
MORNING SESSION

Friday, 18 June 2021

Article 53 - Reopening

Br H van der Linde reads Psalm 33 and leads in prayer. He invites all present to stand and sing Psalm 33:1. The chairman reopens the meeting.

Article 54 - Training for the Ministry

A number of rounds of discussion are held in relation to the Advisory Committee's proposals relating to the Training for the Ministry.

Article 55 - Singing of Children

The John Calvin Primary School student choir attend to sing two songs for the delegates. They are thanked for their beautiful contribution.

Article 56 - Training for the Ministry

A number of further rounds of discussion are held in relation to the Advisory Committee's proposals relating to the Training for the Ministry and the material is sent back to the Advisory Committee to assemble a complete final proposal.

Article 57 - Contact with the EPC and SPC

A number of rounds of discussion are held in relation to the deputies' report relating to the Contact with the EPC and SPC, together with several submissions received. The matter is referred to an Advisory Committee.

Article 58 - International Conference of Reformed Churches

A number of rounds of discussion are held in relation to the proposal of Classis North to send an observer to the next ICRC meeting, together with submissions received from FRC Mt Nasura, Darling Downs & Launceston. The matter is referred to an Advisory Committee.

Article 59 - Acts of Synod

Articles 39-52 of the Acts are discussed and returned for editing.

Article 60 - Committee work

Synod breaks for committee work.

AFTERNOON SESSION**Friday, 18 June 2021**

Article 61 - Reformed Churches of New Zealand**I. Materials**

Item 11.c.9 – Deputies' Report

Item 8.b.3 – Overture from FRC Mt Nasura to instruct deputies to (a) impress upon the RCNZ our conviction that a relationship with them will be untenable if their relationship with the CRCA continues; and (b) urge the RCNZ to promote CRTS to their prospective theological students.

Item 8.c.6 – Overture from FRC Darling Downs to instruct deputies to (a) monitor the relationship between the RCNZ and the CRCA; (b) encourage the RCNZ to be consequential in light of the concerns mentioned to Synod Baldivis 2015.

Item 8.h.4 – Overture from FRC Launceston – Launceston does not support Mt Nasura's overture on the ground that there is no evidence that the RCNZ is negatively affected by their relationship with the CRCA or the Reformed Theological College.

II. Admissibility

All of the items are declared admissible.

III. Decision

Synod decide:

1. Continue the sister church relationship with the RCNZ under the established rules.
2. Thank deputies and reappoint them with the following mandate:
 - a. monitor developments within the RCNZ for mutual benefit according to the established 'Rules for Sister Church Relations', and maintain the contact necessary in exercising the relationship according to the rules;
 - b. continue to monitor and report on the efforts being undertaken by the Emeritus Fund of the Free Reformed Churches to address the discrepancies between the emeritus funds of our two church federations with a view to removing the obstacles faced in calling each other's ministers;
 - c. meet with the RCNZ's Interchurch Relations Committee during the inter-synodical period subject to finances;
 - d. send two delegates to attend the next synod of the RCNZ, subject to invitation and finances;
 - e. invite up to two delegates from the RCNZ to attend our next synod; and
 - f. report to the next synod with recommendations.

Grounds

1. As the RCNZ were unable to hold their planned synod in 2020 due to the Covid-19 virus, there was no visit by deputies. Deputies were however able to have some contact via other means and report that the RCNZ give evidence of a love for the gospel, ongoing faithfulness to God's Word, and commitment to the Reformed faith. No evidence has been presented of any deviation or unfaithfulness in this respect.
2. Part of a sister church relationship includes the privilege of calling one another's ministers, and if there are practical difficulties that prohibit this due to different models being used for the support of retired ministers, real efforts should be made to remove these obstacles in the proper way.

3. There is no need to repeat the specific mandates to continue to monitor the RCNZ's relationship of ecumenical fellowship with the CRCA and to continue to encourage the RCNZ to be diligent in their approach to theological education since:
 - a. the RCNZ have demonstrated evidence of faithfulness in these areas over the past nine years which is attested by deputies' reports to Synod 2021 and to previous synods; and
 - b. the rules for sister church relations provide an adequate mechanism for assisting, encouraging and exhorting all sister churches in any areas of concern.

ADOPTED**Article 62 - Farewell**

Rev P Archbald expresses his appreciation for the invitation, fellowship and hospitality extended to him during his time in Albany.

Synod expresses thankfulness that he could be present, especially as he was the only foreign delegate present due to the travel restrictions brought about by Covid-19.

Article 63 - Committee work

Synod breaks for committee work.

EVENING SESSION**Friday, 18 June 2021**

Article 64 - Reopening

The chairman invites all present to stand and sing Hymn 77:1 and 3. For the benefit of the audience, he explains what has been achieved during the sessions today.

Article 65 - Address of the United Reformed Churches of North America

Br P Witten reads an address from Br G Swets on behalf of the United Reformed Churches of North America (refer Appendix 1j), after which he leads the meeting in prayer for these churches.

Article 66 - Address of the First Evangelical Church of Singapore

A recorded video address is presented by Pastor NT Chong on behalf of the First Evangelical Church of Singapore (refer Appendix 1k), after which Rev R Bredenhof leads the meeting in prayer for the sister churches in Singapore.

Article 67 - Orthodox Presbyterian Church**I. Materials**

Item 11.c.8 – Deputies' Report

Item 8.b.7 – Overture from FRC Mt Nasura re OPC – FRC Mt Nasura observes 'that the deputies would need to do more with their mandate to investigate the OPC to provide Synod and the Australian bond of churches with a thorough understanding of the OPC to enable Synod to come to an informed decision on any relationship with the OPC.' Mt Nasura requests that, should Synod 2021 pursue any kind of relationship with the OPC, that it first mandate

'new deputies to investigate the OPC against the requirements of Art 29 BC, including identifying, setting out and addressing the differences so Synod can have a thorough understanding of the OPC.'

Item 8.c.5 – Overture from FRC Darling Downs re OPC – FRC Darling Downs recommends Synod 'not to pursue a sister church relationship with the OPC' and not to provide the deputies with a renewed mandate. They cite lack of manpower, and suggest that 'distance as well as historical background do not make pursuit of a sister church relations an important matter.' Darling Downs also expresses concern that some of the differences in practise regarding Fencing of the Lord's Table and Confessional membership 'would potentially cause unrest' in our churches.

Item 8.f.1 – Overture from FRC Kelmscott re OPC – FRC Kelmscott supports the recommendation of deputies 'not to pursue a sister church relationship with the OPC at this time.' They consider 'it is better to wait with any further proposed progress in the relationship till [the proposed] guidelines have been made clearer.'

Item 8.g.1 – Overture FRC Southern River re OPC – FRC Southern River supports the recommendation of deputies 'not to pursue a sister church relationship with the OPC at this time.' Their support 'is based on the understanding that this is not a final decision on the future sister church relationship with the OPC, but that this decision be made after Synod 2024.' They also support deputies' recommendation to develop and propose guidelines which are in line with Article 46 of the Church Order and believe we should wait for these guidelines prior to moving forward with a relationship with the OPC.

Item 8.h.3 – Overture from FRC Launceston re OPC – FRC Launceston interacts with some of the comments of the churches (as above) and does not find them persuasive. Further they recognise that the mandate of deputies has not been completed and that further investigations of the OPC are required.

Item 8.i.1 – FRC Melville – FRC Melville supports investigating another level of ecclesiastical relationship and considers that this may be helpful in regard to the OPC.

II. Admissibility

All of the items are declared admissible.

III. Decision

1. To express thanks to God for the Reformed witness evident in the OPC throughout its history, its constant repudiation of theological liberalism, its commitment to being confessionally Reformed, and its commitment to the authority and truth of the holy Scriptures.
2. To acknowledge the concerns mentioned by the deputies and of some of the churches, particularly in regards to the differences in church polity and practice of the OPC.
3. To acknowledge the desire of some of the churches to pursue further ecumenical relations with the OPC.
4. To take note that Synod has mandated deputies for interchurch relations to develop guidelines for interchurch relations, which will have implications for any future decisions about a relationship with the OPC.
5. To discharge deputies, thank them for their work, and to appoint new deputies to maintain ecclesiastical contact with the following mandate to:
 - a. maintain contact with the OPC via its Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations (CEIR);
 - b. further investigate the differences in church polity and practice of the OPC;
 - c. send one delegate to a General Assembly of the OPC during the next 3 years subject to available finances;
 - d. invite the OPC to send a fraternal delegate to our next Synod in 2024 DV; and
 - e. submit a report six months prior to the next synod.

Grounds

1. The OPC is a confessionally Reformed federation that lives up to its commitment to the Reformed faith and has a history of standing valiantly for the inerrant truth of God's Word.
2. Prior to developing any ecclesiastical relationship, the churches require further information about the OPC, including differences in church polity and practice.
3. Deputies for Interchurch Relations have been mandated to develop and propose guidelines concerning interchurch relations, and these guidelines could provide further direction for how to develop this relationship.
4. The OPC has invited the FRCA to send a fraternal observer to a future General Assembly. The previous mandate to attend a General Assembly of the OPC in the past three years could not be completed due to unforeseen restrictions as a result of a global pandemic. There is still value in sending a delegate, in order to become better acquainted with the OPC, and to have opportunity to personally introduce them to the FRCA.
5. The OPC has already shown evidence of a desire to establish contact with the FRCA by authorising the invitation of an FRCA observer to a future General Assembly, and by the attendance of a member of the CEIR at Synod Bunbury 2018. Inviting an observer to our next Synod confirms our desire for contact, and gives the OPC opportunity to become better acquainted with us.

ADOPTED**Article 68 - De Gereformeerde Kerken and Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland****I. Materials**

Item 11.c.2 – Deputies' Report

Item 11.c.2.i – Supplementary report from Deputies for Interchurch Relations 24 May 2021 – anticipating proposals at their respective upcoming synods for DGK and GKN to decide in principle to unite.

Item 8.b.6 – Overture from FRC Mt Nasura – overture to instruct deputies to monitor developments and investigate marks of the true church.

Item 8.d.2 – Overture from FRC Armadale – overture to instruct deputies to continue contact with a view to developing a sister church relationship.

Item 8.e.1 – Overture from FRC Mundijong – overture (a) suggesting that deputies encourage DGK and GKN to work towards unity with each other; (b) supporting continued contact with a view to developing a sister church relationship once that unity has been realised; (c) mandating deputies to encourage DGK to remove the potential obstacle of LRCA.

Item 8.f.2 – Overture from FRC Kelmscott – overture (a) supporting deputies' recommendation to encourage DGK and GKN to work towards unity with each other; (b) supporting continued contact with a view to developing a sister church relationship.

II. Admissibility

All of the items are declared admissible.

III. Decision

1. To express thankfulness to God for positive developments towards unity of the DGK and GKN.
2. To discharge deputies, thank them for their work, and to appoint new deputies with the mandate to:
 - a. continue contact with these two federations of churches;

- b. encourage them to continuing to work towards a united federation;
- c. encourage the DGK to sever its sister church relationship with the LRCA;
- d. confirm that the DGK/GKN have the marks of the true church;
- e. subject to the outcome of this contact, work towards entering a sister church relationship;
- f. keep the churches informed of developments;
- g. send one or two delegates to their respective synods subject to available finances;
- h. invite a delegate(s) from DGK/GKN to our next synod; and
- i. submit a report six months prior to the next synod.

Grounds

1. Past synods have noted that both the DGK and GKN profess to be faithful churches in every aspect of Reformed doctrine (Synod Bunbury Article 75) and there is no evidence to the contrary.
2. We recognise that the members of these two church federations have remained faithful by rejecting the unbiblical direction of the RCN.
3. Both the DGK and the GKN have requested sister church relations with us.
4. Although these churches are geographically distant, their historical backgrounds are similar to ours. Deputies for Interchurch Relations have been mandated to develop and propose guidelines concerning interchurch relations, and these guidelines could provide further direction for how to develop this relationship.
5. Our deputies now report that the DGK are reviewing their relationship with the LRCA (Deputies' Report, page 30).

ADOPTED**Article 69 - Reformed Churches in the Netherlands****I. Material**

Item 11.c.1 – Deputies' Report

II. Decision

That synod with thanks discharges deputies with respect to their mandate concerning the RCN.

Ground

Delegates have faithfully discharged their mandate respecting termination of the sister church relationship with the RCN.

ADOPTED**Article 70 - Reformed Churches of South Africa****I. Materials**

Item 11.c.3 – Deputies' Report

Item 11.c.3.i – Supplementary Report

II. Admissibility

All of the items are declared admissible.

III. Decision

1. To continue sister relations with the FRCSA according to the established rules.
2. To appoint the Deputies' Auditor for Synod Treasurer to audit the financial records of the support provided and report to the next Synod.
3. To discharge deputies, thank them for their work and to appoint new deputies with the mandate to:
 - a. maintain the sister church relations according to the adopted rules;
 - b. send two delegates to the next FRCSA synod when it is convened, subject to available finances;
 - c. coordinate responses to any requests for support from Deputies Curators of the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa and to involve the local congregations of the FRCA as appropriate; and
 - d. keep the members of the FRCA informed regarding the support provided, both directly to consistories as well as to the broader membership via Una Sancta.

Grounds

1. The FRCSA give evidence of continuing faithfulness to the Word of God, maintaining the Reformed Confessions and Church Order.
2. Visits to South Africa have proven to be very beneficial in terms of mutual support and encouragement.
3. Our South African churches, in addition to their own contributions, request ongoing financial support for theological training. Such support should be coordinated, the churches kept informed and financial accountability maintained.

ADOPTED**Article 71 - Kosin Presbyterian Church of Korea****I. Material**

Item 11.c.4 – Deputies' Report

Item 11.c.4.i – Supplementary Report

II. Admissibility

All of the items are declared admissible.

III. Decision

1. To continue sister-church relations with the KPCK according to the established rules.
2. To discharge deputies, thank them for their work and to appoint new deputies with the mandate to:
 - a. maintain the sister church relations according to the adopted rules;
 - b. send two delegates to the KPCK General Assembly in 2022, subject to available finances;
 - c. continue contact with the KPCK mission undertaken locally in Australia, offering support where feasible and appropriate;
 - d. discuss with the KPCK deputies our desire to coordinate with them as they engage in mission activities in Australia; and
 - e. submit a report six months prior to the next synod.

Grounds

1. The Kosin Presbyterian Church of Korea shows faithfulness to the Word of God, maintaining the Reformed Confessions.
2. Contact with mission work of the KPCK in our locality is a meaningful way to mutually assist and encourage one another in keeping with the Rules for Exercising Sister Church Relations.
3. It is brotherly for sister-churches to inform us when they are doing mission work in our nation, also so we can support and encourage them prayerfully and perhaps otherwise.

ADOPTED

Article 72 - Adjournment

The chairman farewells Br H Ballast, who will be leaving synod after today.

Rev RD Anderson reads Philippians 2:1-4 and leads in prayer. He invites all present to stand and sing Psalm 101:1 and synod is adjourned.