Since deputies should prepare a well thought out set of rules for future synods, the above changed procedure should apply only to this synod.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 8

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED AFTER CLOSING DATE

MATERIAL:

1. Deputies for relations with Presbyterian churches - supplementary report PCEA.
2. Deputies for relations with Sister churches - supplementary report FRCSA.
3. Synod Treasurer - Synod Budget.
4. Kelmscott Men's Club - ICRC and Presbyterian Churches.
5. Reverend K Bruning and Reverend G van Rongen - ICRC.

6. Br P 't Hart - Bible translation.

DECISION:

Items 1, 2 and 3 to be included in Agenda.

Items 4, 5 and 6 not be accepted and returned to sender.

GROUNDS:

Rules for synod 3d: *“The closing date for correspondence to be dealt with by synod shall be set at three weeks prior to the convening date.”*

Rules for synod 4e: *“On the agenda of synod shall appear all items submitted to the convening church before the closing date. Items of correspondence received after the closing date shall be included on the agenda only if synod is convinced that there are exceptional reasons requiring their inclusion. However, after having adopted the agenda, synod shall accept no further correspondence.”*

Items 1, 2 and 3 - Accepted under Rule 4e.

Items 4, 5 and 6 - Rejected under Rule 3d.

ADOPTED

**ARTICLE 9
ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

1. Opening by FRC Byford
2. Signing of attendance list and examination of credentials
3. Election of officers
4. Constitution of Synod
5. Delegates' agreement with the Three Forms of Unity
6. Adoption of agenda
7. Adoption of meeting procedures
8. Incoming correspondence
 - a. FRC Kelmscott - request revision decisions - re Art. 19 CO
 - b. FRC Kelmscott - revision synod procedures
 - c. FRC Launceston - proposal re official status FRCA
 - d. FRC Rockingham - inability to send delegates
 - e. FRC Bedforddale - proposed amendment Article 48 CO
 - f. FRC Launceston - proposal for some closed sessions
 - g. FRC Armadale - proposed changes/amendments CO
 - h. FRC Legana - re recognition of PCEA
 - i. FRC Albany - re Article 50 Acts of Synod 1992
 - j. FRC Byford - re Bible Translation
 - k. FRC Albany - re Bible Translation
 - l. FRC Albany - re Musyafir churches
 - m. Br&Sr PW Dekker - re Bible Translations
 - n. Br J Bruning - re membership ICRC
 - o. Rev G van Rongen - re Church Order
9. Instructions
10. @123 TX = Report by classis churches
 - a. FRC Legana - minutes meeting as classis church dd. 281293

11. Deputies' reports, and discharge of deputies
 - a. Archives & Library of Synods
 - b. Deputies inspection Archives
 - c. Synod Treasurer
1. Draft Budget
 - d. Auditors synodical treasurer
 - e. Deputies for relations with other churches:
 1. sister churches
supplementary report
 2. Reformed Churches
supplementary report
 3. Presbyterian Churches
supplementary report
 4. ICRC
supplementary report
 - f. Deputies bible translations
 - g. Deputies training ministry
 - h. Deputies ecumenical creeds
 - i. Deputies revision church order
 - j. Auditors Books Article 18,19 CO
 - k. FRC Albany - roster pulpit exchange 1994-1996
12. Audit of treasurer's books, and discharge of treasurer
13. Calculation of percentages of churches' share of synod costs
14. Appointment of deputies
15. Appointment of convening church, and place and time of next synod.
16. Questions according to Article 41 of the Church Order
17. Personal questions
18. @123 TX = Approval of Acts
19. Approval of press release
20. Censure according to Article 47 of the Church Order
21. Closing of synod

Afternoon Session

ARTICLE 10 REOPENING

The chairman reopens synod and invites all present to sing Psalm 141:1,2.

ARTICLE 11 ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The moderamen proposes a division of work among two advisory committees. After a brief interval, permitting delegates to peruse the

proposed arrangements, and some minor changes, the proposal is adopted as follows:

COMMITTEE 1

Members: Reverend FJ van Hulst - Convenor
Elder P Terpstra
Elder JL van Burgel
Agenda Items: Deputies' Reports - 11.g and 11.j
Incoming Correspondence - 8.a and 8.i

COMMITTEE 2

Members: Reverend A Veldman - Convenor
Elder PO Posthuma
Elder S Reitsema
Agenda Items: Deputies' Reports - 11.a, 11.b, 11.c and 11.d

ADOPTED

Evening Session

ARTICLE 12 REOPENING

The chairman reopens synod and invites all present to sing Psalm 122:1,2.

ARTICLE 13 WELCOME TO REVEREND DOKO

A welcome is extended to Reverend Dara Hae Doko from the Gereja Gereja Reformasi Di Indonesia. A letter from the RCSTS introducing Reverend Doko is read. Reverend Doko is invited to sit as an advisor. Privileges are granted as per ruling ACTS 1992, Article 19, Recommendation 2a.

Since the RCSTS is a sister church, the chairman requests Reverend Doko to rise and in this way to show his agreement to the Three Forms of Unity. He complies.

ARTICLE 14 ADDRESS BY DELEGATE FROM CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

The chairman invites Reverend E Kampen to address synod, who does so and conveys greetings and best wishes in the Lord (see Appendix A).

The chairman thanks Reverend Kampen for his words.

ARTICLE 15 PULPIT EXCHANGES

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 11.k - Deputies Report

DECISION:

1. @123 TX = The following roster is adopted: For the period 1994-1996

Minister of	1994	1995	1996
Kelmscott	Tasmania		
Bedforddale		Tasmania	
Armadales			Tasmania
Launceston	Metro	Albany/Metro	
Legana	Metro		Albany/Metro

2. Costs for pulpit exchanges between the Metro area and Albany should be borne by the church of the travelling minister.

GROUNDS:

1. It is advantageous for the churches that the various congregations are familiar with the ministers of the bond as well as the ministers of the bond being familiar with the various congregations.
2. Pulpit exchanges between Albany and the Metro churches are presently locally arranged.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 16 CHURCH ORDER

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 11.i - Deputies Report
Agenda Item 8.e and 8.g - Incoming Correspondence

■ **Church Order - Article 1**

DECISION:

Amendment:

TEXT:

1. Include the heading '*I. INTRODUCTION*' to this section.
2. Include the title '*Purpose and Division*'.
3. Renumber the Church Order headings.

FOUNDATIONS:

Uniformity with other headings and titles.

Amendment Adopted

Article 1 as amended is ADOPTED

■ Church Order - Articles 2-5

ADOPTED as printed.

■ Church Order - Article 6 - Ordination and installation of ministers of the Word (Deputies' recommended text)

Amendment 1:

TEXT:

1. To replace 1b (Italics) in both proposals by the following:
"a peremptory examination of the candidate by synod with satisfactory results."

FOUNDATIONS:

Deputies of synod mentioned in the proposed text are the Ministers of the Word and are present at synod. Mentioning them separate is superfluous.

Amendment Adopted

Amendment 2:

TEXT:

Deputies recommended text:

1. A1 add after *'ordained only after'* the words *'after classis/synod has approved the call; this shall happen after'*.
2. A1.1b delete all words after *'conducted by classis'*.
3. C replace words *'ordination or installation'* with *'call'*.

FOUNDATIONS:

To keep in line with the original Church Order.

Amendment Adopted

The first preferred text of Article 6 as amended is DEFEATED

■ Church Order - Article 6 - Ordination and installation of ministers of the Word (If the above revised text is not accepted, Deputies' recommended text)

Amendment 1:

TEXT:

1. To replace 1b (Italics) in both proposals by the following:

“a peremptory examination of the candidate by synod with satisfactory results.”

GROUNDS:

Deputies of synod mentioned in the proposed text are the Ministers of the Word and are present at synod. Mentioning them separate is superfluous.

Amendment Adopted

The second preferred text of Article 6 as amended is **ADOPTED**

**ARTICLE 17
ADJOURNMENT**

Elder K de Jonge leads in thanksgiving. The chairman adjourns synod.

**SECOND DAY - Wednesday 15 June, 1994
Morning Session**

**ARTICLE 18
REOPENING**

The chairman reopens synod and reads Acts 1. He invites all present to sing Psalm 47:1,2,3.
The delegates from the church of Rockingham are noted as absent.

**ARTICLE 19
ADOPTION OF ACTS**

The Acts of Synod Articles 1-7 and 9 are adopted. Synod decides to incorporate the texts of official addresses spoken at synod in an appendix to the Acts. (See Appendix A)

**ARTICLE 20
CHURCH ORDER**

Discussion on the Church Order is continued.

■ **Church Order - Articles 7-10**

ADOPTED as printed

■ **Church Order - Article 11 - Proper Support**

Amendment:

TEXT:

The consistory with the deacons, on behalf of the congregation which

it represents in this matter, shall provide for the proper support of its minister(s).

GROUNDS:

1. To adhere closely to the Canadian Church Order and Article 36 of the Church Order.
2. Though the word “*represents*” translates what is in the original Dutch, adding the words, “*on behalf of*” makes it clear in our society that the church is not a democracy.

Amendment Adopted

Article 11 as amended is ADOPTED

■ **Church Order - Article 12 - Call to an Extraordinary task**

Amendment:

TEXT:

1. To add after “*a minister accepts a call*” the words “*or an appointment*”. In the last sentence change “called” to “appointed” and add after “*ministry, others*” the words “*may be called*”.

GROUNDS:

In some cases it is an appointment and in other cases a call.

Amendment Adopted

Article 12 as amended is ADOPTED

■ **Church Order - Article 13 - Retirement of Ministers**

ADOPTED as printed

■ **Church Order - Article 14 - Dismissal**

Amendment:

TEXT:

1. To add after “consistory” the words “with the deacons”.

GROUNDS:

This is consistent with previous articles.

Amendment Adopted

Article 14 as amended is ADOPTED

■ **Church Order - Articles 15-16**

ADOPTED as printed

■ **Church Order - Article 17 - Equality among office-bearers**

To delete this Article and consequently renumber Articles 18-22 to Articles 17-21.

ADOPTED

■ **Church Order - Article 17 - Training for the ministry**

ADOPTED as printed

■ **Church Order - Article 18 - Students of Theology**

Amendment:

TEXT:

1. Return to the text provisionally adopted by Synod 1992.

FOUNDATIONS:

The words “*shall take care that there are sufficient students*” places the churches under an obligation which they may not be able to fulfil.

Amendment Adopted

Article 18 as amended is ADOPTED

■ **Church Order - Article 19 - Task of Missionaries @ADOPTED = ADOPTED as printed**

■ **Church Order - Article 20 - Task of Elders**

Amendment:

TEXT:

1. To add after “*The elders shall*” the words “*together with the ministers of the Word*”.

FOUNDATIONS:

This is used in the Canadian Church Order and the original Church Order of Dort and compliments Article 16 on the task of ministers where it mentions “*Together with the elders*”.

Amendment Adopted

Article 20 as amended is ADOPTED

■ **Church Order - Article 21 - Task of Deacons**

ADOPTED as printed

■ **Church Order - Article 22 - Equality of respective duties**

Amendment to Article 17 CO and new number:

TEXT:

1. *“In the local congregation equality shall be maintained among the ministers, among the elders, and among the deacons, regarding their respective duties, and in other matters, as much as possible.”*

FOUNDATIONS:

1. The equality deals firstly with the tasks, and thus this places the article at a more suitable spot, keeping the rest of the numbering intact.
2. This addresses Armadale’s point that the general matter of equality among all respective offices be the focal point. Also, this simplifies the article.

Amendment Adopted
Article 22 as amended is ADOPTED

■ **Church Order - Article 23 - Term of Office**
ADOPTED as printed

■ **Church Order - Article 24 - Subscription to the Confession by ministers and teaching staff**

Amendment:

TEXT:

1. To change *“the Three Forms of Unity of”* to *“the Three Forms of Unity as adopted by”*.

FOUNDATIONS:

We should not talk about the Three Forms of Unity “OF” the FRCA because this suggests that we have a copyright on these Three Forms of Unity.

Amendment Defeated
Article 24 as printed is ADOPTED

■ **Church Order - Article 25**
ADOPTED as printed

Afternoon Session

ARTICLE 21
REOPENING

The chairman reopens synod and invites all present to sing Psalm 122:3.

ARTICLE 22 CHURCH ORDER

Discussion on the Church Order is continued.

■ Church Order - Articles 26 - 27

ADOPTED as printed

■ Church Order - Article 28 - The Ecclesiastical Assemblies

Amendment:

TEXT:

Three kinds of ecclesiastical assemblies shall be maintained: the consistory, the classis, and the synod.

Three kinds of ecclesiastical assemblies shall be maintained: the consistory, the classis- church, and the synod.

FOUNDATIONS:

1. In line with other articles the italicised version reflects our present situation.
2. Since the major assemblies are not permanent bodies, one cannot say, that they shall meet regularly.

Amendment Adopted

Article 28 as amended is ADOPTED

■ Church Order - Article 29

ADOPTED as printed

■ Church Order - Article 30 - Ecclesiastical matters

Amendment:

TEXT:

To adopt the 1992 text (Article 30).

FOUNDATIONS:

1. The phrase "*in an ecclesiastical manner*" involves more than "*observing the provisions of this Church Order*".

Amendment Adopted

Article 30 as amended is ADOPTED

■ Church Order - Article 31 - Appeals

Amendment:

TEXT:

1. Retain in italics the following formulation:
As long as there are no classis, appeals under Article 31 CO shall be conducted as follows:
 - a. stage 1: to the appointed classis church
 - b. stage 2: to the appointed second appeal church
 - c. stage 3: to the synod".NOTE: Stage 2 will not function when an appeal is made within two months prior to a synod.

Amendment Adopted

Article 31 as amended is ADOPTED

■ Church Order - Articles 32-34

ADOPTED as printed

■ Church Order - Article 35 - Jurisdiction @ADMENDMENT = Amendment:

TEXT:

The classis has the same jurisdiction over the consistory as the synod has over the classis.

The classis church has the same jurisdiction over the consistory as the synod has over the classis church.

FOUNDATIONS:

1. This rendition agrees with the decision of previous synods to bring the Australian Church Order in line with the original edition of Dort as well as with the current Canadian Church Order.
2. The decision of the churches to put the Australian Church Order in line with Dort and the Canadian Church Order supersedes the decision recorded in ACTS 1985, Article 44. At the same time, this alteration does not constitute a major change.
3. The edition of this Article currently in use in the Australian churches duplicates what is already found in Article 31 of the Church Order.

Amendment Adopted

Article 35 as amended is ADOPTED

■ **Church Order - Articles 36-42**

ADOPTED as printed

■ **Church Order - Article 43 - Counsellors**

Amendment 1:

TEXT:

1. To revert the first sentence back to the previously adopted text of 1992.

GROUNDINGS:

The 1992 formulation is much closer to the Canadian Church Order.

Amendment Defeated

Amendment 2:

TEXT:

1. To adopt the Canadian Church Order text.
Replace "*When a vacancy arises*" with the words "*When a vacancy arises less than 2 months prior to a synod meeting, the synod shall appoint a counsellor.*"

GROUNDINGS:

In the absence of classis the synod should appoint a counsellor if time permits.

Amendment Adopted

Article 43 as amended is ADOPTED

■ **Church Order - Article 44 - Church Visitors**

Amendment 1:

TEXT:

1. To add "*each year*" to the italicised version.

GROUNDINGS:

To keep in-line with the non-italicised version.

Amendment Adopted

Amendment 2:

TEXT: To add in italics "*some of the most experienced and capable*".

GROUNDINGS:

Reflect present practise.

Amendment Defeated
Article 44 as amended is ADOPTED

■ **Church Order - Article 45 - Synod**

ADOPTED as printed

■ **Church Order - Article 46 - Relationship with other churches**

Amendment:

TEXT:

1. To revert back to the provisionally adopted text 1992.

GROUND:

A change from “foreign churches” to “other churches” is more than linguistic, and involves a deviation from both the Dort formulation and the Canadian formulation.

Amendment Defeated
Article 46 as printed is ADOPTED

■ **Church Order - Article 47 - Censure in classis and synod**

ADOPTED as printed

■ **Church Order - Article 48- Deputies of major assemblies**

Amendment:

Proposal - Bedfordale Consistory - Agenda Item 8e

TEXT:

1. Replace the sentence: “*Different deputies shall be appointed etc...*”, with the words “*No one shall be appointed to more than one deputyship, except where its task is a minor one.*”

GROUND:

The Article needs strengthening since past experience is that synods find it too hard to act in accordance with its spirit.

The proposed exception clause “except where its task is a minor one” is desirable since some tasks are of such minor nature that an absolute restriction could unnecessarily deprive the churches of talent. It should be harder to transgress this exception clause than the former “*as much as possible*”.

Amendment Defeated
Article 48 as printed is ADOPTED

■ **Church Order - Articles 49 - 50**

ADOPTED as printed

Evening Session

ARTICLE 23 REOPENING

The chairman reopens synod and invites all present to sing Psalm 118:6,7. All delegates are present.

The chairman announces that the Deputies received a facsimile letter from the GMMT, informing them that Reverend Fangidae hopes to arrive in Perth on Saturday 18 June. He will stay for 14 days.

ARTICLE 24 CHURCH ORDER

Discussion on the Church Order is continued.

■ Church Order - Article 51- Administration of sacraments

Amendment:

TEXT:

1. Replace "*church services*" with the words "*public worship service*".

GROUNDS:

1. Worship is the normal English word.
2. It is always used in the churches.
3. The Canadian churches use it.
4. The word "*church service*" gives a one-sided accent. This service is an encounter between God and His people, a meeting in which His people are called to worship Him.

NOTE:

During the discussion it was noted that Synod 1983 dealt with the same amendment which was defeated.

The question is asked if we can deal with the same issue. After discussion a vote is taken.

Majority in favour to allow amendment to be proposed.

Amendment Defeated
Article 51 as printed is ADOPTED

■ Church Order - Article 52

ADOPTED as printed

ARTICLE 25

ADJOURNMENT

Reverend C Bouwman invites all present to sing Psalm 4:2,3 and leads in prayer. The chairman adjourns synod.

THIRD DAY - Thursday 16 June, 1994 Morning Session

ARTICLE 26 REOPENING

The chairman reopens synod and reads Acts 2:1-21. He invites all present to sing Psalm 87:1-5.

The delegates from the church of Rockingham are noted as absent.

ARTICLE 27 CHURCH ORDER

The discussion on the Church Order continues.

■ Church Order - Article 54 - Public Profession of Faith

Amendment:

TEXT:

To change this Article to the following:

“Those who desire to publicly profess their faith shall be examined by the consistory on their motivation and knowledge of the doctrine of God’s Word. The public profession shall take place in a church service, with the use of the adopted Form.”

FOUNDATIONS:

The section *“have come to an understanding and acceptance”* [of the doctrine of God’s Word] is superfluous as the Article requires consistory to examine individuals for such understanding and acceptance.

Amendment Adopted

Article 54 as amended is ADOPTED @HD C.O. = Church Order - Articles 55 - 56

ADOPTED as printed

■ Church Order - Article 57 - Admission to the Lord’s Supper

Amendment:

TEXT:

1. Add the word “good” in between the following: “... *admitted on the basis of a*” and “*attestation*”.

GROUNDS:

1. The reference to “good” requires the consistory to judge the attestation.
2. Including the word “good” is in line with the Canadian Church Order.

Amendment Adopted

Article 57 as amended is ADOPTED

■ **Church Order - Article 58 - Church Records**

Amendment:

TEXT:

1. To use the Canadian Church Order text.

GROUNDS:

1. We desire to conform to Canada.
2. Adding dates of departure and death have historical and pastoral value.

Amendment Adopted

Article 58 as amended is ADOPTED

■ **Church Order - Article 59 - Attestations for communicant members**

Amendment:

TEXT:

1. To change “... *of the consistory by two elders.*”, to “... *of the consistory by two authorised office-bearers.*”

GROUNDS:

1. A deacon can, in a small congregation, be the clerk (cf Article 37 CO)

Amendment Adopted

Article 59 as amended is ADOPTED

■ **Church Order - Articles 60 - 65**

ADOPTED as printed

■ **Church Order - Article 66 - Days of Prayer**

Amendment:

TEXT:

1. Add “*the presence of which is felt throughout the churches*” after “... *afflictions ...*”
2. Replace “*shall*” for “**may**”.

FOUNDATIONS:

1. @123 TX = In this way we stay close to the original Church Order.
2. In this way we stay close to the Canadian Church Order.
3. The addition of the words “*the presence ... churches*” gives more direction to the church which is appointed for this purpose.
4. Since the 1987 decision (Article 47) does not furnish grounds, this amendment cannot be considered illegitimate.

Amendment Adopted

Article 66 as amended is ADOPTED

■ **Church Order - Article 67 - Marriage**

Amendment:

TEXT:

1. Change “*private ceremony*” to “*privately arranged ceremony*”.

FOUNDATIONS:

1. Expresses more accurately the intent of the article.

Amendment Defeated

Article 67 as printed is ADOPTED

■ **Church Order - Articles 68 - 75**

ADOPTED as printed

Afternoon Session

**ARTICLE 28
REOPENING**

The chairman reopens synod and invites all present to sing Psalm 66:1,2.

Elder K de Jonge, as delegate from the church of Rockingham, is also present and welcomed.

ARTICLE 29 CHURCH ORDER

The discussion on the Church Order continues.

■ Church Order - Article 53 - Baptism Promise and Education

Amendment:

TEXT:

The consistory shall make sure that the parents honour their vows to instruct their children, to the utmost of their power, in the doctrine of the Scriptures as summarised in the confession, and to have them instructed in the same by the instruction provided by the consistory. In accordance with the same vow, the consistory shall see to it that the parents, to the best of their ability, and with the cooperation of the communion of saints, give their children education (as stipulated by the civil government) which is based on Scripture and Confession.

GROUND:

The relation between the home, church, school and government should all be reflected in an Article which in its title deals with this broad subject. The duties of the parents should be mentioned. The duties of the church to instruct the children in the doctrine of the Word of God is mentioned in the Article about “*Catechism Sermons*” (63) and hinted at in Article 26.

However, catechetical instruction, which is such a hallmark of Reformed churches, does not receive a mention. Then the need for formal schooling, all on the same basis of the Word of God as summarised in the confessions, should receive attention. That the government sets the requirements (years of education, subjects to be taught, etc) should also be acknowledged (see Article 27).

Amendment Adopted

Article 53 as amended is ADOPTED

■ Church Order - Articles 77 - 81

ADOPTED as printed

ARTICLE 30 DELEGATE FROM THE REFORMED CHURCHES in NEW ZEALAND

A welcome is extended to Reverend MA Flinn, a delegate from the RCNZ. A letter of credentials from the RCNZ is read. The chairman reads Acts Synod 1992, Article 19, 2c, to specify his status and privileges.

ARTICLE 31 CHURCH ORDER

The discussion on the Church Order continues.

■ Church Order - Article 76 - Suspension and removal of office-bearers

Amendment:

TEXT:

1. To use the provisionally adopted text with the following alteration:
Delete in italics: *“and of the consistory of a neighbouring congregation. In the case of a minister, this neighbouring congregation shall be appointed by synod.”*
Insert the following: *“and of the classis church”*

GROUND:

1. Deputies offered no satisfactory explanation for immediate removal from the office for elders and deacons.
2. Synod does not appoint neighbouring congregations. It does appoint classis churches.
3. The provisionally adopted text would imply that a minister cannot be suspended until synod has appointed a neighbouring church.

Amendment Adopted

Article 76 as amended is ADOPTED

ARTICLE 32 CHURCH ORDER DECISION

HAVING COMPLETED THE DISCUSSION ON THE CHURCH ORDER SYNOD decides:

1. to discharge deputies and thank them for their work;
2. to request deputies for Relations with Sister Churches to inform these churches of the revision of the Church Order and to send them a copy of the final text.
3. to appoint deputies with the following mandate:
 - a. to prepare the new Church Order for printing;
 - b. to liaise with the Pro Ecclesia Printers to publish the Church Order.
- 4.

to include the final text of the revised Church Order as an appendix in the Acts 1994.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 33 OFFICIAL STATUS

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 8.c - Proposal re application of official status

DECISION:

To appoint deputies to apply to the Federal Government to register the Free Reformed Churches of Australia with the Federal Attorney General Department to be recognised as a “*Significant Denomination*”.

FOUNDATIONS:

Since the Registrar Generals Department in Canberra does not list the Free Reformed Churches of Australia as a “registered denomination”, it is difficult for our ministers to obtain a marriage license. Thus Launceston’s request should be followed through.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 34 SYNOD ARCHIVES

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 11.a and 11.b
Advisory Committee Number 2 reports.

DECISION:

1. To receive the report of deputies.
2. To thank the church of Bedforddale for the care of the archives and library and to discharge them.
3. To renew the mandate given by Synod Bedforddale 1992 (Acts Article 52) to deputies appointed with the proviso to make a microfilm record of the archives on a selective basis in accordance with the recommendations of the report of the church in charge of synod archives.
4. To request the appointed deputies to present a detailed report to the next synod.

FOUNDATIONS:

1. Instructions by Synod 1992, Article 52, Recommendation 2a & b have not yet been completed.
2. A complete microfilm record is not warranted because of the effort and expense involved.

ADOPTED

**ARTICLE 35
ADJOURNMENT**

The chairman adjourns the meeting.

Evening Session

**ARTICLE 36
REOPENING**

The chairman reopens synod and invites all present to sing Psalm 19:1,3. Elder T Visser, as delegate from the church of Rockingham, is also present and welcomed.

**ARTICLE 37
BIBLE TRANSLATION**

MATERIAL: Agenda Item 11.f - Deputies Report

Agenda Item 8.j, 8.k and 8.m - Incoming Correspondence

DECISION:

Synod declares that the submission of PW & JA Dekker (Agenda Item 8m) is inadmissible.

GROUNDS:

The submission is an attempt to participate in synod discussions. That is not the prerogative of individual church members but only of the delegates to synod. Submissions from individual church members should come via their consistories.

ADOPTED

**ARTICLE 38
ADJOURNMENT**

Elder H Heys invites all present to sing Psalm 34:3,4 and leads in prayer. The chairman adjourns the meeting.

**FOURTH DAY - Friday 17 June, 1994
Morning Session**

**ARTICLE 39
REOPENING**

The chairman reopens synod and reads Acts 2:22-47. He invites all present to sing Psalm 16:4,5 and leads in prayer.

All delegates are present.

Reverend C Kleyn conveys a request from 'Nederlands Dagblad' to send approved Acts of Synod by facsimile at their expense.

The request is APPROVED. Reverend C Kleyn will arrange it.

ARTICLE 40 BIBLE TRANSLATION

Continuation of discussion on Bible Translation.

ARTICLE 41 ADJOURNMENT

The chairman adjourns synod.

Afternoon Session

ARTICLE 42 REOPENING

The chairman reopens synod and invites all present to sing Psalm 119:1.

ARTICLE 43 ADOPTION OF ACTS

The Acts of Synod Articles 8, 10 - 15 are adopted.

ARTICLE 44 BIBLE TRANSLATION

Continuation of discussion on Bible Translation.

An amendment and alternate proposal is tabled. One round of discussion takes place.

ARTICLE 45 REQUEST FOR SOME CLOSED SESSIONS

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 8.f - Incoming Correspondence - Request from FRC Launceston for some closed sessions of synod, to discuss reports from Deputies for the ICRC and Presbyterian churches.

DECISION:

Synod decides not to accede to Launceston's request to discuss the reports re Presbyterian Churches and the ICRC in closed sessions.

FOUNDATIONS:

1. Synod should abide by the accepted rules of Synod (4a), that general matters be discussed in open session.
2. The chairman's task is to prevent misuse of the delegates' privileges to speak.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 46 REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO USE SYNOD'S ACTS

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 8.o - Incoming Correspondence - Request by Reverend G van Rongen to use synods' Acts for the preparation of standing decisions of the churches.

DECISION:

To grant the request of Reverend G van Rongen.

FOUNDATIONS:

His efforts to prepare a book on the standing decisions of the Churches is appreciated.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 47 ADJOURNMENT

The chairman adjourns synod.

Evening Session

ARTICLE 48 REOPENING

The chairman reopens synod and invites all present to sing Psalm 33:2,3.

A letter was received from Fraternal Relations Committee of PCK. Letter of greetings is read.

ARTICLE 49 RESPONSE TO VISITING CanRC DELEGATES

Elder AMC Bruning, in his capacity as Secretary of deputies for Relations with Sister Churches, responds to the address given by Reverend E Kampen. The text of this response may be found in Appendix A.

ARTICLE 50 ADOPTION OF ACTS

The Acts of Synod Articles 16 - 35 are adopted.

**ARTICLE 51
BIBLE TRANSLATION**

Continuation of discussion on Bible Translation.

**ARTICLE 52
ADJOURNMENT**

Reverend C Kleyn invites all present to sing Psalm 111:1,2 and leads in prayer. The chairman adjourns the synod.

**FIFTH DAY - Saturday 18 June, 1994
Morning Session**

**ARTICLE 53
REOPENING**

The chairman reopens synod and invites all present to sing Psalm 133:1,2. He reads Acts 2:43-47 and Acts 4:32-37 and leads in prayer.

All delegates are present.

The chairman welcomes Reverend A de Jager and Br DJ van Wijnen who have been delegated by the GKN. The chairman reads the credentials presented and reads the position and privileges of delegates from sister churches adopted by Synod 1992, Article 19, 2a. He asks the delegates to rise in order to show their agreement with the Three Forms of Unity. Both delegates rise.

The chairman proceeds to introduce the synod delegates.

**ARTICLE 54
ADOPTION OF ACTS**

The Acts of Synod Articles 36 - 37 are adopted.

**ARTICLE 55
BIBLE TRANSLATION**

MATERIAL:

Amendment to Deputies proposal.

DECISION:

Alter Recommendation 3 to read:

“to recommend the use of either the NIV or NKJV in the churches, in the homes and in the schools.”

Alter Recommendation 5 to read:

“to review the situation and to aim for the endorsement of one translation in consultation with the CanRC as much as possible.”

Alter Recommendation 6(a) to read:

“to inform the CanRC of this decision and remain in touch with Canadian deputies about developments there;”

Alter recommendation 6(f) to read:

“to report to the synod after next.”

To add recommendation :

“To allow a period of transition for the churches to move away from the RSV in two years.”

GROUND:

1. Deputies have put the NIV on a par with the NKJV.
2. As it is likely that it could take quite a number of years for the CanRC to come to a decision in this matter it becomes difficult to wait for them.
3. With this we honour the wish of the churches not to delay a decision any longer.
4. Even though it is preferable that all the churches in the bond use the same translation of the Bible, synod should not restrict the freedom of the local congregation too much.
5. After some years of hands-on experience a more thorough evaluation of the reception of both translations in the churches should be possible.

DEFEATED

MATERIAL:

Recommendations by Deputies.

DECISION:

1. To thank deputies for the work done and discharge them.
2. To retain the archives.
3. @123 TX = To recommend to the churches that either the NIV or the NKJV be used for study, instruction and family purposes or that both translations be used side by side.
4. To remind the church membership of the strengths and weaknesses of the NIV and the NKJV as mentioned in the reports of deputies to this and previous synods.
5. To defer a definite decision regarding the translation to be used in the church services until it is clear what direction the CanRC will be going.
6. To appoint new deputies with the mandate:
 - a. to communicate this decision to deputies from the CanRC, to maintain contact with those deputies and to evaluate the report they are to compile for their forthcoming synod;
 - b. to monitor developments in both the NIV and NKJV;
 - c. to solicit from the churches comments on possible improvements in these translations for a possible reprint and send these comments to the publishers;

- d. to monitor how these translations are received in the churches;
- e. to maintain the archives;
- f. to report to the next synod with recommendations.

DEFEATED

DECISION:

Alternate Proposal tabled.

1. To thank deputies for the work done and discharge them.
2. To retain the archives.
3. To endorse the NKJV as a faithful and reliable translation for use in the churches, as well as for study, instruction and family purposes.
4. To allow the NIV to be used in the church service, and for study, instruction and family purposes.
5. To allow a period of transition for the churches to move away from the RSV in two years.
6. To appoint new deputies with the following instruction:
 - a. to inform the CanRC of this decision and remain in touch with the Canadian deputies about developments there;
 - b. to inform the churches of developments in the CanRC;
 - c. to monitor developments with respect to the NKJV and the NIV;
 - d. to solicit from the churches comments on possible improvements on these translations for a possible reprint and to send these comments to the respective publishers;
 - e. to maintain the archives;
 - f. to report to next synod.

FOUNDATIONS:

1. Our previous synods, have found the NKJV to be a faithful and reliable translation and have allowed the use of it in the churches. Synod 1992 withheld final endorsement of the NKJV in order to evaluate its reception in the churches. That the NKJV is well received is evident from the fact that some of the congregations in the federation already use the NKJV.
2. Since the weaknesses of NIV are the strengths of the NKJV (and vice versa) the NIV should be considered for the use in the churches, and as with the NKJV a period of evaluation should be given before final endorsement.
3. It is highly desirable that all the churches in the bond use the same translation of the Bible. However, since the question of which Bible translation to use is not one of principle but rather one of preference, room should be left in the churches for a degree of variation.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 56 TRAINING FOR THE MINISTRY (Article 17, 18 CO)

Report A from the Advisory Committee 1 is tabled.

MATERIAL:

1. Agenda Item 8.i - Letter from Free Reformed Church of Albany with proposals dealing with Article 50 of Synod Bedforddale 1992 regarding training for the ministry.
2. Synod Bedforddale 1992 decided to add the following to Article 3 of the Regulations for the financial aid of students:
“The church to which the eligible student belongs when he begins his studies has secondary responsibility to provide support, after the student’s family and before the federation of churches. The deputies when assessing the churches must take into account the financial commitments which the local churches have assumed with respect to the support of needy students.”

DECISION:

1. Albany’s letter to synod regarding Article 50, Synod Bedforddale, requesting a revision of the decision is rejected.
2. Deputies for Training for the Ministry be given a mandate to clarify with the churches who is the “mother church” in regard to a student who has been a member of more than one congregation.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Albany’s recommendations which are described as a proposal in the covering letter and described as an appeal in the text of the document.

2. According to Article 31 CO an appeal can be lodged if the appellant is convinced the decision is contrary to Scripture or Church Order. Albany does not give any arguments which show the decision of Article 50 is contrary to Scripture or Church Order. Instead they ask for a revision because it has grave misgivings as to its practicalities. It claims the change of rules are lacking in clarity and lead to inequities.
3. According to Article 33 CO, matters once decided upon may not be proposed again unless they are substantiated by new grounds. It could be questioned whether Albany really gives new grounds but it is wise to answer Albany’s comments on the implementation of Article 50, Synod Bedforddale.
4. Article 18 Co (old Article 19) implies that each individual church is responsible for stimulating young men to study for the ministry. Synod 1992 decided that each church has a prior responsibility for their own student, financially, by prayer and by correspondence.
5. Individual churches have differing financial responsibilities in many aspects of church life. Inequality in financial burdens for the differing congregations is to be expected. Support for a theo-

logical student is no exception. If the church finds that the financial costs become too heavy it should address the Deputies for Training for the Ministry for assistance.

6. Equality amongst students regarding financial means can never be completely achieved since some students will have substantial family support, whilst others will rely only on support from their home church or Deputies for Training for the Ministry.
7. Regarding Albany's concern that confusion may occur as to which church has the secondary responsibility for assisting a student, in the case that that student has been a member of more than one congregation, we agree this should be avoided. Deputies should be mandated to clarify this issue.

ADOPTED

Report B from the Advisory Committee 1 is tabled.

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 8.a - Letter from Free Reformed Church of Kelmscott, dated 27th November, 1993 in which they recommend:

- a. The consistory of a student's home church is to:
 - i. carefully consider his circumstances and resources, discuss relevant matters with the student, parents (and girlfriend if he has one), establish the best course of action (including possible marriage where applicable), means test the student and investigate to what degree his parents and/or other family are able to financially support him.
 - ii. @2ND ABC TX = (In cases where assistance from the bond of churches is needed) Report in detail to synod appointed deputies and cooperate in negotiating a reasonable financial arrangement between the family, the home church and deputies.
 - b. In the case of disputes the home church's classis (classis-church) shall adjudicate.
 - c. that rules and regulations for financial aid of students be amended to incorporate their proposals.
2. Report Deputies for Training for the Ministry (Agenda Item 11g).
 3. Report Auditors Books, Article 17, 18 CO (Agenda Item 11j).

DECISION of Report B:

1. Accede to Kelmscott's request to delete Article 7 and Article 9 of the regulations for the financial aid of students.
2. Accede to deputies request to amend Article 19c of the regulations to read as follows:
"the student after having completed his course of studies, does not within two years make himself available for call by one of the Churches mentioned in Article 1".

3. Not to accede to Kelmscott's proposal (Material 1a) to prescribe the procedure by which a consistory will determine the level of support for a student.
4. Not to accede to Kelmscott's proposal to delete Article 8 of the regulations.
5. Accede to Kelmscott's proposal (Material 1b) to add to the regulations eg as Article 25:
"In the case of disputes the home church's classis (classis-church) shall adjudicate".
6. Adopt the deputies recommendation that the churches are levied \$38.00 per communicant member per annum for the maintenance of the Theological College in Hamilton as from the 1st July, 1994.
7. Synod discharge deputies and appoint new deputies with the mandate to:
 - a. collect funds for "Hamilton" and forward them to the college;
 - b. encourage the churches to hold regular collections for the Theological Seminary in Pusan;
 - c. continue correspondence with both "Hamilton" and "Kampen" in order to maintain contact and to obtain information;
 - d. publish relevant information about the training for the ministry, so that the churches understand the need to support the Colleges and the training of the students;
 - e. continue to arrange the support of the Theological students whenever required in accordance with Article 18 CO.
 - f. clarify which church has secondary responsibility in the case of student who has been a member of more than one congregation (Reg. Article 3).
8. Discharge auditors for books deputies, Article 17, 18 CO and appoint new deputies.

GROUNDS:

1. Kelmscott and the deputies have shown that the provision of Articles 7 and 9 of the regulations regarding the support of the family of a married student is inconsistent with the Consideration 7a of Article 50, Synod Bedfordale, which amended the regulations. Kelmscott has given good grounds why the spouse of a married student should also require financial support.
2. Article 19c of the regulations required repayment of the study loan if the student does not make himself available for a call. Deputies rightly point out that very young graduates may wish to prepare themselves for the ministry in a practical way (eg by teaching at school, by additional studies, or simply by obtaining some life experience by holding any job in the workforce).
3. Churches and deputies have misunderstood the application of the rules and regulations. The regulations for the financial aid

of students are applicable only to students who receive financial aid from the Deputies for Training for the Ministry. Students who receive financial assistance from their own church are governed only by any rules or agreements which their supporting church may determine. Deputies erred in their advice to students not to marry before Synod 1994 had made a decision regarding support for a spouse.

If a church assumes secondary responsibility for a student then it can provide assistance under its own terms and conditions. Just as synod cannot make regulations regarding the level of support given to a student from private or family sources, so synod should not make regulations regarding the level of support for a student supported by his own church.

4. The regulations and rules regarding means testing students who apply for assistance from the fund for the support for needy students has not been shown to need amendment since these regulations assist the deputies to be good stewards over that which has been entrusted to them.
5. It is in keeping with good reformed practice that a student aggrieved by the level of support offered by deputies or by their application of the rules and regulations, should be able to appeal deputies decisions.
6. Support for the Theological College should continue in accordance with Article 18 of the Church Order. @ADOPTED = ADOPTED

ARTICLE 57 INSTITUTION OF SECOND CHURCH IN ALBANY

MATERIAL:

The church of Albany gave their delegates the following instruction:
“Consistory request synod to approve the institution of a second church in the Albany area. At present no definite name has been chosen. The date for institution has been set for 7 August, 1994. The new church also likes to be part of the bond of churches and therefore asks to be incorporated in the bond of Free Reformed Church of Australia.”

DECISION:

Not to deal with Albany’s request.

GROUNDS:

According to the Church Order, constitution of a consistory (and hence institution of a church) is a matter requiring advice of the classis-church. Since this matter has not been finished in the minor assembly, synod cannot deal with the matter and so advises Albany to seek the advice of the classis-church.

ADOPTED

**ARTICLE 58
ADJOURNMENT**

Elder H Olde invites all present to sing Psalm 8:1,3 and leads in prayer.

The chairman adjourns synod.

**SIXTH DAY - Monday 20 June, 1994
Morning Session**

**ARTICLE 59
REOPENING**

The chairman reopens synod and reads Acts 3. He invites all present to sing Hymn 14:1,2 and leads in prayer.

**ARTICLE 60
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED
CHURCHES**

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 8.n - Letter from Br J Bruning re membership of the ICRC.

DECISION:

Synod declares that the submission of Br J Bruning is inadmissible.

GROUNDS:

The submission is an attempt to participate in synod discussions. That is not the prerogative of individual church members but only of the delegates to synod. Submissions from individual church members should come via their consistories.

ADOPTED

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 11.e.3 - Deputies Reports

Agenda Item 11.e.4 - Deputies Reports

At the beginning of Round 1 of the discussion on the deputies report and recommendations regarding the ICRC, the chairman reads the letters from the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa and the Presbyterian Church in Korea.

Round 1 of the discussion follows.

**ARTICLE 61
ADJOURNMENT**

The chairman adjourns synod. @DAY = Afternoon Session

**ARTICLE 62
REOPENING**

The chairman reopens synod and invites all present to sing Psalm 138:4.

**ARTICLE 63
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED
CHURCHES**

Round 2 of the discussion is held.

**ARTICLE 64
ADJOURNMENT**

The chairman adjourns synod.

Evening Session

**ARTICLE 65
REOPENING**

The chairman reopens the meeting and invites all present to sing Hymn 23:1-8. He welcomes the delegates and the audience.

**ARTICLE 66
ADDRESS BY VISITING DELEGATES**

Reverend A de Jager, delegate of our sister churches in the Netherlands (GKN), is invited to address synod.

Reverend A Veldman, in his capacity as a deputy for Relations with Sister Churches, responds.

Reverend MA Flinn, a delegate from the Reformed Churches of New Zealand, a church with which our churches have contact, is invited to address synod.

Reverend W Huizinga, in his capacity as a deputy for Relations with Other Churches (Reformed), responds.

Texts of addresses and replies may be found in Appendix A.

**ARTICLE 67
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED
CHURCHES**

Round 2 of the discussion regarding the ICRC is finished.

**ARTICLE 68
ADJOURNMENT**

Elder PO Posthuma invites all present to sing Psalm 25:1,2,7 and leads in prayer. The chairman adjourns synod.

**SEVENTH DAY - Tuesday 21 June, 1994
Morning Session**

**ARTICLE 69
REOPENING**

The chairman reopens synod and reads Acts 4:1-31. He invites all present to sing Psalm 2:1,3,4 and leads in prayer. All present are welcomed.

**ARTICLE 70
ADOPTION OF ACTS**

The Acts of Synod Articles 38 - 55 are adopted.

**ARTICLE 71
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED
CHURCHES**

Continuation of discussion on report from Deputies for ICRC.

**ARTICLE 72
ADJOURNMENT**

The chairman adjourns synod.

Afternoon Session

**ARTICLE 73
REOPENING**

The chairman reopens synod and invites all present to sing Psalm 118:5,6.

**ARTICLE 74 @ARTICLE TITLE = INTERNATIONAL CON-
FERENCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES**

Continuation of discussion on report from Deputies for ICRC.

ARTICLE 75 ADJOURNMENT

The chairman adjourns synod.

Evening Session

ARTICLE 76 REOPENING

The chairman reopens synod and invites all present to sing Psalm 105:2,3,4.

The Free Reformed Church of Bedfordale's primary delegate is absent. His secundus Elder R vander Laan is present. The chairman requests Elder R vander Laan to rise to indicate his agreement with the Three Forms of Unity. He does so.

ARTICLE 77 ADDRESS FROM REVEREND DOKO

Reverend Doko, delegate of our sister churches in Sumba, Savu and Timor, addresses synod and passes on greetings from his churches. Elder J Bosveld, in his capacity as a deputy for Relations with Other Churches (Reformed), responds. (The text of this address and response may be found in Appendix A.)

ARTICLE 78 REFORMED CHURCHES IN NEW ZEALAND

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 11.e.2 - Deputies Report - New Zealand

DECISION:

That Reverend Flinn be given the opportunity to speak.

FOUNDATIONS:

It is courteous and beneficial to make the most use of his presence.

ADOPTED

Amendment:

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 11.e.2 - Deputies Report - New Zealand

DECISION:

To replace Point 4 and insert:

“How the relation of the RCNZ with the RCA should impact our relation with the RCNZ.”

FOUNDATIONS:

In the light of the changes occurring on the ecclesiastical scene, there is a need to reconsider expectations (Synod Acts 1990, Article 53, Recommendation 5).

ADOPTED

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 11.e.2 - Deputies Report - New Zealand

DECISION:

1. To discharge deputies for their work done and appoint new deputies.
2. To continue contacts with the RCNZ at the present level.
3. To work towards a resolution about third parties, so that the way can be opened towards sister relations.
4. How the relation of the RCNZ with the RCA should impact our relation with the RCNZ. @123 HD = 5.
To keep the churches informed about any progress.
6. To report to the next synod.

FOUNDATIONS:

The report gives sufficient reason to renew the mandate of deputies.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 79 CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

Reverend E Kampen gives an update of the contacts the CanRC have with the FRCNA.

Contacts are intensifying between consistories.

CanRC approach the FRCNA as a sister church with whom they should be one.

MATERIALS:

Agenda Item 11.e.1 - Deputies Report - Canada

DECISION:

1. To thank the deputies and to discharge them.
2. To continue sister relations with the CanRC under the adopted rules.
3. To appoint new deputies.

FOUNDATIONS:

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

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 80

ADJOURNMENT

Elder S Reitsema invites all present to sing Psalm 85:3,4 and leads in prayer. The chairman adjourns synod.

EIGHTH DAY - Wednesday 22 June, 1994 Morning Session

ARTICLE 81 REOPENING

The chairman reopens synod and reads Acts 5:1-11. He invites all present to sing Psalm 55:12,13 and leads in prayer. All delegates are present.

ARTICLE 82 ADOPTION OF ACTS

The Acts of Synod Articles 56 - 68 are adopted.

ARTICLE 83 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 11.e.4 - Deputies report
Agenda Item 11.e.4 - Supplementary report

DECISION:

1. To discharge deputies of their mandate and to thank them for all the work done.
2. To consider the study of the concerns of the 1990 Synod about our (continuing) membership of the ICRC complete.
3. To continue our membership in the ICRC.

GROUNDS:

- a. this is in line with previous synods which decided to join the ICRC, to continue membership and which denied appeals against membership in the ICRC.
- b. the concerns signalled at the 1990 Synod have not convinced us to withdraw, for the following reasons:
 - i. the ICRC is a conference, not an ecclesiastical assembly, and its conclusions are advisory.
 - ii. admission of member churches to this conference may not be equated with the official recognition of a bond of churches which is made by our broadest ecclesiastical assembly, the synods.
 - iii. the overall purpose of the ICRC is "to express and promote the unity of faith that the member churches have

in Christ". This "unity of faith" is an overall goal to aim for as the second purpose clarifies. Insofar as we have sister churches in the ICRC we already practise this goal; concerning those churches who are not (yet) sister churches, this conference is a vehicle to pursue this goal.

- iv. Lord's Day 7 specifies what true faith, and thus what unity of faith, means. That member churches in their reformed standards confess and adhere to "the sure knowledge" that everything from Genesis to Revelation is the truth, the Word of God; and that they have shown their "firm confidence" in all the promises of the Gospel gives us confidence in meeting these churches at an international, reformed conference, and in fulfilling our obligations as outlined in "Article III - Purpose" of its Constitution.

4. To request deputies to pass onto the churches the conclusions and recommendations of the ICRC, specifically the ones about "Theological Affirmation" and regional conferences and mission conferences from the 1993 ICRC, together with deputies' comments, at least 1/2 a year before the next synod, if so desired.

FOUNDATIONS:

- a. this is according to the decision of the 1992 Synod (Article 124, Recommendation 10);
 - b. this spells out how the matters at the ICRC may arrive on the agenda of synods.
5. In meeting the member churches of the ICRC to maintain the decision of the 1990 Synod, Article 58:
 - "a. to limit the requirements of the relative mandates to a manageable level;
 - b. to limit present contacts and relations with churches which are geographically close to our sister churches abroad and with churches which we have recognised as true and faithful to the minimum level necessary for us to remain acquainted with their situation and to fulfil our obligations made to them;
 - c. to concentrate on relations and contacts with churches who are geographically closer to us and for whom we have a greater responsibility;
 - d. to phase out contact with churches with whom we appear to be making no progress."

FOUNDATIONS:

Since the number of member churches grows and will grow, thankfully, it is necessary for our small bond to restate this decision.

6. In making contacts and relations with other bonds of member churches in the ICRC, which are geographically distant from us, to wait for sister churches closer to those other churches to take the initiative and to make decisions before we become involved.

FOUNDATIONS:

Our bond is too small to seek the fullest ecclesiastical fellowship with a growing number of churches, many of which are distant from us.

7. To utilise the ICRC in as practical a way as possible, especially for exercising some aspects of our sister relations with other churches.

FOUNDATIONS:

This is good stewardship.

8. To send the proposed "Constitutional Amendment of the First Purpose of the ICRC" as presented by previous deputies to the 1992 Synod to the next ICRC (see text below).
9. To appoint deputies to carry out our obligations as members of the ICRC.

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT OF THE FIRST PURPOSE OF ICRC

The 1994 Synod of the FRCA proposes to the next ICRC to adopt the following amendment of the first Purpose of the ICRC as stated in its Constitution so that it reads instead:

"1. to express and promote unity in the reformed faith which the member churches confess;"

FOUNDATIONS:

1. The present reading *"to express and promote the unity of faith that the member churches have in Christ"* uses language from our confessions, language which suggests that the full unity of faith as established in organic unity or sister relations between federations of churches can be expressed and promoted at and by the ICRC. Many understand the purpose in the above manner; and in turn this understanding causes much concern. It is not the task of the ICRC but of the broadest ecclesiastical assemblies to recognise and to give expression to this full unity of faith (cf the Proposal of the FCS to the 1989 ICRC, Proceedings, pages 12-14).
2. The present reading - *"the unity of faith that the members churches HAVE in Christ"* (stress is ours) - could imply and implies to many that this unity is already a present fact. It could imply that unity already exists among all the members churches. The next purpose (*"to encourage the fullest ecclesiastical fellowship.."*) belies this implication. Instead of fostering ambiguity, confusion and dissension, a clearer statement of purpose would promote appreciation for the purpose of the ICRC.
3. The first purpose should always be broad, comprehending every other stated purpose. The amendment tries to do so.
4. The amendment does not leave room for ambiguity. Expression and promotion of the reformed faith which all the member churches confess is general, involves the more specific aim of

promoting full interchurch relations, but includes a comprehensive array of discussions, aims and projects which will all express and promote the reformed faith.

5. The reference to “*reformed faith*” should encourage especially those who hold to the Westminster Standards. Instead of being called “presbyterian” in contradistinction to “*reformed*” all member churches are now said to confess the “*reformed faith*”. Needless and divisive distinctions are thus avoided.
6. The reference to “*the reformed faith which the member churches CONFESS*” (stress is ours) neatly ties in with the “*BASIS*” of the Constitution where the reformed confessions are listed. It knits the article of basis and purpose together.

ADOPTED

The chairman said that, considering that this was the first of 3 proposals, it is possible that delegates would have preferred one of the other proposals but could also support this one, and adhering to Acts of Synod 1992, Rule 6a:

Wherever possible, decisions should be taken unanimously.,

It is prudent to have a second vote to aim for unanimity.

He asks how many can stand behind this decision. The vote remains the same.

ARTICLE 84

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 8.h - FRC Legana proposal re recognition of PCEA

Agenda Item 11.e.3 - Deputies Report

First round of discussion follows.

ARTICLE 85 ADJOURNMENT

The chairman adjourns synod.

Afternoon Session

ARTICLE 86 REOPENING

The chairman reopens synod and invites all present to sing Psalm 141:3,4.

ARTICLE 87 PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

Deputies respond to first round of discussion. The second round of discussion on the report and letter is continued. Alternate proposal is tabled.

DECISION:

1. To accept the reports of Deputies for Relations with the FCS, EPCI, RPCI and the PCEA as interim reports.
2. To keep all contacts with churches mentioned under 1 at the present level.
3. To appoint deputies with the mandate:
 - a. to study the matter of contacts with Presbyterian churches, whereby answer the questions:
 - what weight the FRCA should give to the remaining areas of concern;
 - whether first all areas of concern must be cleared before a church can be acknowledged as true and faithful;
 - whether every contact consequently must lead to sister relations; whereby due consideration must be given to the decision of Synod 1985 regarding the recognition of true and faithful churches (Acts Article 67);
 - b. to authorise the deputies to organise a conference for the churches to discuss these issues as broad as possible.
4. To report back to the churches six months prior to the next synod.

GROUND:

1. Deputies for Relations with Presbyterian Churches did not have sufficient time to digest an alternative proposal of one of its members to give the PCEA official recognition and on that basis continue the study and discussions of the remaining concerns.
2. Due to the lack of unanimity the arguments pro and con should be well-considered before making a final decisions on the issues concerned. The churches will not benefit from a rash decision made under pressure.
3. Breaking off contacts with the FCS, EPCI and RPCI as proposed by Deputies for Relations with Presbyterian Churches would not be wise in this point of time and would harm the discussions with the PCEA.
4. The arguments mentioned under Grounds 1-3 justify further discussion of the issues concerned. The discussions should be as broad as possible.

The first round of discussion on the alternate proposal follows.

**ARTICLE 88
FAREWELLS**

Reverend MA Flinn, delegate from the RCNZ, thanks synod for the opportunity to attend. He is thankful for the hospitality shown to

him and his wife and wishes synod the Lord's blessing.
Reverend E Kampen, delegate from the CanRC, gives his farewell address, which is printed in Appendix A.
After his address he invites all present to sing Hymn 40:1,2 and leads in prayer.

ARTICLE 89 ADJOURNMENT

The chairman adjourns synod.

Evening Session

ARTICLE 90 REOPENING

The chairman reopens synod and invites all present to sing Psalm 147:1,4.

Reverend A van Delden presents the chairman with an Australian and Canadian flag and a jar of Vegemite, and extends his congratulations on becoming an Australian citizen.

ARTICLE 91 PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

Round of discussion on alternate proposal is completed. The mover withdraws his proposal to incorporate suggestions made during discussions.

Reverend A de Jager, from our sister churches in the Netherlands, gives some clarification on how the RCN deal with the PCEA.

ARTICLE 92 MUSYAFIR CHURCHES

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 8.1 - FRC Albany

DECISION:

Albany informs synod of their opinion that the decision of synod 1992 re-study support for Yonson Dethan was incorrect on the grounds that the FRCA had not yet recognised the GMMT. Though synod can see Albany's argument on technical grounds it does not share their opinion.

GROUND:

With reference to churches who desire to benefit from the riches

which the Lord has given us, we should be quick to encourage our churches to give assistance.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 93 REFORMED CHURCHES NETHERLANDS (LIB)

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 11.e.1 - Deputies Report

DECISION:

1. To thank deputies and discharge them.
2. To continue sister relations with the RCN under the adopted rules.
3. To appoint new deputies.

GROUND:

The RCN give evidence of continuing faithfulness to the Word of God, maintaining the Reformed Confessions and CO.

One round of discussion follows. The delegates from the RCN answer some questions. Reverend C Kleyn asks that his name be deleted from the speech delivered by Reverend C Bouwman, on behalf of the Deputies for Relations of Sister Churches at the Synod of the RCN, as he was not present at that session of synod because he had difficulty with the drift of the address and felt that this would not serve the relationship between the RCN and the FRCA.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 94 REQUEST FOR EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT

Reverend C Bouwman moves that the morning session of tomorrow (Thursday 23 June) be cancelled.

GROUND:

1. The funeral of our late brother Bonker.
2. Delegates can catch up on some outstanding work.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 95 ADJOURNMENT

Elder A Slobe invites all present to sing Hymn 34:1-6 and leads in prayer. The chairman adjourns synod.

NINTH DAY - Thursday 23 June, 1994
Afternoon Session

ARTICLE 96
REOPENING

The chairman reopens synod and reads Acts 5:12-42. He invites all present to sing Psalm 103:1,2 and leads in prayer. All delegates are present.

ARTICLE 97
ADOPTION OF ACTS

The Acts of Synod Articles 69 - 87 are adopted.

ARTICLE 98
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

Three proposals are tabled.
A round of discussion follows. Delegates from our sister churches in the Netherlands give advice. Movers of the three proposals give their response.

ARTICLE 99
ADJOURNMENT

The chairman adjourns synod.

Evening Session

ARTICLE 100
REOPENING

The chairman reopens synod and invites all present to sing Psalm 73:8,9.

ARTICLE 101
ADDRESS BY REVEREND E FANGIDAE

The chairman welcomes Reverend E Fangidae from the GMMT and invites him to address synod. He does so and conveys greetings and best wishes in the Lord (see Appendix A).
The chairman thanks Reverend Fangidae for his words.

ARTICLE 102

INDONESIAN CHURCHES

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 11.e.2 - Deputies Report

DECISION:

1. To discharge current deputies and appoint new deputies with the mandate to:
 - a. continue to support the theological training undertaken by Yonson Dethan;
 - b. to coordinate the support offered to the Indonesian churches by the way of visits, literature and other aids in order to build up the reformed character of the reformed churches in Indonesia;
 - c. to visit the Indonesian Churches before our next synod, preferably during the time of the synod of the RCSTŚ;
 - d. to continue to gather information regarding the Reformed Movement in Indonesia;
 - e. to maintain the contacts with the GMMT to assist them in their desire to remain reformed and to report on progress towards an eventual recommendation to recognise the GMMT as sister churches and;
 - f. to encourage the individual Free Reformed Churches and their members to provide the financial support to enable deputies to carry out their mandate under recommendations 1a and 1b.
2. To maintain the sister relations with the RCSTS in accordance with the adopted rules.

GROUNDS:

1. From the contacts with and visits to the RCSTS we may gratefully conclude that the RCSTS have remained faithful to the word of God as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity and to the adopted Church Order.
2. The reports regarding the progress of Yonson Dethan is positive and we should continue the commitments entered into by deputies as per their mandate given by Synod Bedfordale 1992.
3. Consistent with previous synod decisions that we concentrate our contacts with churches that are closer geographically, deputies should continue contact with the GMMT, encouraging them in their desire to remain Reformed.
4. Since the GMMT both request and appreciate very much (as we have heard from Reverend Fangidae in his address to us) the assistance we have been allowed to give, we should continue to do our best to assist in whatever way possible.
5. Closer relations with both the RCSTS and the GMMT is desirable not only because they are near neighbours to us but also because of the increasing difficulty for the Dutch sister churches to provide missionary help due to government restrictions on

the issue of visa. Visits to Australia by ministers or students from the Indonesian sister churches will not only help build up their theological training but also strengthen the bond between our churches.

A round of discussion is held and the deputies respond.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 103 SOUTH AFRICA

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 11.e.1 - Deputies Report and Supplementary Report
Reverend FJ van Hulst gives an update of the recent developments in the South African churches.

DECISION:

1. To thank deputies for their work done and discharge them.
2. To continue sister relations under the adopted rules.
3. To appoint new deputies.

FOUNDATIONS:

The FRCSA give evidence of continuing faithfulness to the Word of God, maintaining the Three Forms of Unity and the Church Order of Dort.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 104 KOREA

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 11.e.1 - Deputies Report and Supplementary Report

DECISION:

1. To thank deputies for their work done and discharge them.
2. To continue sister relations under the adopted rules.
3. To appoint new deputies.
4. To continue efforts to improve the exchange of information between the churches.

FOUNDATIONS:

The PCK give evidence of continuing faithfulness to the Word of God, maintaining the Reformed Confession and the Church Order.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 105 ADJOURNMENT

Elder H Terpstra invites all present to sing Psalm 36:1,2,3 and leads in prayer. The chairman adjourns synod.

TENTH DAY - Friday 24 June, 1994 Morning Session

ARTICLE 106 REOPENING

The chairman reopens synod and reads 1 Corinthians 3. He invites all present to sing Hymn 38:1-4 and leads in prayer.
The Acts of Synod Articles 88 - 95 are adopted.

ARTICLE 107 PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA Three amended proposals are tabled. A discussion on these proposals is started.

PROPOSAL No 1:

DECISION:

Synod decides to:

1. Thank deputies for the work they have done and discharge them.
2. Not to accede to the request of the church at Legana to acknowledge the PCEA as a true church of the Lord and to continue to discuss the remaining areas of concern on the basis of mutual recognition.
3. To appoint new deputies and give to them the identical mandate given to deputies by Synod 1992, viz:
 - “To work towards a mutual recognition of each other as true churches of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the light of this goal:*
 - a. *to continue to study and discuss further with the PCEA the remaining areas of concern specified by Synod 1987, viz, the supervision of the Lord's table, the practice of pulpit exchanges and the position of children in the covenant. In this discussion about the areas of concern the confession of the doctrine of the church should be addressed when applicable. Due attention must be given to our concern about possible unscriptural concepts regarding interdenominationalism. All this should be done in the light of God's Word giving heed to the complete doctrine of salvation:*
 - b. *to continue these discussions with the PCEA mindful of the considerations of Synod 1990 (Acts, Article 77);*

- c. *to exchange visitors at deputy and synodical level;*
 - d. *to use the current rules for sister churches in the discussions leading toward mutual recognition as true churches of our Lord Jesus Christ;*
 - e. *to inform the RCN (through the deputies for correspondence with churches abroad) of our decision concerning the PCEA."*
4. To express regret that our Dutch sister has made our contacts with the PCEA more difficult, even though she indeed has her own responsibility.
 5. To include Legana's submission (Agenda Item 8h) in the Acts as Appendix B3.1.

GROUNDS:

1. Legana's proposal tries to do the work of deputies. It would serve the bond of churches better if deputies would complete their mandate, instead of Synod now making a precipitous change in midstream. New deputies should give consideration to the submission of Legana.
2. In the course of their stay here, delegates from our sister churches in the Netherlands have encouraged us to "receive" as true churches of Jesus Christ other churches who have and maintain a reformed confession, as long as the areas of concern, which there might be in these other churches do not have the weight of promoting unbelief. This constitutes an approach to other churches different from the approach followed by the FRCA until now. The FRCA should not immediately follow this advice without first having thought the matter through for ourselves.
3. Synod 1987 gave expression to the joy of the churches that "*between the Free Reformed Churches of Australia and the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia there is indeed a mutual desire to serve God according to His Word*" (Article 115, Recommendation 2). Precisely this oneness in desire gives every incentive to carry on our contacts with the PCEA.
4. Current deputies' reports (as also those of 1990 and 1992) does not give evidence of much progress. One should not become impatient with this tardiness, for the areas of concern have deep roots in the PCEA. We should instead be assured that the common desire to serve God according to His Word will lead to fruit in the course of time. So we should carry on in efforts to share what we have received and learn what we can learn.
5. Our Dutch sister has recognised the PCEA as a true church, but has not offered them sister relations out of consideration for the FRCA. Yet this leaves us in an awkward situation, since the PCEA is being accepted by one but still investigated by the other. Since the RCN is distant from the PCEA and we are close by, it is regretful that the FRCA could not finish its mandate first.

An amendment was tabled, namely:

DECISION:

To change Point 3a to read as follows:

3. a. *Study and discuss with the PCEA the areas of concern.*
viz:
 1. *children in the covenant;*
 2. *pulpit exchange;*
 3. *supervision of the Lord's table.*

GROUND:

To add all the other items is not productive to good discussion.

Amendment DEFEATED

A vote was taken on Proposal No. 1 as presented.

DEFEATED

PROPOSAL No. 2

DECISION:

1. To strive for a sister relation with the PCEA and in view of this to continue contact.

GROUND:

- a. The submission from Legana, based on years of contact between the FRCA and the PCEA, indicates that in doctrine, worship and church government the PCEA must be considered as a true church of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- b. Seeing the matter of sister relations has not yet been discussed with the PCEA it would be premature to offer a sister relation at this point of time.
With reference to Article 67 of the 1985 Acts, Synod 1987 considered regarding the FCS "this same decision acknowledges that there may be historical developments which form an obstacle to becoming sister-churches immediately. Article 74 of the 1985 Acts allows for a formal relation of ecclesiastical contact as long as this relation does not become permanent and as long as it is actively used to come to relations as sister churches" (Acts 1987, Article 82, Consideration 8).
- c. Striving for a sister relation must be seen as a first step towards full ecclesiastical unity. Synod 1990 considered: "Where two federations of sister churches are found in the same country there is the demand of God that, 'brothers dwell in unity' (Psalm 133:1). However because of the different cultural and historical background between the two bonds of churches such eventual organic unity, although a goal, cannot be expected to be achieved quickly and may

need to develop slowly” (Acts 1990, Article 77, Consideration 23).

2. To discharge deputies and to thank them for all the work done.
 3. To appoint new deputies with the mandate:
 - a. to use the current rules for sister churches in the discussions leading to the establishment of sister relations;
 - b. to continue, for the mutual benefit of both federations of churches, to study and discuss the remaining areas of concern.
 4. To include the letter from Legana in the Acts of Synod.
- A vote was taken on Proposal No. 2 as presented.

DEFEATED

PROPOSAL No. 3

DECISION:

1. To thank deputies and to discharge them.
2. To accept the reports from Deputies for Relations with Presbyterian Churches as interim reports.
3. To appoint new deputies with the mandate:
 - 3.1 to continue to study and discuss further with the PCEA the remaining areas of concern specified by Synod 1987, viz, the supervision of the Lord’s table, the practice of pulpit exchanges and the position of children in the covenant. In this discussion about the areas of concern the confession of the doctrine of the church should be addressed when applicable. Due attention must be given to our concern about possible unscriptural concepts regarding interdenominationalism. All this should be done in the light of God’s Word giving heed to the complete doctrine of salvation. To continue these discussions with the PCEA mindful of the considerations of Synod 1990 (Acts, Article 77);
 - 3.2 as regards the FCS, to use the rules for TEC to improve our contacts, especially in the discussions about mutual areas of major concern and our concerns with the FCS (pulpit exchange and certain views of the FCS regarding the ICRC), so that we can expect eventual sister relations to be fruitful;
 - 3.3 as regards the EPCI to use the rules for TEC to improve the quantity of discussions and exchange of information so that the two churches might get to know each other better. In the discussions with the EPCI the items mentioned for discussion with the PCEA are not to be overlooked;
 - 3.4 as regards the RPCI to study the matters of covenanting and purity of worship in line with the decision taken by Synod Bedfordale 1992 (Acts, Article 157, Consideration 3,4,5). For the sake of consistency, the items mentioned for discussion with the PCEA are not to be overlooked;

- 3.5 as regards all the above mentioned churches answers should be given to the following questions:
 - a. What weight the FRCA should give to the remaining areas of concern;
 - b. Whether or not firstly all areas of concern must be cleared before the FRCA can progress with contacts/relations;
 - c. How in a manageable and responsible way the FRCA can fulfil their obligations towards churches geographically far away;
- 3.6 to authorise deputies to organise a conference for the churches to discuss the contact with Presbyterian churches as broadly as possible;
- 3.7 to report back to the churches when the mandate is finished.

GROUNDS:

1. Breaking off contacts with the FCS, EPCI and RPCI as proposed by Deputies for Relations with Presbyterian Churches would not be justified at this point of time and would harm the discussions with the PCEA.
2. Since previous deputies could not finish their mandate, new deputies should be appointed to come with final conclusions.
3. Past synods have spoken about areas of concern, yet have never called them impediments to progress with contacts/relations.
4. In line with the decision of Synod Armadale, 1990 (Acts, Article 58) it is important to define more clearly what is needed to fulfil our obligations towards churches geographically far away. Before sister church relations are offered the FRCA should be clear on how to give content to such a relationship. @123 HD = 5. Since the FRCA still struggle with the contacts they have with Presbyterian churches a broad discussion about these contacts is warranted and would be beneficial for the churches.

A vote was taken on Proposal No. 3 as presented.

DEFEATED

A proposal was tabled to deal with the other Presbyterian churches first. This was **ADOPTED**.

ARTICLE 108 EPCI, RPCI, FCS

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 11.3.e - Deputies report s
Letter from a deputy

First round of discussion follows and deputies respond.

ARTICLE 109 FAREWELL and ADJOURNMENT

The chairman says a few words of farewell to the visiting delegates from the GKN. He asks them to pass on our thanks to their churches for allowing them to travel to Australia. Their presence and advice is greatly appreciated and he wishes them a safe journey home.

Brother van Wijnen responds and thanks synod for the hospitality received, he wishes synod God's blessing.
Reverend de Jager closes the morning session in prayer.

The chairman adjourns synod.

Afternoon Session

ARTICLE 110 REOPENING

The chairman reopens synod and invites all present to sing Psalm 127:1,2.

ARTICLE 111 EPCI, RPCI and FCS

Continuation on the discussion on EPCI, RPCI and FCS.
Synod is adjourned until 3:15 to give some brothers the opportunity to draft a proposal.

A PROPOSAL is tabled.

An amendment to the proposal is tabled:

To change Grounds Number 2 to read as follows:

To phase out contact with the RPCI, as proposed by the majority of Deputies for Relations with Presbyterian Churches would not be justified until the study is finalised. To break off relations with the EPCI and the FCS can only be done if these churches are found to be unfaithful.

GROUND:

This reflects the present situation where the EPCI and FCS have been recognised as true churches and official relations have been entered. Also it reflects fairly the present state of contacts with the RPCI about which a very favourable report was sent to the 1992 Synod.

Amendment ADOPTED

AMENDED PROPOSAL

DECISION:

1. To thank deputies and to discharge them.
2. @123 TX = To appoint new deputies with the mandate:

- 2.1 to study/discuss the matter of contacts/relations with Presbyterian churches, addressing the following questions:
 - a. What weight the FRCA should give to the areas of concern;
 - b. Whether or not all areas of concern must be cleared before the FRCA can progress with contacts/relations;
 - c. How in a manageable and responsible way the FRCA can fulfil their obligations towards churches geographically/culturally far away;
- 2.2 To authorise deputies to organise a conference for the churches to discuss the contact with Presbyterian churches as broadly as possible;
- 2.3 To report back to the churches when the mandate is finished.
- 2.4 To continue contact/relations with the PCEA, FCS, EPCI AND RPCI at a low level (passing on Acts and greetings, etc.) leaving the discussions in abeyance.
3. Not to accede to the request of the FRC of Legana.
4. To include Legana's submission in the Acts as an appendix.

GROUND:

1. Amongst ourselves we are not of one mind on the matter of contacts/relations with Presbyterian churches.
2. To phase out contact with the RPCI, as proposed by the majority of Deputies for Relations with Presbyterian Churches would not be justified until the study is finalised. To break off relations with the EPCI and the FCS can only be done if these churches are found to be unfaithful.
3. Past synods have never explicitly indicated what weight the areas of concern should have in the development of our contact/relations with Presbyterian churches.
4. In line with the decision of Synod Armadale, 1990 (Acts, Article 58) it is important to define more clearly what is needed to fulfil our obligations towards churches geographically far away.

A vote was taken on the proposal as amended.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 112 BUDGET

The Advisory Committee Number 2 presents the budget.

**BUDGET INCOME AND COST SHARING
OF SYNOD 1994**

**BUDGET EXPENDITURE
OF SYNOD 1994**

ARTICLE 113 ADJOURNMENT

The chairman adjourns synod.

Evening Session

ARTICLE 114 REOPENING

The chairman reopens synod and invites all present to sing Psalm 123:1,3.

ARTICLE 115 RESPONSE TO GMMT

Brother J van Dijk delivers a response to the address given by Reverend E Fangidae on Thursday evening. The text of this response may be found in Appendix A.

ARTICLE 116 ADOPTION OF ACTS

The Acts of Synod Articles 96 - 105 are adopted.

ARTICLE 117 EVANGELICAL REFORMED CHURCHES OF SINGAPORE

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 11.e.2 - Deputies Report

DECISION:

Synod decide to discharge deputies and appoint new deputies with the mandate to continue the contacts with ERCS so that the FRCA and the ERCS can come to know each other better.

FOUNDATIONS:

Deputies report that progress in our contacts with the ERCS is slow and difficult especially whilst the sister relations between the ERCS with the PRCA continues. However deputies have begun to establish a working relationship with ERCS and they should be mandated to attempt to develop this further.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 118 INVITATION FROM REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 11.e.2 - Supplementary Report - Item 4
Letter from Reformed Churches of Australia inviting the FRCA to send an observer to their forthcoming synod

DECISION:

1. Synod decide not to accept the request of the RCA to send an official observer to the forthcoming synod of the RCA.
2. Deputies be given the mandate to inform the RCA of synod's decision incorporating as reason:
Recommendation 3 of Article 38, Synod Armadale 1990, but noting also the developments signalled in Article 102. Deputies are free to request attendance at the RCA Synod on individual title.

FOUNDATIONS:

1. Synod Armadale decided that *“it is premature to speak about any real progress in contacts until the obstacle which separated us in the past and which our past synods have addressed is removed. The FRCA continues to be grieved because of the issues that divide us. These must be addressed before we can receive a representative of your churches.”* (Recommendation 3, Article 38) This decision was repeated in Consideration 2 of Article 78, Synod Bedforddale 1992.
2. Synod Armadale 1990 also decided to establish a dialogue committee with the RCA to discuss the matters that divide us and the positive response of the RCA deputies should also be acknowledged but until this is dealt with by the RCA Synod it does in itself not remove the obstacles mentioned in Article 38.
3. Synod Armadale has mandated deputies for dialogue with RCA and these deputies reported to Synod Bedforddale but synod has yet to be advised how the RCA will deal with the matter.
4. Synod Bedforddale mandated deputies to observe *“what the next Synod of RCA will do with the report which the deputies for dialogue with the FRCA will submit”* (Recommendation 3, Article 78). Deputies can determine whether it is beneficial to observe personally the discussion on this report in the RCA Synod but if they do attend they should do so only on personal title and not in any way imply they represent the FRCA in an official capacity. Any request to address the RCA Synod should be declined.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 119 ZAIRE

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 11.e.2 - Deputies Report

DECISION:

To discharge deputies and thank them for their work.

FOUNDATIONS:

1. Article 144 of Acts 1992 gives 3 reasons why contact with the Reformed Church of Zaire should not be cultivated. So deputies need no mandate.
2. Deputies report that the Dutch sister churches have sister relations with a different church than had earlier approached us.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 120 ADJOURNMENT

Elder P Terpstra invites all present to sing Hymn 32:1-3 and leads in prayer. The chairman adjourns synod.

ELEVENTH DAY - Saturday 25 June, 1994 Morning Session

ARTICLE 121 REOPENING

The chairman reopens synod and reads Acts 6:1-15. He invites all present to sing Psalm 68:2,3 and leads in prayer.

ARTICLE 122 ADOPTION OF ACTS

The Acts of Synod Articles 106 - 113 are adopted.

ARTICLE 123 @ARTICLE TITLE = PHILIPPINES

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 11.e.2 - Deputies Report

DECISION:

Synod decide to instruct the deputies to continue to gather information regarding the FRCP e.g. received via Acts of Synod of our sister churches or correspondence received, with the aim of seeing whether official contacts should be opened with them.

FOUNDATIONS:

1. These churches have a sister relationship with our sister churches in the Netherlands, and are geographically close to us.
2. These churches are young in the Reformed faith and would undoubtedly benefit from the heritage of churches long standing in the Reformed faith.
3. Deputies find that having to translate material, pass it on to the churches and then wait and see if any church will bring it to the synod is cumbersome.
4. It is a more orderly manner to mandate deputies to coordinate the relevant information.

ADOPTED**ARTICLE 124
ECUMENICAL CREEDS****MATERIAL:**

Agenda Item 11.h - Report from Deputies for Ecumenical Creeds

DECISION:

1. To adopt the texts for the Apostle's and Athanasian Creeds as they have been recommended to the churches by the deputies above.
2. To discharge the deputies from their mandate.
3. To appoint new deputies to study the forthcoming revision of the Nicene Creed of the Book of Praise in light of the ICET texts (cf Proceedings of the (ICRC, 1989, pg 151ff) and present synod with final recommendations.

FOUNDATIONS:

1. It would be preferable for us to adopt a text for the ecumenical creeds as close to those found in the Book of Praise, which we use in our worship services. Although we may not wish to adopt them verbatim (even as we have decided not to add the word 'Christian' in the ninth article of the Apostles' Creed) the deputies have endeavoured to keep changes to a minimum.
2. The Canadian Reformed Churches have adopted the revision of the Apostles' and the Athanasian Creeds. The revision of the Nicene Creed is to be submitted to the following Synod of the CanRC.

DEFEATED

An alternate proposal is tabled.

DECISION:

1. To thank the deputies for the detailed work they have done, and to discharge them.

2. a. To maintain our present text of the Apostles' Creed (which is identical to the text of the Book of Praise except for the omission of the word 'Christian' in the ninth article).
- b. To accept the revised text of the Athanasian Creed.
- c. To retain our present text of the Nicene Creed for the present, and appoint deputies to scrutinise the revisions which our Canadian sister churches will adopt at their next Synod and report back to synod with their recommendations.
3. To send the International Consultation Text of the three ecumenical creeds along with the completed deputies' report to the churches to see whether any of the churches wish to place them on the agenda of the following synod.

FOUNDATIONS:

1. a. The text of the Apostles' Creed has been scrutinised and adopted by Synod 1987, Article 100 and a decision was made to adopt our present text.
- b. The recommendations of the deputies regarding the Athanasian creed are of a minor nature, and not of sufficient importance to warrant a departure from the text as found in the Book of Praise.
- c. Since we use the Book of Praise in our churches, it would be preferable to have the same text for the Nicene Creed as found therein.
2. The 1992 Synod (Article 124) considered (Consideration 9) that to ensure the ICRC 'remains a non-ecclesiastical body with only advisory powers it would be good to adopt a ruling which requires any conclusions to the ICRC to pass through deputies to churches for consideration and action. Only when (a) church(es) accept(s) a conclusion from the ICRC and pass it on to Synod should such a conclusion (which is really only advice) be received as an agenda item to be dealt with at Synod'. The International Consultation Text (ICT) comes to us via the ICRC. As such it should go through the proper channels mentioned above before reaching Synod. Unfortunately this was not clarified by the same synod for these deputies. Thus deputies have sent their comments about the ICT directly to Synod. It would be more correct still to sent this information of the deputies to the churches to set a good precedent.

ADOPTED

**ARTICLE 125
SYNOD TREASURER**

Advisory Committee 2

MATERIAL:

Agenda Item 11.c.d - Deputies Report and Draft Budget

DECISION:

1. To thank synod treasurer for the work done and discharge him.
2. To accept the statement of income and expenditure for the period 1.2.1992 - 22.2.1994.
3. To accept the draft budget and the cost sharing arrangement for the individual churches as proposed by the treasurer.
4. To include the items mentioned under 3 as an appendix in the Acts.

ADOPTED

ARTICLE 126 ADJOURNMENT

Elder JL van Burgel invites all present to sing Psalm 100:1-4 and leads in prayer. The chairman adjourns synod.

TWELFTH DAY - Monday 27 June, 1994 MORNING SESSION

ARTICLE 127 REOPENING

The chairman reopens synod and reads Acts 8:1-25. He invites all present to sing Hymn 21:4,7 and leads in prayer.

ARTICLE 128 CLOSED SESSION

Synod goes into closed session in order to deal with church visitation reports, and appointments.

EVENING SESSION

ARTICLE 129 REOPENING

The chairman reopens synod and invites all present to sing Psalm 46:1,2. Elder H Heys is noted as absent.

ARTICLE 130 APPOINTMENTS

The chairman announces the appointments of deputies made in the closed session this morning.

The following appointments are made:

1. Publishing of the Acts

- the First Clerk
2. Archives and Library of Synods - Acts, Article 34
the Church of Bedfordale
 3. Inspection of Archives and Library - Acts, Article 34
the Church of Byford
 4. Treasurer of Synod - Acts, Article 112
Ad. Hordyk
Alternate:
JG Versluis
 5. Auditors for Synodical treasury
the Church of Kelmscott
 6. Deputies for relations with other churches:
General Convener: Reverend A Veldman
General Secretary: JL van Burgel
 - 6.1 Sister Churches
The Netherlands, Canada, South Africa, Korea - Acts, Article 79, 93, 103, 104,
Convener: Reverend C Bouwman
AMC Bruning
D Pot
A van Leeuwen
Alternate: PO Posthuma
 - 6.2 Other Churches (Reformed)
New Zealand, Reformed Churches of Australia, Singapore, Philippines, Indonesia - Acts, Articles 78, 102,
Convener: Reverend W Huizinga
J Bosveld
JL van Burgel
J van Dyk
Alternate: W Buist
 - 6.3 Other Churches (Presbyterian)
PCEA, Ireland, Scotland - Acts, Article 111
Convener: Reverend A Veldman
J Bruning
H Olde
A Slobe
Reverend A van Delden
Alternate: PO Posthuma
 - 6.4 ICRC - Acts, Article 83
Convener: Reverend W Huizinga
A Slobe
Reverend A Veldman
Alternate: H Olde
- The 1996 Synod will appoint delegates to attend the 1997 ICRC.
- 6.5 All deputies will work under one umbrella. The various sec-

tions will do their own work. These four sections will also meet together regularly to inform each other of their work. The frequency of the combined meetings will be decided by deputies. The final reports have to be endorsed by the full deputyship before being sent to synod.

The duties of the general secretary will be:

- a. to take care of the central post box;
- b. to distribute the mail;
- c. to act as recording clerk for the combined meetings;
- d. to send in the final reports to synod. @2ND ABC TX =

- 7. Deputies for Bible Translations - Acts, Article 55
 Convener: Reverend C Kleyn
 G Brouwer
 G Groenewold
 Reverend FJ van Hulst
- 8. Deputies for Training for the Ministry - Article 17, 18 CO Acts, Article 56
 Convener: Reverend C Bouwman
 J Bolhuis
 AT Schiebaan
 A van Leeuwen
- 9. Deputy for the Nicene Creed - Acts - Article 124
 Reverend A van Delden
- 10. Pulpit Exchanges
 the Church of Albany - Acts, Article 15
- 11. Deputy for the publication of the Church Order - Acts, Article 32, Point 3
 J Eikelboom
- 12. Deputies for the Civil Registration of the FRCA - Acts, Article 33
 Convener: SC Fokkema
 S Herbert
- 13. Deputies for the revision of the Rules and Procedures of synod - Acts, Article 7.c.2
 Church of Kelmscott
- 14. Classis Church: the next church in alphabetical order
 Second-appeal Church: the preceding church in alphabetical order
 It is understood that if another church is instituted, this new congregation takes its place according to its alphabetical order in the list below:

	Classis churches	Second-appeal churches
for Albany	Armadale	Rockingham
for Armadale	Bedfordale	Albany
for Bedfordale	Byford	Armadale
for Byford	Kelmscott	Bedfordale

for Kelmscott	Launceston	Byford
for Launceston	Legana	Kelmscott
for Legana	Rockingham	Launceston
for Rockingham	Albany	Legana

15. Deputies for Church Visits - Article 44 CO
 The ministers (Convener: Reverend A Veldman) @ABC TX
 = Alternates - the convener may request the consistory of
 the church neighbouring the one to be visited to appoint an
 experienced elder from its midst.

16. Deputies for Article 48 and 76 CO -
 Convener: Reverend A Veldman
 Reverend C Bouwman
 PO Posthuma

17. Deputies for Article 66 CO - (Days of Prayer)
 Church of Launceston

18. Deputies for auditing the books for deputies for Article 17, 18 CO
 - Acts, Article 56
 Church of Bedfordale

19. Convening church for the next synod:
 Church: Kelmscott
 Place: Kelmscott
 Time: June 1996

ARTICLE 131 CENSURE AFTER ARTICLE 47 CO

Article 47 CO requires that at the close of the major assemblies censure shall be exercised over those who during synod have done something worthy of reproof.
 The chairman announces that there is no need for this censure.

ARTICLE 132 PERSONAL QUESTION TIME

None of the delegates make use of this item.

ARTICLE 133 ADOPTION OF ACTS

The Acts of Synod Articles 114 - 128 are adopted. The Acts of the closed session will be approved by the moderamen and sent to the churches.

ARTICLE 134 APPROVAL OF PRESS RELEASE

The vice-chairman Reverend C Bouwman reads the press release which is approved. This press release will be sent to: Una Sancta, Clarion, Compas (South Africa) and Nederlands Dagblad.

ARTICLE 135 PRESENTATION

The chairman expresses the appreciation of the delegates for the excellent organisation and care by the convening church and presents the kitchen staff and typists with a bouquet of flowers.

ARTICLE 136 CLOSING ADDRESS

The 1994 Synod of Byford, the eighteenth synod, of the FRCA is about to become history. But before we put down the gavel on this synod, brothers, delegates, I would like to address some closing remarks.

On behalf of all the moderamen, we thank you for the confidence placed in us. Some of us were quite surprised by the positions you gave to us - I for one had not expected it at all! It took us a few days to adjust to our responsibilities. To have the minister of the convening church beside me as the vice-chairman, for example, greatly helped me through that initial period. So even as your task as delegates may have been a learning experience, so it was for us. We hope that your confidence in us was not ill-placed or abused.

Some comments as chairman might be in order. At the beginning you stressed that we should discuss all items in open, public sessions. You stated that the chair should censure anyone who abused his privileges of the floor. Generally speaking you did not make that task too difficult. The attempt was to be fair and still firm when in my view members or advisory members misused their privileges. If I have been subjective or if I have dealt with anyone unjustly during the course of the discussions and deliberations, please accept my apologies.

The chair also wishes to thank you as fellow delegates. We have worked hard together, struggled and prayed together. We really became acquainted with each other. That develops a bond between us and helps cement the churches together. One of the satisfying feature of a synod, at least for me personally, is the privilege to work together with one's colleagues and with elders from the other churches.

At the start of this synod we decided upon the rules and procedures we would follow, especially whether we would use the system of advisory committees for all items or only for a select few items in order to speed up synod. We decided to use them only for select agenda-items like the budget and cost-sharing scheme. We also decided to use the format of "material, decisions, and grounds." This meant that we had

to interact much more directly with the reports of the deputies than before when the reports of the advisory committees at times overshadowed or even duplicated the efforts of the deputies. We had to adjust to a system without advisory committees for most items. It was awkward at times, especially since the reports of the deputies did not always follow this format. At times our discussions and decision-making was somewhat 'messy'. Yet on the whole we adjusted quite well. In my view the switch was a success - instead of 17 full days of synod as in 1992 we had 10 full days; instead of almost four weeks this synod took just two weeks. That in itself attests to its success. Hopefully the next synod, based on a thorough report of deputies, will even refine the system more.

Also, it meant that not only an advisory committee but all the members of synod fully interacted with the material such as the revision of the Church Order. We worked on it together. That too was a big benefit.

That brings me to the next comment. This synod worked hard on subjects for the internal life of our bond of churches. It took us about three days to go through the complete Church Order to approve the final edition. That is important for us as a bond. Also, the matter of Bible translations has plagued us for some synods. Much effort by deputies and synods has been expended on this necessary subject. We love and respect the Word of God, exactly because it is the Word of our Triune God. A faithful and clear translation is thus important for us. Thus at least a full week was first devoted to our own internal affairs. That is good and proper.

Yes, and when we discussed Bible translations as well as contacts and relations with presbyterian churches, it heartened me to see that delegates were true delegates of the churches. They did not just try to represent their own personal views, but kept the churches in mind. So while one delegate strongly favoured one translation, he still voted to allow the other translation which others strongly favour. With respect to the presbyterian churches it meant that while some personally favour striding forward with sister-relations with presbyterian churches, they instead "caught the synodical train." To climb on board the synodical train of the churches means you follow what previous synods have done, respect its decisions, and strive to have the churches come to ripe decisions. For example, some may have wanted sister-relations with the PCEA now already; yet had the churches through the deputies arrived at such a ripe decision? No! Therefore some sacrificed their own views and represented the churches. Let the churches together, through the deputies, first grapple with areas of concern we seem to meet with a number of presbyterian churches; let us have a common and consistent approach so that this matter need not continually trouble us in the future. Brothers, that was wise; hopefully the churches will appreciate it.

Yet every synod faces a moment of truth; it must make hard decisions. In our case the time had come to decide our future membership in the ICRC. It was not an easy decision. Our sister-churches knew this, and

they sent delegates or sent longer than normal letters of greetings with commentary. We are not alone in this world; we experienced what it means to have sister-churches. They consistently pleaded with us to retain membership in the ICRC. After five full rounds of discussion, and the chair invited you all to participate, we finally decided. The first proposal, basically reflecting what the majority of deputies recommended, carried. Since you delegates had three proposals to choose from, a preference had been possible, and you possibly could stand behind the one adopted but which was not your first preference; and since the rules of synod oblige us to strive for unanimity, the chair asked for a second vote to seek as much unanimity as possible. Unfortunately, the vote remained the same. In my own personal view, this was a disappointment, especially since a number of dissenting delegates had indicated that they were so close to agreeing with the proposal. Hopefully, after a period of reflection the consensus can still grow among those who were delegates and among the leaders and members of the churches. For this international conference can be a very useful tool for us in this part of the world to help the kingdom of Christ come.

The decisions of synod now go to the churches. They can read and scrutinise them, deciding whether our work was well-founded or not. Mind you, these decisions are settled and binding on the churches, unless the churches find them to be against the Word of God, the confessions or church order.

We will not review all the decisions themselves, but we do want to say here and now that the predictions of gloom and doom about this synod did not materialise. Oh yes, in the press and in the prayer service the nervousness of many were mentioned. Who will deny that there was tension in the air? Yet did it dominate our meetings? No! Some tension, especially when a vote on an important issue is taken, cannot be avoided. Such tension is normal - for example, there is tension at the birth of a baby, even if the pregnancy went normally. Yet in the first week that tension simply did not exist. During the second week when discussion about the ICRC started, then one could expect it. However, in my view the members were not too tense to speak up. Everyone was urged to speak his mind on the issues, to listen to each, and to try to win his brother instead of trying to win his argument. To an extent, in my humble view, we succeeded. May the LORD forgive us where we failed. But to return to my point, tension did not dominate us until the chair put the proposals to the vote. How come our nerves did not play havoc with us? Well, we begun synod and every morning with Scripture and prayer. Yes, the prayers for God's guidance, for Christ's Spirit of truth and for brotherly kindness prevailed. In the prayer service we heard a message about Paul's assurance that our heavenly Father is able to answer us exceedingly above all that we ask or think. We experienced the truth of that assurance. And when personalities instead of issues were the focus of attention, prayer reminded us of the path to walk. When you know that danger looms ahead, when you can foresee tensions and divisions, then as chris-

tians we pray, we pray hard and from the heart. In our church services in Australia, in church services abroad in sister-churches and in churches with whom we have contacts, in our church meetings and in our schools, as well as in our homes prayers were multiplied for the peace of Jerusalem. God heard them.

For at the start of synod had we not all stood up to declare our common submission to the Word of God and our common agreement with the Three Forms of Unity? That meant we had to respect the integrity and sincerity of all delegates even if we disagreed on some issues. Yes, that simple act was very important! Obedience to the Word cemented us together. May these decisions thus be received in the spirit in which they were made.

It is now time to say farewell. One delegate from Tasmania has started down the road to Melbourne and Launceston already. After two weeks of intensive work, it is time to unwind and to resume our normal labours. May God go with you, and may He bring you safely home to your wife and family who have missed you. God strengthen you all for your respective offices.

We also think of the many brothers appointed to serve the next synod(s). God grant wisdom to them all that the workload of the next synod(s), D.V., may be lightened by good reports. God bless our bond of eight (soon nine) churches here in Australia. May what we read from the Book of Acts for morning devotions during synod be true of Christ's churches here in Australia - "they were devoted to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayers" so that "the Word of God increases."

Thank you.

ARTICLE 137 CLOSING

The vice-chairman thanks the chairman for chairing the meetings in a brotherly and impartial way. He invites all present to sing Psalm 16 and leads in thanksgiving and prayer.

The Chairman, Reverend W Huizinga, closes the 1994 Synod.

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