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ACTS

of the Seventh Synod
of The Free Reformed Churches of Australia
held at Albany, W.A.
20th to 24th May, 1968.

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E v e n i n g s e s s i o n o n Monday 20th May

Article 1

OPENING

On behalf of the convening Church, the Church of Albany, the Rev. J.D. Wielenga opens the meeting. He invites the delegates and the Church members who attend the meeting to sing Psalm 23, reads from the Scriptures Revelation 3:7-14, and leads in prayer.

In his opening address he points to the coincidence that this Synod is held in the week during which the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ is commemorated.

There is a close relation between these two facts, the relation of cause and result. Our Lord ascended into heaven in order to execute from there His authority by gathering His Church and sending His Holy Spirit. This Spirit took hold of the apostles. Then the world-wide work began. The apostolic proclamation reached us also. And so the living Lord made us unto His Churches, here in this country.

But also our being together as Churches in Synod is a direct result of Christ's ascension and a gift of our living Lord. He bound us together unto a bond of Churches. The Bible teaches us that Churches of the Lord belong together and have to live in a bond. A Synod is a clear manifestation of that bond.

Usually the word "Synod" suggests a large meeting.

Ours is a small one only. The saying of the Saviour in heaven can be applied to our situation: "Thou hast a little strength". However not our strength but His counts.

We are here as three Churches at our seventh Synod. We would prefer to see these figures in the reversed order. But let us be thankful because there are no less than three Churches. For we are living in the midst of a world which is in full commotion and changes rapidly. Our living Lord has kept us.

The agenda shows us that fortunately we have not to deal with serious difficulties which would try to draw us away from the foundation of the Word of God and the Confession.

We all are aware of the difficulties in our sister-Churches in The Netherlands. One of the controversies there is the matter of the meaning of the bond of Churches and the necessity of holding Synods. There are some people who deem them of no value at all. But since the Reformation of the 16th century the Reformed Churches have always realized, we ought to live together in a bond of Churches. In Article 1 of our Church order they worded this conviction as follows: "For the maintainance of good order in the Church of Christ it is necessary that there should be ... assemblies". One of these assemblies is called "Synod". Only Churches that are "in good order" will be able to hold out against the pressures of the heavy storms in this, especially in spiritual respect, rapidly changing world.

Surely, this Synod will not make the headlines, as e.g. the Assembly of the World Council of Churches which will be held at Uppsala this year, or the "Reformed Ecumenical Synod" at Amsterdam.

The agenda reflects our position in a modern world. The Rev. Wielenga pointed to subjects as "Adoption", "Missions", and the request to join the "Australian Council of Reformed Churches".

More than ever before we need the bond of Churches. Because of that we accept this Synod from the hand of the Lord.

What will be our directive? It will be the Word of our Lord to the Philadelphians: "I know that you have

but little power, but you have kept My Word and not denied My Name".

This Word has been summarized in our doctrinal standards. When we are faithful to them this Synod will certainly be a blessing of Christ given to His Churches. Then we will be kept from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world. And perhaps the Lord will make other people join us.

He has promised to be with His Churches until the end of this world. He will be with this Synod also.

Article 2

CREENTIALS

The delegates of the Church of Launceston are appointed to examine the credentials. They report that all the Churches are lawfully represented.

The delegates are:

- of the Church of Albany: the Rev. J. D. Wielenga.
elder R. Koops.
- of the Church of Armadale: the Rev. K. Brüning.
elder H. Terpstra.
- of the Church of Launceston: the Rev. G. van Rongen.
elder P. Dingemanse.

Article 3

MODERAMEN

The moderamen is elected as follows:

- the Rev. K. Brüning, president.
- the Rev. J. D. Wielenga, assessor.
- the Rev. G. van Rongen, first clerk.
- elder R. Koops, second clerk.

Article 4

CONSTITUTION

The meeting is constituted as the seventh Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia.

Article 5

AGENDA

The draft agenda as proposed by the convening Church is agreed to. The representatives of the Church of Armadale have brought with them two instructions.

Article 6

AGREEMENT WITH THE THREE FORMS OF UNITY

The delegates of the Churches testify their agreement with the Three Forms of Unity by standing up.

Article 7

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Synod will meet:

mornings: 10.00 - 12.30

afternoons: 2.00 - 5.30

evenings: 7.30 - 10.00

Whenever possible those items on the agenda which may be expected to be of special interest to the Church members who attend Synod will be dealt with during the evening sessions.

Article 8

SPIRITUAL SUPPORT TO MILITARY SERVICEMEN

The Church of Armadale proposes that Synod will consider whether, and in which manner, the Churches will assist each other in the spiritual support to Church members who have been called up into compulsory military service.

The discussion will be continued.

Article 9

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting is adjourned, after the singing of Psalm 84:4, and thanksgiving in which the president leads.

M o r n i n g s e s s i o n on Tuesday 21st May

Article 10

RE-OPENING

The meeting is re-opened. Psalm 84:5 is sung. The president leads in prayer, and reads from the Bible I John chapter 1.

Article 11

SPIRITUAL SUPPORT TO MILITARY SERVICEMEN

The discussion on the proposal of the Church of Armadale concerning the spiritual support to Church members who have been called up into compulsory military service is continued.

A draft resolution will be formulated and dealt with

in a later session.

Article 12

CLOSED SESSION

Synod goes into closed session and discusses Church visitation reports.

E v e n i n g s e s s i o n on Tuesday 21st May

Article 13

RE-OPENING

Synod is re-opened. Hymn 5:3 is sung.

Article 14

CORRESPONDENCE WITH FOREIGN CHURCHES

A letter is read which was sent by the Rev.H.Scholten of Smithville, Canada, on behalf of the deputies for the correspondence with foreign Churches appointed by The Canadian Reformed Churches. Receipt of the papers concerning this Synod is acknowledged and some information regarding the agenda of this year's Synod in Canada given.

A similar letter came from the Rev.P.van Gurp of Oldenbove, The Netherlands, on behalf of the deputies of our sister-churches in Holland. He wishes Synod the blessing of the LORD, and announces the forwarding of the text of a decision made by the said Churches concerning the rules for correspondence between the sister-churches.

The latter point will be discussed later. The communications were noted.

Article 15

"AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF REFORMED CHURCHES

A letter is read which was written by the Rev.W.R.McEwen, minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of McKinnon, Victoria, on behalf of "The Australian Council of Reformed Churches", containing the request to co-operate with and to join this body. Enclosed are the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the A.C. of R.C. held in St. George's Church, Castlereagh Street, Sydney, on Tuesday 21.3.1967. In a later session the discussion will be summarized in a draft reply.

Article 16

PRESBYTERIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

The first instruction of the Church of Armadale is read. It contains a proposal to "consider whether and in which manner our Churches have a common duty towards those people who because of the increasing apostasy in the Presbyterian Churches which is stimulated by modern theology, have separated themselves from these churches and gather separately under the name of "Presbyterian Reformed Churches".

The following explanation is given by the Church Council: "We can see that these people stand for the holiness and truth of God's Word. Because of that we have the duty to assist them in their hard struggle. This is the more urgent since we pretend and believe to be Churches of Christ to which every believer is bound to join himself; the Church which He still gathers, defends, and preserves, planted and built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, on God's Holy Word, as it has been unfolded in the doctrinal standards of the Church. The Council is of the opinion that because of all this we have the duty to introduce ourselves to them, to remember them in our prayers in respect of their struggle for the truth. If we would not do this, but on the contrary would not let them hear anything from us, these people most likely would amalgamate with another community which may seem to them of a more orthodox standard, or hold their own as a separate congregation, so that it would become more and more difficult, if it is the will of God, to unite and enjoy communion with each other as the fulfilment of Christ's prayer for the unity of all those who love Him in sincerity".

Synod is of the opinion that there is a task for our Churches indeed, and decides to send a letter to the Presbyterian Reformed Church at Sutherland, N.S.W., and any possible separated group in New Zealand. Copy of this letter will be added to these Acts.

Article 17

LAST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH OF OCTOBER

The Council of the Church of Armadale proposes that Synod shall make the following resolution:

"The Free Reformed Churches will:

- a. during the Church services on the last Sunday of the month of October give some special attention to the great works of God in the history of His Church, also in view of the serious attacks on these works of God;
- b. stimulate the study associations at the same time to give good attention to the said works of God in "introduction" and discussion;
- c. request the schools to give good attention to this important matter in an appropriate way".

This proposal is not accepted. From information given by the delegates of the Churches it becomes clear that the congregations are already acting along these lines.

Article 18

ARCHIVES OF SYNOD

The report of the Church of Armadale which is in charge of the archives of Synod is on the table for the inspection of members.

The Church of Albany reports about the examination of the archives, namely that they have been found to be in good order.

Article 19

ACTS

The Acts of the sessions of 20th and 21st May are adopted.

Article 20

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting is adjourned after the singing of Psalm 77:8 and thanksgiving in which the first clerk leads.

M o r n i n g s e s s i o n o n W e d n e s d a y 22nd M a y

Article 21

RE-OPENING

Synod is re-opened. Psalm 84:6 is sung. The president leads in prayer and reads I John 2:1-6.

Article 22

SPIRITUAL SUPPORT TO MILITARY SERVICEMEN

Synod resolves:

"The Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, having read the proposal of the Church of Armadale con-

cerning the spiritual support of those brothers who have been called up into compulsory military service, considering:

- a. that the said young brothers, because of their isolated position in surroundings which show hardly any respect or no respect at all for the Word and will of the LORD, need some special spiritual support, in order that they will be able to be steadfast and faithful to the Lord Who has purchased them with His blood;
- b. that as a consequence it is urgent that these young brothers spend their leave as often as possible in the midst of the Church of the Lord, in order that they, by means of the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, and any further support from the side of the special office-bearers, and by enjoying the communion of saints, be strengthened and encouraged in their faith, trust in God, and faithfulness to Him;
- c. that it is the duty of the Churches to assist them financially - if necessary - to enable them to spend as often as possible a weekend in the midst of the Church of Launceston, which Church - in view of the location of the training-centres - must be considered to be the nearest Church;
- d. that it is also the task of the Churches to provide these military servicemen with tape-recorded sermons and literature, by which means they will be able to maintain relations with the Churches and be strengthened to fulfil their daily calling in the Lord;

declares:

1. that the respective Churches are first of all are responsible for those brothers who from their midst are called up into military service;
2. that - in view of the situation of the training-centres - the Church of Launceston has a special task concerning members who have been called up into military service, a.o. by contacting the authorities concerned;
3. that the Church of Launceston will consider in which manner it will execute this special task, and

- report to the Churches;
4. that the churches bind themselves to assist each other financially in this spiritual support as soon as it appears to be necessary.

Article 23

ARTICLE 70 CHURCH ORDER

The Council of the Free Reformed Church of Armadale, considering Article 56 of the Acts of Synod 1966, proposes to amend or/and amplify Article 70 of the Church Order, so that it will clearly express that a marriage solemnization may also take place in a meeting which has not the character of an official Church service. According to the said Council Article 70 could read: "Article 70. The Councils shall attend to it that not only the confirmation of the matrimonial state in the presence of Christ's Church, but also the solemnization of marriages which may take place in a meeting that has not the character of an official Church service, in which a minister being an authorized celebrant officiates, shall be done according to the form for that purpose, and the regulations approved by the local Council."

Synod decides to amend Article 70 of the Church Order as follows: "The Councils shall attend to it that the confirmation of the matrimonial state in the presence of Christ's Church or the solemnization of marriages with the approbation of the Church of Christ, shall take place according to the respective forms for these purposes".

The question whether the foreign sister-churches will be consulted concerning this amendment before it takes effect, will be considered later.

Article 24

BY-LAWS ARTICLE 10, VISITATION REGULATIONS

The Church of Launceston proposes to amend Article 10 of the By-Laws as follows: "As long as there are no Classes, Synod shall appoint delegates for Church visitation to execute Article 44 of the Church Order. Church visitation will take place orally wherever and whenever possible in accordance with the commonly accepted Visitation regulations. The delegates will report in writing to Synod. In a year during which no Synod is

to be held they will inform the Churches of the visitations which have taken place, and report to the Churches if and as far as they deem this necessary. The answers given by the Councils to the visitation questions, shall, if they have been written down, be filed in the synodical archives."

The delegates of the Church of Armadale have been instructed to table the following proposal: "The Council of the Free Reformed Church of Armadale proposes that Synod decide, the annual Church visitation shall be held before the month of May, and to insert this decision into the By-Laws".

These proposals are discussed. A draft-resolution will be tabled in a later session.

Article 25

"SCATTERED MEMBERS"

The Churches report on their work amongst the "scattered" brothers and sisters. It appears to have been diminished strongly. A part of these reports is heard and discussed in closed session.

Article 26

PRESS REPORT

After the closed session the Press Report is adopted partly.

Article 27

CLOSED SESSION

Synod goes into closed session again to confirm the minutes of the previous closed sessions. This closed session is continued after the midday interval.

A f t e r n o o n s e s s i o n on Wednesday 22nd
May

Article 28

WELCOME

After the closed session a number of pupils of "The School with the Bible" at Albany are welcomed. They want to attend a part of the session together with the Headmaster, Mr. G. Spijker. They are informed of the character of a Synod.

Article 29

MISSION

The report of the Church of Armadale concerning the

Mission - which, together with a number of appendices, was sent to the Churches - comes up for discussion. Copies of the first report about the Mission work at Pinjarra, W.A., are distributed among the delegates. Br. G. J. Bosveld of Armadale, member of the local Mission Committee, is invited to advise Synod in these matters.

The Council of the Church of Armadale, concludes it's report with the proposal that Synod declare:

- "a. The Free Reformed Churches of Australia must remain conscious of their commission concerning the preaching of the Gospel, in particular to the Natives who are living in Western Australia;
- b. the preaching and explanation of the Gospel shall for the time being be undertaken by the Churches of Albany and Armadale in their own environment, according to their abilities;
- c. the Churches of Albany and Armadale shall consider the establishing and maintaining of one or more hostels, because these are held for a concrete possibility to spread the Word of God;
- d. The Free Reformed Churches of Australia shall assist each other as much as possible in the execution of the missionary assignment among the said Natives."

After ample discussion Synod decides:

- "a. The Free Reformed Churches of Australia must remain conscious of their commission concerning the preaching of the Gospel, in particular to the Natives who are living in Western Australia;
- b. in view of the possibilities which have already been found and of the inquiries into other opportunities they gladly take upon themselves the execution of the missionary assignment;
- c. the preaching and explanation of the Gospel shall for the time being be undertaken by the Churches of Albany and Armadale in their own environment, according to their abilities;
- d. the Council of the Church of Armadale shall draft an "Agreement of Co-operation" and send this to the Churches as soon as possible for approbation;
- e. the Churches of Albany and Armadale shall consider the establishing and maintaining of one or more hostels, because these are considered a concrete possi-

bility to spread the Word of God".

Article 30

REPORT SYNOD TREASURER

The reports and books of the treasurer of Synod 1966 will be examined by the brs. R. Kooops and H. Terpstra.

Article 31

ADJOURNMENT

The meetings is adjourned.

E v e n i n g s e s s i o n on Wednesday 22nd May

Article 32

RE-OPENING

The meeting is re-opened, Psalm 103:9 is sung.

Article 33

CORRESPONDENCE FOREIGN CHURCHES

A letter is read, sent by the Rev. W. Boessenkool of Kempton Park, South Africa, in which receipt of the papers regarding this Synod is acknowledged, the forwarding of the reports concerned is requested, and Synod is wished the blessing of the LORD, on behalf of deputies appointed by "Die Vrye Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika".

This communication is noted.

Article 34

ADOPTION

The threefold report of deputies appointed by Synod Armadale 1966 to study the matter of Child-adoption comes up for discussion. The reporter, the Rev. J. D. Wielenga, summarizes the contents and different opinions in a paper.

The report of the deputies at Armadale shows that they still defend the proposal made in 1964, which read: "Synod declare that:

- a. the legislation regarding child adoption in Western Australia is in conflict with the Law of God;
- b. our Church members will do well not to make use of present-day legislation regarding child adoption;
- c. on the ground of a. and b. it is unwarranted to administer Holy Baptism to adopted children."

From the same report another proposal can be formulated, namely this that in case Synod rejects the grounds under a. and b. and approves the legislation on adoption or leaves Church members freedom to decide, it will not yet take a decision regarding the question whether adopted children shall be baptized or not. This proposal is based on the considerations that a. it has become apparent from several reports and discussions that the lawfulness of the administration of baptism to adopted children has not been proved yet; b. a clear solution of this matter has not been found by our sisterchurches in The Netherlands either. (Thus the summary of the reporter, which was approved by the Rev. K. Brüning, one of the members of the committee at Armadale).

The deputies at Launceston have proposed regarding the proposal of the Church Council of Armadale as amended during Synod 1964:

"Synod rejects this proposal,

because it has not been proved that the proposition mentioned under a. is correct;

because that which is mentioned under b. is without foundation;

because the conclusion mentioned under c. and drawn from a. and b. has lost its base;

and declares,

that in its opinion the sign and seal of Holy Baptism cannot be withheld from those children who in accordance with the Child Adoption Acts in the different States of the Australian Commonwealth have been adopted by married couples who are full members of one of our Churches".

The members of the committee at Albany propose:

"a. not to condemn the Australian legislation concerning child adoption as requested in the proposal of the Church of Armadale; since a judgment of this legislation is not required;

b. to leave the Church members the freedom to make use of the said legislation concerning child adoption;

c. not to decide to administer Holy Baptism to adopted children as long as there is no complete consensus of opinion concerning this administration on the ground of indisputably clear Biblical proofs.".

Synod declares:

"In view of the discrepancies in the proposals made by the three groups of delegates, which could not be removed by the discussion, Synod finds that it cannot make the resolutions which were requested by the Church of Armadale; and also considering that the same matter is under discussion in some foreign sisterchurches, it urges the Churches to continue studying the matter of adoption as it has been raised".

The matter of the administration of Holy Baptism to adopted children will be completed in a later session.

Article 35

ACTS

The Acts of the sessions of Wednesday 22nd May are adopted.

Article 36

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting is adjourned, after Hymn 5:9 was sung and br. H. Terpstra has lead in prayer.

M o r n i n g s e s s i o n on Thursday 23rd May

Article 37

RE-OPENING

Synod is re-opened. Psalm 33:7 is sung, the president leads in prayer, and reads I John 2:7-14.

Article 38

BAPTISM OF ADOPTED CHILDREN

Concerning the matter of the administration of Holy Baptism to adopted children Synod declares:

"Synod, finding that the matter of the administration of Holy Baptism to adopted children cannot be dealt with in view of the resolution mentioned in Article 34 of these Acts, further considering that the same matter is under discussion in some foreign sisterchurches, urges the Churches to continue studying this matter and if possible to table proposals at another Synod."

Article 39

BY-LAWS ARTICLE 10, VISITATION REGULATIONS

Regarding the proposals mentioned under Article 24

of these Acts Synod makes some amendments in article 10 of the By-Laws and the "General Stipulations" of the Visitation regulations. From now on they will read: Article 10 of the By-Laws:

"As long as there are no Classes the delegates appointed by Synod for Church visitation shall make these visitations if possible orally, if necessary by correspondence, once a year before the first of May in accordance with the commonly accepted Visitation regulations. They shall report to Synod in writing. In a year during which no Synod is to be held they will report to the Churches. These reports will be filed in the synodical archives."

The Articles 1 and 4 of the "General Stipulations" of the "Visitation regulations" are abrogated. Article 2 will read from now on: "The Church Council shall give notice of the proposed Church visitation to the congregation at least one week before it will take place". This article, then, will be numbered 1; Article 3 will be numbered 2.

The Church visitation at Launceston will take place in two stages whenever one of the ministers from Western Australia visits this congregation, namely before the first of May by correspondence, and during the said visit orally.

Article 40

ENGLISH BIBLE VERSIONS

Deputies concerning English Versions of the Bible have nothing to report. New deputies will be appointed who will be requested to continue this work, and consult together with deputies appointed to this end by the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Article 41

FOREIGN SISTER CHURCHES

Deputies for the correspondence with foreign sister-churches report on their work. They have fulfilled their usual duties. They have sent a letter to the Presbyterian Church of South-Korea; however no reply has been received. In the meantime the sisterchurches in The Netherlands have opened official correspondence with the said Church. They have promised and re-

requested contact with our Churches on this matter. Further they announce the acceptance of some rules for correspondence which are exactly the same as those that have been proposed by our Churches to the foreign sisterchurches. Synod expresses it's gladness about the acceptance of these rules by the sisterchurches in The Netherlands.

Article 42

INSTRUCTION DEPUTIES FOREIGN CHURCHES

The instruction of new deputies for the correspondence with foreign sisterchurches reads:

1. to inform the sisterchurches in the Netherlands, Canada, South-Africa, and Monte Alegre of the gratitude of our Churches concerning acceptance of the rules for correspondence with foreign sisterchurches, by the General Synod of Amersfoort-West; and to conduct the correspondence with these foreign sisterchurches according to these rules;
2. to ask the Canadian deputies once again to request the next Synod of their Churches on behalf of our Synod to promote a closer cooperation between the Churches in those matters which are of mutual importance;
3. to bring to the attention of the Churches those items from the correspondence with the foreign sisterchurches which are of importance to the Churches in Australia;
4. to forward two copies of the Acts of this Synod to the foreign sisterchurches;
5. to inform the foreign sisterchurches of the place and time of the next Synod, and to send the preliminary agenda to them at least six weeks prior to the commencement of that Synod;
6. to request the foreign sisterchurches to forward four copies of the acts of their Synods for the benefit of the archives of Synods and each of the three congregations;
7. to examine whether The Free Reformed Churches of Australia have the duty and are able to recognize The Presbyterian Church of Korea as a foreign sisterchurch, and on that ground to enter into corres-

with.

Having heard this report, Synod is of the opinion:

- a. that preference should be given to completion of the preliminary studies in Australia;
 - b. that there is no need now to make a choice between theological training in Canada or in The Netherlands; and decides;
- to appoint new deputies with the instruction:
1. to examine in what manner complete education prior to the existing theological training in Canada and The Netherlands could take place in Australia;
 2. to examine whether an opportunity can be created for students to complete their studies after having followed the compulsory lectures abroad.
 3. to report to next Synod.

Article 47

CLOSED SESSION

Synod goes into closed session.

Article 48

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE GOVERNMENT

Deputies for the correspondence with the Government report their activities.

After having discussed this report Synod decides to appoint new deputies with the instruction:

- a. to apply to the Government for the recognition of our Churches by the Government;
- b. to report to the next Synod on this recognition and its meaning.

Article 49

DEPUTIES AD ART. 49 and 79 C.O.

Deputies ad Articles 49 and 79 Church Order inform Synod that there is nothing to be reported.

Article 50

AUDIT TREASURY OF SYNOD

The brs R. Koops and H. Terpstra report on the auditing of books of the treasurer of Synod.

Synod decides to request the treasurer to be appoin-

ted to table a written report at next Synod and provide the Church Councils with an outline of receipts and expenditure.

The treasurer is discharged. From now on the Church of Launceston will audit the treasurer's books locally, and report to Synod.

Article 51

PERCENTAGE FIGURES

The percentage figures for the apportionment of Synod costs between the Churches are determined as follows:

Albany:	25%
Armadale:	50%
Launceston:	25%

Article 52

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTIES

The following deputies are appointed:

1. for keeping the archives of Synod: the Church of Armadale;
2. for supervising the archives: the Church of Albany;
3. Synod treasurer: br. J. Veltkamp, 61 Victoria Street, Young Town (Tas.), 7251; secundus: br. J. Kroeze, 22 Pomona Road, Riverside (Tas.), 7250;
4. Deputies ad Articles 49 and 79 C.O.: the Ministers of the Word, and the brs. R. Koops, H. Terpstra, and P. Dingemane;
5. Deputies for correspondence with the foreign sisterchurches: the Rev. K. Brünning, the brs. H. Terpstra, and J. Zuidema of Armadale;
6. Deputies for correspondence with the Government: the president and secretary of each Church (president: the Rev. G. van Rongen);
7. Deputies for English Bible Translations: the Ministers of the Word (president: the Rev. J. D. Wielenga);
8. Deputies for an English Church Service Book: the Rev. G. van Rongen and br. J. Van der Ros of Launceston;
9. for Church visitation: the Ministers of the Word; for each oral visitation the Church Council to which the deputy concerned belongs appoints one elder, who will be regarded as having been appointed by Synod.
10. Deputies concerning the Training to the Ministry of the Word: The Rev. K. Brünning, and the brs. M. Dijkstra

and H. Terpstra of Armadale;
11. Address Church for the Mission: the Church of Armadale.

Each report should be sent to the Churches at least three months prior to next Synod.

Article 53

NEXT SYNOD

The next Synod will be convened by the Church of Launceston and held at Launceston in May 1970, the LORD willing.

Article 54

ARTICLE 41 CHURCH ORDER

None of the Churches has any business concerning Article 41 of the Church Order.

Article 55

PERSONAL BUSINESS

There is no personal business.

Article 56

DISCIPLINE AFTER ART. 43 CHURCH ORDER

No discipline after Article 43 Church Order is required.

Article 57

PRESS REPORT

The Press Report will be offered to "Una Sancta", "National Dagblad (Gereformeerd Gezinsblad)", "Canadian Reformed Magazine", "Kerk en Woord" (South Africa) and the magazine of the Church at Mone Alegre (Brasil).

Article 58

ADJOURNMENT

Synod is adjourned until the Church service arranged by the Church of Albany at the occasion of the commemoration of the Lord's Ascension into heaven is finished.

E v e n i n g s e s s i o n o n Thursday 23rd May

Article 59

RE-OPENING

Synod is re-opened. Psalm 68:9 is sung.

Article 60

ACTS

The Acts, Articles 36-60, are read and adopted.

Article 61

FINAL ADDRESS PRESIDENT

Since this is the last occasion on which visiting Church members can attend the meeting, the President delivers his final address now.

He is grateful because the work could be done smoothly as a result of Christian cooperation.

Thanks is rendered to several bodies and persons that have enabled us to have our meetings.

A number of important and sometimes difficult matters had to be dealt with, e.g. the reports about Church visitations, that brought to the fore the most essential aspects of our life as Churches; also the Mission-work: we are glad because the work could be started in Western Australia, although in a modest way; the external contacts: the request to join the "Australian Council of Reformed Churches", in the reply to which full justice had to be done to the truth and we were not allowed to seek a self-willed isolation; besides there was the difficult topic of Adoption, in which we could see the wrecking of life by those who leave the LORD and His Word; also the Training to the Ministry of the Word: it is a good thing but also a matter of responsibility to stimulate young members of our Churches to desire the special office of a Minister of the Word.

Now we have to go on. How will we expect that all these items of the agenda will bear their fruits?

This evening the Gospel of Ascension Day was preached to us. The cause of the Churches lies in the completely safe hands of our Saviour. He is unreachable as far as the enemy is concerned. But we have to discharge our duty and go on.

After Ascension Day we look forward to Pentecost. The Gospel of Pentecost tells us that the Lord has caused the world-wide work to be started. The signs of "storm" and "fire" still give us promises and guarantees. There was not a real storm, no real fire. It was not spectacular. When we see the Church going on there is nothing spectacular either. Yet we know that the power of the

Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Christian Church. Christ said: I come and work through you, to make My Kingdom come. Although everyday life seems to be different, as usual, this Kingdom cannot be stopped. It is as a storm and as fire which cannot be held. Nobody can stop the Lord. Through all things the perfection and completion of His work will be there.

Pentecost is also the feast of the Word of God, the "ordinary", sober Word. Presently we will be at home again. Trusting in and guided by and giving room to the Word of God - and to this Word in its full extent - we will experience the power of Pentecost also in our work and our Churches.

Our case lies in good hands. The Lord Jesus is in heaven. We are here on earth. We have the duty to see our commission and to fulfil it in obedience to the Scriptures. When we act that way, we will have such fire-power and the power of the wind, that room is created for the working of God's Word.

Then we continue until the end, until the city will be there, eternal Zion, into which the fruits will be brought.

Let us go on in the strength of God's Word. Our Head is in the heavens. Also the body will be taken up presently. Then we will praise Him Who will be all in all.

Article 62

ADDRESS ASSESSOR

The Assessor thanks the President for the way in which he has presided over Synod.

Article 63

ADJOURNMENT

This session is closed after the singing of Psalm 68: 14 and 17, and prayer in which the Assessor led.

M o r n i n g s e s s i o n o n Friday 24th May

Article 64

RE-OPENING

Synod is re-opened. Psalm 119:45 is sung. The president leads in prayer and reads I. John 2:15-27.

Article 65

LETTER TO THE "PRESBYTERIAN REFORMED CHURCH
AT SUTHERLAND", N.S.W.

The text of the letter to the "Presbyterian Reformed Church at Sutherland", N.S.W., and any other separated groups - compare Article 16 of these Acts - is adopted. (see Appendix 1 of these Acts). A copy of our letter to the "Australian Council of Reformed Churches" will be enclosed.

Article 66

LETTER TO THE "AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF REFORMED CHURCHES"

The text of our reply to the letter of the "Australian Council of Reformed Churches" - compare Article 15 of these Acts - is determined. This reply will be added to these Acts as appendix 2.

Article 67

ACTS

The Acts, Articles 61 and following, are adopted.

Article 68

PRESS REPORT

The Press Report concerning the sessions on 22nd, 23rd, and 24th May is read and approved.

Article 69

CLOSING

The president wishes the delegates a safe return trip. Psalm 138:3 is sung. The LORD is given thanks and asked for His blessing upon this Synod and our Churches. Synod is closed.

NOTE:

Only the Dutch version of these Acts was accepted and approved by Synod.

The English version is an un-authorized translation for which only the undersigned is responsible.

(signed) G. van Rongen
First Clerk.

APPENDIX I

(see articles 16 and 65 of the Acts)

SYNOD ALBANY 1968

of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia

May 1968

To the Presbyterian Reformed Church

C/- the Rev. A. Grahame Kerr

34 Ewos Pde., Cronulla, N.S.W., 2230.

Dear Sirs!

The Synod of The Free Reformed Churches of Australia, at present assembled at Albany, Western Australia, had in one of its sessions to deal with the question, whether and in what manner our Churches have a common task concerning those who, because of the growing apostasy through modern theology, have separated themselves from the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

After an ample discussion about your struggle for the holiness and truth of God's Word synod came to the conclusion, that our Churches have a common task indeed, and therefore decided, first of all, to write you this letter.

We want to draw your attention to the fact that every struggle in the Church shall be a return to the Holy Word of God. Only if there is a complete return to God's Word - which is given us to the regulation, foundation and confirmation of our faith - we can speak of reformation. Otherwise it would only be a protestation.

Since your struggle has resulted in your separation from the Presbyterian Church, which does not confess the Holy Scriptures as the infallible Word of God, we are convinced that you are in the way of the Bible, that your struggle pleases God and that in this way you may expect the blessing of the LORD.

However, as everyone is in duty bound to join the true Church, so do we believe that every Church has to seek communion with other true churches, to the end that they may employ their gifts readily

and cheerfully to the advantage and salvation of each other.

We are afraid that here may lay a snare for you. For we are convinced that more than one church calling itself "reformed" will present itself to you. We think of the "Australian Council of Reformed Churches", against which we have serious Scriptural objections.

For your information about the said objections we may refer you to enclosed letter.

Therefore we will introduce ourselves to you.

The Free Reformed Churches of Australia consist of three congregations, namely one at Launceston, Tasmania, and those at Albany and Armadale in Western Australia. They expressed their faith in the Three Forms of Unity, namely the Belgic Confession of Faith, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort. They uphold these confessions and maintain relations only with those Churches abroad that have the same confession and live in accordance with it. We can add to this that this Synod decided to appoint deputies with the instruction to inquire into the possibility of a similar relationship of correspondence with the Presbyterian Church of Korea (Pusan).

They heartily desire to live together with all those who love the Lord and want to serve Him in accordance with His Word.

To come to a conclusion we want to stress the necessity to distinguish between the churches, and therefore draw your attention to article 29 of our first-mentioned doctrinal standard, where we confess our faith as follows:

"The marks by which the true Church is known are these:

if the pure doctrine of the Gospel is preached therein;

if it maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ;

if Church discipline is exercised in punishing sin;

in short, if all things are managed according

to the pure Word of God;
all things contrary thereto are rejected, and
Jesus Christ acknowledged as the only Head of
the Church.

Hereby the true Church may certainly be known,
from which no man has a right to separate him-
self."

Finally, be convinced that you in your struggle are
remembered by us in our prayers.

We will be glad to hear from you.

The correspondence-address for this matter is: The
Free Reformed Church of Armadale, C/- Rev. K. Brüning
P.O. Box 12, Armadale, W.A.....6112.

May the Spirit of the Lord guide you.

On behalf of Synod Albany 1968,

(signed) K. Brüning, president

(signed) G. van Rongen, first clerk.

APPENDIX II

(see articles 15 and 66 of the Acts)

SYNOD ALBANY 1968

of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia

May 1968

To the "Australian Council of Reformed Churches"
C/- the Rev. W.R. McEwen,
2 Swindon Grove,
McKinnon, Vic...3204.

Dear Sirs!

Synod Albany 1968 of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia has read and fully discussed the letter of your assembly which was received from your secretary, The Rev. W.R. McEwen B.A., through the Rev. G. van Rongen of Launceston.

Synod is of the opinion that she cannot accept the invitation made in your letter, to join your council.

Serious objections prevent the Free Reformed Churches to satisfy your desire and invitation. A further exposition of these objections is being offered to you in this letter, so that you might know our feelings.

In the first place, Synod notices a certain incincerity in the grown situation and also in the received invitation.

Your council means not only to invite the Free Reformed Churches to a certain form of cooperation and collective action, but has also in mind, as we read in the Acts of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod of Grand Rapids 1963: "Synod declares that the unity among its member churches, now coming to expression in mutual understanding and cooperation in many spheres, should come to expression in union, wherever possible" (Article 101 I C 2).

Your council and the churches represented therein will no doubt agree with the above pronouncements, considering the fact that your council is so in-

timately involved in the work and the course of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod.

Well, we must then confess that the Free Reformed Churches have gained bitter experiences with the sincerity of the desires to come to true unity with true believers of Christ.

The Free Reformed Churches have exchanged letters with the Reformed Churches of Australia; and on that occasion it became more than clear that this group of churches is not at all concerned with The Free Reformed Churches; there was a permanent refusal to consider the questions and difficulties which the Free Reformed Churches put forward in clear terms; not one attempt was made to even try to understand these problems, but the raised questions were just laid aside. Such an attitude proves to us that in the Reformed Churches the genuine seriousness to come to unity is far off, so that Synod asks itself on what basis the invitation of the council must be regarded.

A similar experience was had by the Free Reformed Church of Launceston, with a group of churches who were also invited to your council. The Free Reformed Church of Launceston has for a time held discussions concerning unity or combination with the Reformed Evangelical or Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Tasmania; but during these discussions it became evident that this group of churches does not desire a real unification but rejects this on grounds not in accordance with God's Word.

Your council might well ask itself whether the churches represented in the council are acting in earnestness in accordance with the beautiful goals which are propagated by your council. We can show correspondence which could convince your council of the opposite.

A second objection raised by Synod is the sad fact that the Reformed Churches are on a way, which makes Scriptural unity with faithful Churches of the Lord impossible.

These churches pretend to be Reformed Churches, which as faithful churches of the Reformation will

remain loyal to the Scriptures and the Confession, and in accordance with reformed principles, will clearly deny and reject all that which is contrary to the Word of God and the revealed will of the Lord.

But especially in this regard have the Reformed Churches disappointed us. They maintain communion with, and continue to recognize as faithful sister-churches (and that wilfully at the expense of unity e.g. with the Free Reformed Churches) a group of churches in The Netherlands, the so called Ge-reformeerde Kerken in Nederland", also known as "the Synodical Churches", who in many respects deviate alarmingly from the truth of God's Word and who live in open disobedience to the will of the Lord.

Indeed, these "synodical churches" have not only demanded subscription to doctrines and theological constructions which are contrary to the Word of God and to the Reformed confession, but they have also thrown out and permanently excommunicated by means of disciplinary actions and other measures, many faithful children of God, among whom were several loyal office bearers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Reformed Churches know these things, and notwithstanding this they continue to recognize such churches as faithful and true sisterchurches, by this action rejecting the Free Reformed Churches, who through God's grace and wisdom have rejected, already years ago, the above mentioned evil things and who made themselves free from the fatal course and acts, which are a great disgrace before the Lord.

To this must be added that the present developments in the "synodical churches" in The Netherlands show a serious turning away from the Bible and the confession of the churches.

We mention for example: freedom of doctrine, which also gives protection to an attack on the Bible as the Word of God (we may refer you to the recent decision of the Synod of these churches in The Netherlands on the matter of the interpretation of

Genesis chapter 3);

the declaration of principle, that the joining of the World Council of Churches no longer raises fundamental objections;

being a member of the International Missionary Council, which is a part of the World Council of Churches;

being a member of the Presbyterian Alliance; evidence that these churches have sailed into the broad waters of the so called ecumene.

The Reformed Churches of Australia know these things and yet they continue to accept these churches as true sisterchurches, and are well aware that it is at the expense of unity in Australia with faithful Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Free Reformed Churches are of the opinion that this attitude of the Reformed Churches is a serious obstacle to true unity, and forms a real difficulty for an effective cooperation in your council.

A third objection is that your council forms part of and is responsible for the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, in which organisation the "synodical churches" in the Netherlands play a prominent role.

It is an oppressive thought, that your council, which claims to stand for the great doctrines and practices of the reformed faith, and which says to fight against sad apostasy, in fact becomes involved in a movement and cooperation, in which especially the attack on the reformed values and the effect of that attack have practically a free hand.

Considering these matters, we must conclude that your council in its composition and course does not offer sufficient guarantees for a cooperation, which must be based on the truth of and in the obedience to the Word of God.

If your council bypasses these serious objections and prohibitive facts, and leaves them for what they are, we must conclude that it cannot commence its primary task, namely the seeking of the true unity of faithful believers in Christ, but that the coun-

cil itself forms an obstacle to unity.

Synod brings these matters to your attention, because on the one hand she rejects an aspiration towards an unholy and self willed isolation, but on the other hand she rejects a cooperation which indeed suggests a unity but without sufficient guarantees of its Scriptural truth.

Synod expressed the hope that you will consider these matters seriously, and wishes you God's blessing in this.

On behalf of Synod Albany 1968,

(signed) Rev. K. Brüning, President.

(signed) Rev. G. van Ronge First
Clerk.

2 Fulford Street,
LAUNCESTON (Ta .)....7250.