

Day 4 — Morning Session
Friday, May 13, 2016

Article 51 – Reopening

The chairman noted all synod members are present. He read Acts 1:12-26, spoke some words, led in prayer and had those present sing Hymn 52:1,2,5. It was mentioned that the Rev. Bruce Backensto, the RPCNA fraternal observer, had returned home and that br. M. Bube, the OPC fraternal delegate, would be returning home. Some housekeeping matters were dealt with. Newly arrived fraternal delegates were welcomed.

Article 52 – Adoption of Acts

Prepared articles of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

Article 53 – Appeal of LRCA re: GS 2013 art. 62

1. Material

1.1 Letter from the Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford (LRCA) (8.6.8.1)

2. Admissibility

2.1 GS 2013 declared their letter inadmissible. GS 2013 observed, “The churches of the Canadian Reformed federation set the agenda for general synod. No church has asked us to address this issue. Synod also accepts correspondence received from churches with which we are in Ecclesiastical Fellowship. The letter from the LRCA does not fulfil either criterion.” GS 2016 agrees with GS 2013’s observation.

3. Recommendation

That Synod declare the letter inadmissible.

ADOPTED

Article 54 – Appeal of Dunnville re: GS 2013 art. 101 rec. 4.1

1. Material

1.1 Appeal - Dunnville (8.6.2.1)

2. Observations

2.1 The SCBP submitted two corrections for the forms of subscription in the APV. These corrections were submitted because, due to an editing oversight, these forms did not reflect the approved versions adopted by GS 2010.

2.2 The Abbotsford CanRC stated that it could not agree with the corrections submitted by the SCBP, and advised that both forms be amended as follows: “We will first submit this to the church via her assemblies for judgment.”

2.3 GS 2013 adopted the wording proposed by Abbotsford (GS 2013 art. 101 rec. 4.1.1).

2.4 Dunnville considers that GS 2013 had stated that Abbotsford’s disagreement was with GS 2010, and not with the action of the SCBP.

2.5 Dunnville further considers that as a result of the decision to adopt the wording proposed by Abbotsford, the CanRC now have novel terminology in the subscription forms that was not first examined by the churches.

47 2.6 Dunnville further considers that the terminology adopted by GS 2013 is problematic,
48 because it confuses the federation of churches with the local church. The assemblies
49 referred to are not assemblies of the local church, but of the federation of churches. On a
50 point of principle, the federation is called the Canadian Reformed Churches, not the
51 Canadian Reformed Church.

52 2.7 Dunnville further considers that GS 2013 should simply have noted that what the SCBP
53 submitted was a correction of its own mistake. The wording adopted by GS 2010 would
54 thus still stand.
55

56 **3. Considerations**

57 3.1 Abbotsford's disagreement was with GS 2010, and not with the SCBP.

58 3.2 The CanRC now have wording in the subscription forms that is novel, and had not been
59 examined by the churches prior to its adoption, because it came to GS 2013 by way of a
60 letter from Abbotsford.

61 3.3 GS 2013 should simply have noted that the SCBP was correcting its own mistake.
62

63 **4. Recommendations**

64 That Synod decide

65 4.1 That GS 2013 erred when it changed the wording of the subscription forms from what had
66 been adopted by GS 2010;

67 4.2 That the correction presented to GS 2013 by the SCBP reflects what GS 2010 had decided
68 to be the correct formulation of the forms of subscription;

69 4.3 That the wording of the subscription forms as decided by GS 2010 be reinstated at the next
70 printing of the *Book of Praise*.
71

72 **ADOPTED**

74 **Article 55 – Not published on the web as per GS 2016 art. 8.1**

76 *Synod was adjourned for committee work.*
77

78 **Day 4 — Evening Session**

79 **Friday, May 13, 2016**
80

81 **Article 56 – Reopening**

82 Synod reopened in plenary session. The chairman noted all synod members are present. Some
83 housekeeping matters were dealt with.
84

85 **Article 57 – FRCSA – Fraternal Delegate Address**

86 The chairman introduced the Rev. Dirk Boersma, fraternal delegate of the Free Reformed
87 Churches in South Africa (FRCSA). The Rev. Boersma addressed Synod, passing on greetings
88 and, among others, explained the desperate need for Afrikaans speaking ministers, as they are as
89 rare as “chickens’ teeth.” The full text of his address can be found in *Appendix #*. The Rev. D.
90 Wynia responded with appropriate words.
91

92 **Article 58 – RCN – Fraternal Delegate Address**

93 The chairman introduced the Rev. J.M. (Kim) Batteau and br. Peter Bakker, fraternal delegates
94 of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (RCN). The Rev. Batteau addressed Synod,
95 passing on greetings. He described the situation of the RCN and where they are at with respect to
96 various matters. He pleaded with the CanRC to continue the EF relationship. The full text of his
97 address can be found in *Appendix #*. The Rev. R.C. Janssen responded with appropriate words.
98

99 **Article 59 – Reformed Church of Quebec (ERQ)**

100 **1. Material**

- 101 1.1 Report of CCCNA re: ERQ (8.2.4)
102 1.2 Letters from the following CanRC: Fergus-North (8.3.2.6), Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.2.9),
103 Hamilton-Blessings (8.3.2.11), Grassie-Covenant (8.3.2.14), and Lincoln-Vineyard
104 (8.3.2.19)
105

106 **2. Observations**

- 107 2.1 GS 2013 art. 21 gave the CCCNA the following mandate with respect to the ERQ:
108 [4.3] To mandate the CCCNA to continue the relationship of EF with the ERQ under the
109 adopted rules, giving particular attention to the matters of supervision of the pulpit,
110 admissions to the Lord’s table and women deacons (in particular, the ordination of)
111 and to provide an account of its dialogue with the ERQ.
112 2.2 The CCCNA fulfilled its mandate by meeting with delegates of the Inter-Church Relations
113 Committee of the ERQ and by attending synods of the ERQ.
114 2.3 The CCCNA had fruitful discussions with the ERQ delegates about matters of doctrine and
115 practice, including women deacons, supervision of the pulpit, modus operandi of the synod
116 of the CanRC, and interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2 in the CanRC. The CCCNA asks not to
117 be mandated regarding specific matters of difference with the ERQ.
118 2.4 The CCCNA reports that the ERQ requested clarification of their privileges in the
119 relationship of EF. The delegates confirmed that the ERQ has the full privileges of a ‘sister’
120 church.
121 2.5 The matter of women deacons remains a matter of ongoing discussion with the ERQ.
122 2.6 The CCCNA affirmed to the ERQ that the CanRC has not adopted any statements
123 regarding the doctrine of creation.
124 2.7 Fergus-North asks that the committee be mandated to continue the discussion with the ERQ
125 on the place and function of women deacons in the ERQ and to continue the discussion
126 regarding the doctrine of creation.
127 2.8 Fergus-Maranatha asks that the committee be mandated to continue the discussion with the
128 ERQ on unresolved matters, including the ordination of women deacons, supervision of the
129 pulpit and admission to the Lord’s table.
130 2.9 Grassie-Covenant asks that the committee be mandated to continue the discussion with the
131 ERQ on the matter of women deacons.
132 2.10 Lincoln-Vineyard supports that special care be taken to treat the ERQ as a sister church, not
133 a daughter church.
134 2.11 Hamilton-Blessings supports that the CCCNA not be specifically mandated to address the
135 ERQ regarding identified matters of difference in doctrine and practice.
136

137 **3. Considerations**

- 138 3.1 The CCCNA fulfilled its mandate regarding the ERQ.

- 139 3.2 God has blessed the ERQ as a small and fragile group of churches in a spiritually hostile
140 environment.
141 3.3 Rule 1 of Ecclesiastical Fellowship states that ‘the churches shall assist each other in the
142 maintenance, defence and promotion of the Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity,
143 discipline and liturgy, and be watchful for deviations.’ Within this context there is always
144 room for discussion about differences in matters of doctrine and practice.
145 3.4 When we enter EF we accept each other as faithful churches without qualifications.
146 Differences that were noted and discussed prior to EF, but which did not hinder entering
147 EF, do not require resolution. It is incorrect to speak of ‘outstanding’ differences. The word
148 ‘outstanding’ implies a need for resolution. Bringing up these issues repeatedly, without
149 proper proof of necessity, is potentially damaging to sister-church relationships. Discussion
150 of these issues may take place naturally in the course of EF, but a specific mandate,
151 identifying particular issues, need not be given.
152

4. Recommendations

154 That Synod decide:

- 155 4.1 To thank the Lord for the faithful Reformed witness provided in and by the ERQ;
156 4.2 To mandate the CCCNA to continue the relationship of EF with the ERQ under the adopted
157 rules;
158 4.3 To involve the fraternal delegates in discussions at synods in such a way as to honour the
159 sister-to-sister-church relationship;
160 4.4 To encourage the churches to support the ERQ prayerfully and financially in their
161 missionary endeavours and special projects.
162

ADOPTED

Article 60 – Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS)

1. Material

- 167 1.1 Report from the CCCNA (8.2.4)
168 1.2 Letter from the Hamilton-Blessings CanRC (8.3.2.11)
169

2. Observations

- 171 2.1 GS 2013 art. 93 mandated the CCCNA regarding the RCUS as follows:
172 [4.2.2] To mandate the CCCNA to continue the relationship of EF with the RCUS under
173 the Adopted rule and to endeavour to meet regularly to discuss matters of mutual
174 concern and edification, giving attention to matters of Lord’s Day observance
175 and admissions to the Lord’s table.
176 2.2 Since GS 2013, the CCCNA met annually with the Inter-Church Relations Committee of
177 the RCUS. These meetings took place in conjunction with the annual meetings of
178 NAPARC. Matters discussed included the following:
179 2.2.1 Due to decline of membership, the American Reformed congregation of Blue
180 Bell dissolved. Some of the former members have since joined a local RCUS
181 congregation;
182 2.2.2 In light of their contact with some of the members of the former Blue Bell
183 church, the RCUS requested a discussion with the CCCNA about the place of
184 children in the covenant. The conclusion was that our respective federations have

- 185 the same views about this matter of doctrine;
- 186 2.2.3 Rev. S. Powell of the RCUS spoke at a conference hosted by Winnipeg-
187 Redeemer on the topic “Promoting a Biblical Sexual Morality.” He also led
188 worship services in the Redeemer church;
- 189 2.2.4 An article from the Reformed Herald magazine was reprinted in Clarion;
- 190 2.2.5 The RCUS expressed appreciation for the decision of GS 2013 not to allow
191 voting by women in the churches;
- 192 2.2.6 The CCCNA discussed with the RCUS delegates their mutual concerns about the
193 Reformed churches of the Netherlands;
- 194 2.2.7 In view of GS 2013’s decision not to offer EF to the RCPNA on the ground that
195 these churches allow for female deacons, the RCUS was asked how they view
196 the issue of female deacons in connection to their ongoing relationship of
197 ecclesiastical fellowship with the RPCNA. The RCUS delegates mentioned that
198 their churches have but little contact with the RPCNA at this time. They also
199 stated that their churches have an increased awareness of the responsibilities
200 entailed in a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship. In regard to establishing
201 relationships of ecclesiastical fellowship, the matter of female deacons would
202 likely receive greater scrutiny in the present than it did in the past;
- 203 2.2.8 The CCCNA raised with the RCUS delegates the mandate given by GS 2013.
204 The IRC of the RCUS expressed regret that issues discussed in the past come up
205 for discussion again. They feel that differences between our respective churches
206 should be accepted with the recognition of each other as faithful churches of the
207 Lord;
- 208 2.2.9 The RCUS asked about the CanRC position on the length of the six days of
209 creation. The CCCNA responded by referring to confessional statements. It was
210 acknowledged that some in the CanRC are looking for room within the
211 confessions for views other than a literal, six-day sequence of creation;
- 212 2.2.10 The RCUS informed the CCCNA of a new sister-church relationship it had
213 established with the United Covenant Reformed Church in the Philippines. It
214 also informed the CCCNA that it had received some initial contact from the
215 Heritage Reformed Congregations. Additionally, the RCUS has established
216 ecclesiastical relations with the Reformed Fellowship Church in Kenya.
- 217 2.13 The CCCNA sent representation to the general synods of 2014 and 2015 of the RCUS. The
218 CCCNA also received a copy of the Abstracts of these synods which are also available on
219 the RCUS website. The CCCNA feels that visiting the assemblies of the RCUS has served
220 to cement the relationship with these churches.
- 221
- 222 **3. Considerations**
- 223 3.1 The CCCNA has fulfilled its mandate in regard to the RCUS.
- 224 3.2 Rule 1 of Ecclesiastical Fellowship states that “the churches shall assist each other in the
225 maintenance, defence and promotion of the Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity,
226 discipline and liturgy, and be watchful for deviations.” Within this context, there is always
227 room for discussion about differences in matters of doctrine and practice.
- 228 3.3 When we enter EF, we accept each other as faithful churches without qualification.
229 Differences that were noted and discussed prior to EF but which did not hinder entering EF,
230 do not require resolution. It is incorrect to speak of “outstanding differences.” The word

231 “outstanding” implies a need for resolution. Bringing up these issues repeatedly, without
232 proper proof of necessity, is potentially damaging to the sister-church relationship.
233 Discussion of these issues may take place naturally in the course of EF, but a specific
234 mandate, identifying particular issues, need not be given.
235

236 **4. Recommendations**

237 That Synod decide:

- 238 4.1 To thank the Lord for the faithfulness of the RCUS to the Word of God and the Reformed
239 confessions;
240 4.2 To continue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the RCUS under the adopted
241 rules.
242

243 **ADOPTED**

244
245 **Article 61 – Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)**

246 **1. Material**

- 247 1.1 Report from the CCCNA (8.2.4)
248 1.2 Letters from the following CanRC: Fergus-Maranatha (8.3.2.9), Hamilton-Blessings
249 (8.3.2.11), Lynden (8.3.2.15)
250

251 **2. Observations**

- 252 2.1 GS 2013 (Article 43) gave the CCCNA the following mandate in regards to the OPC:
253 [4.3] To mandate the CCCNA to continue the relationship of EF with the OPC under the
254 adopted rules giving particular attention, together with the CEIR, to the functioning of
255 the 2001 agreement.
256 2.2 The CCCNA continued the relationship of EF by correspondence, annual meetings with the
257 CEIR, and bi-annual attendance of the General Assembly, including participation in a
258 colloquium about how to fulfill our tasks as churches, particularly in bringing the gospel to
259 the world. One of the significant questions that the OPC asks churches in ecclesiastical
260 fellowship is: Are there specific occasions where you believe we have failed to live up to
261 our commitments to you or have caused you grief? The CCCNA conveyed to the CEIR that
262 the OPC has not caused any grief, but rather great joy in the fellowship we enjoy with each
263 other.
264 2.3 The CCCNA received assurance from the CEIR that the 2001 agreement is functioning
265 well. The CEIR also expressed surprise and disappointment that the agreement was part of
266 the mandate of GS 2013. The CCCNA made very clear that no particular offense
267 occasioned this mandate, but that it arises from the concerns raised by individual churches
268 within the CanRC. The CCCNA and the CEIR share the desire to be mandated to work
269 together on new items rather than revisiting the issues of the past. (See also the CCCNA
270 report, General matters).
271 2.4 The CEIR reported on developing relations with the Presbyterian Church of Brazil (IPB), a
272 church comprising about a million members. Some of the theological students of the IPB
273 are studying at Greenville Theological Seminary which also trains many in the OPC. The
274 OPC fraternal delegate also reported that OPC missionaries and IPB missionaries rub
275 shoulders in the work in Uruguay. The IPB approached them after the IPB had broken off
276 contact with the PCUSA. The IPB sees “her mother’s eyes” in the OPC and thus sought

- 277 fellowship with it. They have invited the OPC into a relationship of ecclesiastical
278 fellowship. In its consideration of this invitation, the CEIR expressed the concerns around
279 the fact that one of the IPB's presbyteries asked if it was permissible for women to preach
280 under the oversight of session, even though the IPB, in principle, is against the ordination
281 of women to the offices. The delegate attending synod reported that the concern was
282 satisfactorily addressed, and the OPC entered into EF with the IPB in 2015.
- 283 2.5 The CEIR also reported that the General Assembly appointed a study committee on the
284 issues of the republication of the covenant of works given how one of the Presbyteries
285 faced significant struggles on this issue. According to the Acts of the 2014 General
286 Assembly, this committee was mandated to study "whether and in which particular senses
287 the concept of the Mosaic Covenant as a republication of the Adamic Covenant is
288 consistent with the doctrinal system taught in [our] confessional standards." According to
289 the CCCNA this view is somehow tied to the two kingdom viewpoint. Within that
290 Presbytery a deep rift and conflict on this had developed and became quite personal. The
291 General Assembly also established a visitation committee to be available should the
292 Presbytery request help.
- 293 2.6 The CCCNA asked the CEIR for clarification on the OPC entering into EF with the
294 Independent Reformed Church of Korea. The IRCK is a consciously confessional church,
295 and the relationship arises out of a mission situation: one of the OPC missionaries in China
296 developed contact with this church. The OPC also has an indigenous candidate moving into
297 a church planting situation.
- 298 2.7 The CCCNA passed on the interim copy of the report sent to GS 2016 regarding the RCN.
- 299 2.8 The CCCNA highlights to synod the helpful questions the CEIR uses for its discussions
300 with other inter-church relations committees.
- 301 2.9 Fergus-Maranatha asks synod not to drop the two specific issues of confessional
302 membership and admission to the Lord's Supper, but instead to mandate the CCCNA:
- 303 2.9.1 To clearly illustrate why we continue to have confessional membership, and thus
304 how confessional membership would benefit the OPC;
- 305 2.9.2 To demonstrate to GS 2019 how the CanRC and the OPC have moved ahead on
306 these two issues so that it no longer is a matter of concern for the churches.
- 307 2.10 Fergus-Maranatha also urges synod to encourage the OPC, in its dialogue with the
308 Presbyterian Church of Brazil, to advise them that it is not permissible for women to
309 preach.
- 310 2.11 Lynden asks if the CanRC, in retrospect, have been straight with the OPC regarding our
311 ongoing concerns of the fencing of the Lord's supper table and confessional membership.
312 Neither the OPC nor the CanRC have officially changed their positions. This begs the
313 question: are we consistent, transparent, and forthright with the brothers in the OPC when
314 we promised to continue the discussions on the existing differences in confession and
315 church polity?
- 316 2.12 The OPC fraternal delegate remarked that it would be good for the federations to work
317 more together on foreign mission projects since to have teams of workers where the
318 workers come from different federations is very helpful in overcoming the growth of
319 "dependence mindsets" on the mission fields.
- 320
- 321 **3 Considerations**
- 322 3.1 The CCCNA fulfilled its mandate regarding the OPC.

- 323 3.2 Re: Observation 2.10. The OPC has already made its concerns very clear in its address to
324 the IPB General Assembly, and the matters were satisfactorily resolved in a subsequently
325 adjourned assembly, thus allowing the OPC to proceed with EF.
- 326 3.3 Re: Observation 2.12. The CanRC should keep this point in mind as they ponder their
327 mission tasks.
- 328 3.4 Rule 1 of Ecclesiastical Fellowship states that “the churches shall assist each other in the
329 maintenance, defence and promotion of the Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity,
330 discipline and liturgy, and be watchful for deviations.” Within this context there is always
331 room for brotherly discussion about differences in matters of doctrine and practice.
- 332 3.5 When we enter EF we accept each other as faithful churches without qualifications.
333 Differences that were noted and discussed prior to EF, but which did not hinder entering
334 EF, do not require resolution. It is incorrect to speak of “outstanding differences.” The word
335 “outstanding” implies a need for resolution. Bringing up these issues repeatedly, without
336 proper proof of necessity, is potentially damaging to sister-church relationships. Discussion
337 of these issues may take place naturally in the course of EF, but a specific mandate,
338 identifying particular issues, need not be given.

339

4 Recommendations

341 That Synod decide:

- 342 4.1 To thank the LORD for the way in which the OPC actively provides a faithful Reformed
343 witness to the gospel;
- 344 4.2 To mandate the CCCNA to continue EF with the OPC under the adopted rules.

345

ADOPTED

346

Article 62 – Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America (RPCNA)

348 Advisory Committee 2 presented its report on the RPCNA. The report was discussed. The
349 committee took the report back for refinement.

350

Article 63 – North American Reformed and Presbyterian Council (NAPARC)

352 Advisory Committee 2 presented a second report on NAPARC. The report was discussed. The
353 committee took the report back for refinement.

354

Article 64 – Committee for Pastoral Training Program Funding (CPTPF)

1. Material

- 357 1.1 Report from the Committee for Pastoral Training Program Funding (CPTPF) (8.2.12)

358

2. Observations

- 359 2.1 GS 2013 art. 73 decided:

362 [4.2] To reappoint the Emmanuel Canadian Reformed Church at Guelph as the PTP funding
363 committee with the following mandate:

364 [4.2.1] To look after the internship-related funding matters;

365 [4.2.2] To assess the churches each year based on the anticipated funding required
366 for a particular summer;

367 [4.2.3] To report about its activities to the next general synod, which report shall be
368 sent to all the churches at least six months prior to the next general synod.

369 2.2 The Committee for Pastoral Training Program has updated its documents entitled ‘The
370 Committee for Pastoral Training Program Funding’ and ‘Guidelines Developed by the
371 Pastoral Training Program Funding Committee’ “to reflect a change in the name to the
372 Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary and to record the increased amounts paid to
373 churches employing students.”

374 2.3 The Committee reports which students were funded by the program in the summers of
375 2013, 2014 and 2015.

376 2.4 The Committee reports that in 2013, 2014 and 2015, its books were audited and its records
377 were found to be in good order.

378

379 **3. Consideration**

380 3.1 The Committee has done its work with dedication and aplomb and the funding program has
381 worked well.

382

383 **4. Recommendations**

384 That Synod decide:

385 4.1 To express gratitude to Guelph-Emmanuel and its committee for the work it has done;

386 4.2 To reappoint Guelph-Emmanuel as the CPTPF with the following mandate:

387 4.2.1 To look after all internship-related funding matters;

388 4.2.2 To assess the churches each year based on the anticipated funding required for a
389 particular summer;

390 4.2.3 To report about its activities to the next general synod, which report shall be sent
391 to all the churches at least six months prior to the next general synod.

392

393 **ADOPTED**

394

395 **Article 65 - Closing Devotions and Adjournment**

396 The Rev. R. Vermeulen spoke some words, read Jeremiah 31:1-14, led in prayer, and had those
397 present sing psalm 138:1.

398

399 *Synod was adjourned to reconvene Monday morning.*