



**Tenth**  
**International Conference**  
**of Reformed Churches**

# **Proceedings**

Windhoek, Namibia

13 – 18 October, 2022

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## Prayer Service

On October 12, 2022 Rev. H. Venter, minister of the Reformed Church Windhoek in Namibia (RCSA) welcomed all present. He spoke for a short time on the 14 Reformed Churches in Namibia and the mission work in Sanveld, which delegates will have an opportunity to visit on Saturday. He then led in prayer.

The prayer service was led by Rev. Dr. P. de Bruyn, minister of the Reformed Church Windhoek-South in Namibia (RCSA). The conference sang Psalm 100 (Genevan Psalter) and the hymn "Praise God Most High, You Servants of The Lord." Rev. Dr. de Bruyn prayed the words of Psalm 19:14 as prayer for enlightenment. He then led in the reading of Ephesians 4:7-16 as the text for his message.

*Our focus will be on the leaders in the church, for that is what most of you are. We consider first our mission. Our mission is to serve each other. Christ gives us all gifts to make a difference for others (Eph. 4:7). All elements in the list that follows have to do with leadership. Eph 4:12 makes clear leaders have their gifts to equip the congregation to use its gifts. The word translated "to equip" is translated "to mend nets" in Matthew 4. This equipping is about fixing what needs mending. The purpose of the equipping is "for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ." Leaders, do not expect your churches to be perfect. We need to be fixed. But if we use our gifts faithfully by the power of the Spirit, will grow to maturity. We consider second the challenges we face in fulfilling our mission. Basically, our challenge is that we are childish. We need to mend our childish behaviour. There are three elements to think of, given our text. (1) Children are selfish (Eph. 4:13). For example, children often don't care about the unity of the family. Sadly, leaders are often selfish too. (2) Children lack discernment (Eph. 4:14), they are often superficial. (3) Children say things as they are (Eph. 4:15). Children will speak the truth without reflecting on that it may embarrass or hurt. The truth must be spoken in love. Do note: both truth and love are needed. It is cowardly not to speak the truth and just let things be (think of Eli and his sons). We consider third how we fulfil our mission. A leader is to grow in the knowledge of God (Eph 4:13). Unity and harmony requires the same foundation in the knowledge of God. This unity has to be our vision. Today's key word is "variety". Our unity lies in the knowledge of Christ, in serving God. The unity within God was broken on the cross when God forsook Christ. That happened so that we might be joined to God. A leader must grow in his trust in Christ. Immature men are children (plural) but are to become the mature man (singular): this is speaking of being in the body of Christ. As there is unity in God there is unity in the body of Christ. We build each other up, to be like Christ. We do not avoid each other because of "hurt feelings". We can entrust ourselves to Christ. We don't need false promises for in Christ we have a wonderful hope. And as leaders we must speak the truth in love. There is no tension here, as if it is either truth or love. For truth without love breaks down, and love without truth is cruel. The truth is that we are worse than think. But see the love of Christ on the cross. We have a wonderful mission, to help fix. We have a lot of challenges. Realize that Jesus is the answer to each challenge we face.*

Rev. Dr. de Bruyn then led in a prayer of intercession.

Following the service, the Corresponding Secretary, Rev. Dr. James Visscher, made some brief comments about arrangements for dinner and breakfast, and noted that the first session would open at 9:00am.

# Day 1

## Thursday, 13 October 2022

### *ARTICLE 1 – OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE AND THE DAY*

Rev. Dr. Dick Moes opened the tenth International Conference of Reformed Churches at 9:10 a.m. welcoming all delegates, observers, and visitors, from all over the world. A show of hands made clear that many delegates were present for the first time at an ICRC. He noted that he was opening this conference as chairman of the previous ICRC. He introduced Rev. Heinrich Zwemstra on behalf of the host church, the Reformed Churches in South Africa, who would be doing the roll call and receiving the credentials.

He invited the Conference to sing the hymn “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today”. He led in a prayer for illumination and read Scripture from Genesis 2:1-3. For the text of his devotional message see Appendix to article 1.

Rev. Dr. Moes led in prayer, seeking a blessing over the proceedings of the conference.

### *ARTICLE 2 – ROLL CALL*

On behalf of the hosting church, Rev. Dr. Heinrich Zwemstra conducted the roll call. Officially present at the ICRC 2022 were the following:

#### **I. MEMBER CHURCHES**

1. African Evangelical Presbyterian Church (Kenya)
  - Rev. Dr. Joseph Mutei
  - Rev. Daniel Kithongo
  - \*Elder Fanuel Anyul Otieno
  
2. Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church
  - Rev. Benjamin Glaser
  - Rev. Patrick Malphrus
  - \*Rev. Alex Pettet (arrived later)
  
3. Calvinist Reformed Churches of Indonesia
  - Rev. Yonson Dethan
  
4. Canadian Reformed Churches
  - Rev. Dr. Roelf C. (Karlo) Janssen
  - Rev. Dr. Jeff W. Temple
  
5. Christian Reformed Churches in The Netherlands
  - Rev. Florimco van der Rhee
  - Rev. William N. Middelkoop
  - \*Rev. Willem Jan van der Toorn
  
6. Christian Reformed Churches of Australia
  - Rev. Andrew Nugteren
  - Rev. Lourens Nel
  
7. Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales

Rev. Nathan Hilton  
Rev. Andrew Graham

8. Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland  
Rev. Marcus Hobson
9. Free Church of Scotland  
Dr. Alistair I. Wilson
10. Free Church of Scotland Continuing  
Rev. Graeme Craig
11. Free Church in Southern Africa  
No in-person delegates
12. Free Reformed Churches of North America  
Rev. G. Procee  
Rev. Eric Moerdyk
13. Free Reformed Churches in South Africa  
Rev. Dr. Pieter Boon  
Rev. Phineas Kgatle  
\*Rev. B.A Matlaela  
\*Rev. G.F. Mnisi
14. Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC)  
Dr. Brian DeVries
15. Independent Reformed Church of Korea  
Prof. Rev. Heon Soo Kim  
Rev. Sung Min Hong
16. Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea  
Rev. Hae Shin Yoo  
Dr. Aaron Bae  
\*Rev. Jaehyung (Sean) Shin
17. Orthodox Presbyterian Church  
Mr. Mark Bube  
Rev. Dr. L. Anthony Curto  
\*Mr. David Nakhla  
\*Rev. Robert E. Tarullo
18. Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia  
No in-person delegates
19. Presbyterian Church of Uganda –  
Rev. David Kabaale  
Rev. Bob Gad Kalyowa  
\*Rev. Fred Kabenge
20. Presbyterian Free Church of India (PFCI)

Rev. Samit Kumar Mishra

21. Reformed Church in the US (RCUS)  
Rev. Travis Grassmid  
Elder Warren Nuss
22. Reformed Churches in Brazil  
Deacon André Barbosa de Lima
23. Reformed Churches in Indonesia  
Rev. Pila Njuka
24. Reformed Churches in South Africa  
Rev. Dr. Douw Breed  
Rev. Dr. Albert Coetsee  
\*Rev. Dr. Heinrich Zwemstra  
\*Rev. Dr. Wilbert Chipenyu (arrived later)
25. Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (liberated)  
Rev. Henk Venema  
Rev. Dr. Melle Oosterhuis
26. Reformed Churches of New Zealand  
Rev. Reinier Noppers  
Rev. Dirk van Garderen
27. Reformed Churches of Spain  
No in-person delegates
28. Reformed Presbyterian Church of India  
Prof. Dr. Mohan Chacko
29. Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland  
Rev. Dr. David Mckay (arrived later)
30. Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America  
Rev. Bruce Parnell
31. Reformed Presbyterian Church of North East India  
Rev. Huolthanglur  
Rev. Lungawiruol (Lawr) Khawbung
32. Sudanese Reformed Church  
Rev. Patrick Jok Ding Wic  
Rev. Kewy Geng Magok
33. United Reformed Churches of Congo  
Rev. Michelle Kamanda Kabongo (arrived later)
34. United Reformed Churches of North America  
Rev. John van Eyk  
Rev. Dr. Dick Moes

\*Advisor

**II. APPLYING CHURCHES**

1. Anugraha Reformed Presbyterian Church of Bangalore, India  
Rev. Edwin P. Singh
2. Evangelical Reformed Church in India  
Rev. Vijay Chonhas Minz  
Rev. Anup Dass
3. Reformed Presbyterian Church of Africa (Uganda)  
Rev. Robert Mabonga  
Deacon Tusiime Richard
4. Reformed Presbyterian Church of Central and Eastern Europe (RPCCEE)  
Rev. Imre Szoke  
Rev. Gyula Bagoly
5. Reformed Churches The Netherlands (RCN)  
Elder Jaap Vreugdenhil

**III. OBSERVER CHURCHES**

1. Free Evangelical Reformed Churches (SERK) - Germany  
Rev. Dr. Victor E. d'Assonville

**IV. OBSERVERS**

Dr. Zacharys Anger Gundu  
(Vice-Chancellor, University of Mkar, Nigeria, Connected to the NKST church (TIV))

**V. EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**

1. Corresponding Secretary  
Rev. Dr. James Visscher
2. Treasurer  
Mr. Kyle Lodder

**VI. SPEAKERS**

1. Rev. Dr. Henk van den Belt (arrived later)

**VII. Others**

1. Diaconal Committee Member - Mr. Rick Postma (arrived later)
2. Diaconal Committee Member – Rev. Gé Drayer

It was noted that due to visa complication the delegates from the United Reformed Churches of the Congo were not able to attend the conference. Rev. Dr. James Visscher briefly explained the situation for the FCSA (Free Church of Southern Africa), PCEA (Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia), and Reformed Church of Spain.



### ***ARTICLE 3 – EXECUTIVE***

Rev. Dr. Dick Moes explained the composition of the executive, noting that the executive is by appointed by the Coordinating Committee.

**Chairman:** Rev. Dr. Douw Breed as chairman on behalf of the hosting church of this ICRC

**Vice-Chairman:** Rev. Dr. Aaron Bae as vice chairman on behalf of the hosting church of the next ICRC

**Corresponding Secretary:** Rev. Dr. James Visscher

**Recording Secretary:** Rev. Dr. Karlo Janssen was appointed to replace Rev. Dr. Peter Naylor.

Rev. Dr. Dick Moes passed the chair over to Rev. Dr. Douw Breed

### ***ARTICLE 4 – ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS AND DAY SCHEDULE***

Rev. Dr. James Visscher mentioned some administrative matters:

- All were encouraged to wear their name tags for the full duration of the conference
- Costs covered by the ICRC were explained
- Financial questions are to be directed to Mr. Kyle Lodder (treasurer)
- Trip to Sanveld Mission project
- Church Reports need to be submitted

The following day schedule was adopted:

- 9:00 – 10:30 morning session - a
- 10:30 – 11:00 morning break
- 11:00 – 12:30 morning session - b
- 12:30 – 2:00 lunch break
- 2:00 – 3:30 afternoon session - a
- 3:30 – 4:00 afternoon break
- 4:00 – 5:30 afternoon session - b
- 5:30 – 7:30 evening break
- 7:30 – 9:00 evening presentation

### ***ARTICLE 5 – WORDS OF THANKS***

The Chairman, Rev. Dr. Douw Breed, thanked Rev. Dr. Dick Moes for his service in opening the ICRC and in serving the ICRC as chairman since 2017. He thanked Rev. Dr. Paul de Bruyn for his words last night during the prayer service.

*Morning break*

### ***ARTICLE 6 – REPORT OF THE CORRESPONDING SECRETARY***

The Corresponding Secretary, Rev. Dr. James Visscher, presented his report. For the full text of his report see Appendix to article 6.

Opportunity was given for discussion but not made use of.

The report was approved and received with gratitude. The chair expressed gratitude for the work of the Corresponding Secretary. Rev. Dr. L. Anthony Curto led in prayer for the executive.

### ***ARTICLE 7 – REPORT OF THE PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE***

The convenor of the Publications Committee, Rev. Dr. Karlo Janssen, presented the report (see Appendix to article 7). He explained in a little more detail the operations of the ICRC magazine, *Lux Mundi*, indicating that one printed copy of the most recent edition would be available for each church delegation.

The report was received with gratitude.

The following mandate for the Publications Committee was adopted by the Conference:

**Mandate for the Publications Committee:**

- A. *The ICRC shall be served by a facilitating committee to be known as the Publications Committee. The Publications Committee in turn will be served by a Website Subcommittee and a Magazine Subcommittee.*
- B. **The composition of these committees shall be as follows:**
1. **Publications Committee:** *a convenor, the Corresponding Secretary (ex officio) and the members of the two subcommittees*
  2. **Website Subcommittee:** *the convenor of the Publications Committee, the Corresponding Secretary (ex officio) and one further member. The webmaster serves as advisor to the Website Subcommittee.*
  3. **Magazine Subcommittee:** *the convenor of the Publications Committee and four further members representing, as much as possible, the different regions in the world and/or liaisons appointed by the facilitating committees and operating committees of the ICRC. The Corresponding Secretary serves as advisor to the Magazine Subcommittee. The Magazine Subcommittee shall function as the editorial board for the magazine and elect from its midst an editor-in-chief.*
  4. *All three committees may be expanded with advisors by the ICRC or by the Publications Committee as deemed necessary.*
- C. **The purpose of the Publications Committee** *is to facilitate the publication of materials from ICRC committees and member churches in keeping with the purposes of the ICRC (Constitution, III)*
- D. **The mandates for the Publications Committee** *are as follows:*
1. *Via the Website Subcommittee:*
    - a. *Arrange for the construction and maintenance of a website for the Conference, which shall include a list of the ICRC Member Churches (with links to the Members' websites, where possible); copies of the Constitution, Regulations, and Informational Documents; copies of the Proceedings of previous meetings of the Conference (in a form suitable and appropriate for posting on the Internet); a list of the upcoming meeting dates and venues for the major assemblies of the Member Churches; materials for upcoming meetings of the Conference; information and materials regarding Regional Conferences, including the hosting Member Church, date, and venue of upcoming Regional Conferences; and other materials which the Website Subcommittee deems appropriate (bearing in mind the nature and extent of the Conference's authority, Constitution V).*
    - b. *Develop and implement policies for the operation of the Conference's website, including a job description for the position of Webmaster, and report such to the Publishing Committee.*
    - c. *Appoint a Webmaster to labor under its oversight.*
  2. *Via the Magazine Subcommittee:*
    - a. *Publish a quarterly magazine and distribute this as efficiently and broadly as possible*
    - b. *To publish in this magazine:*
      1. *Articles from members in good standing of ICRC member churches; such articles shall be in line with the foundation and purposes of the ICRC*
      2. *Communications from ICRC committees*
      3. *Press releases of ICRC Regional Conferences*
      4. *Announcements regarding broadest assemblies of ICRC member churches*
      5. *Announcements from institutions (Missional, Diaconal, Theological) that are in line with the foundation and purposes of the ICRC*
    - c. *Develop and implement policies for the operation of the Conference's magazine and report such to the Publications Committee.*
    - d. *Appoint a layout-editor to labor under its oversight.*
  4. *To facilitate further means of communication as need is felt and opportunity arises.*
  5. *To submit annual reports to the Coordinating Committee and a quadrennial report to the*

- Corresponding Secretary at least six months before the next ICRC.*
6. *To work within its allotted budget, keeping to the following:*
- a. *The Publications Committee will submit a financial statement and a budget to each ICRC for the previous and upcoming four-year period.*
  - b. *The Publications Committee will submit an annual financial statement to the Coordinating Committee.*
  - c. *For costs that exceed those budgeted by more than 20%, the Publications Committee will seek the approval of the Executive Committee.*

Discussion took place on the function and role of the ICRC magazine, *Lux Mundi*.  
Rev. Dirk van Garderen led in prayer for the Publications Committee.

### ***ARTICLE 8 – APPOINTMENT OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND PANELS***

The following Advisory Committees were appointed with a view to the business of ICRC 2022:

- #1 – Credentials  
Heinrich Zwemstra, Albert Coetsee
- #2 – Finance  
Kyle Lodder, William Middelkoop, Fanuel Anyul Otieno
- #3 – Press Release  
Karlo Janssen
- #4 – ICRC 2026  
Aaron Bae, HaeShin Yoo, Heon Soo Kim, Jeff Temple, Yonson Dethan
- #5 – Application New Members
  - Europe – RPCCEE & RCN  
Pieter Boon (convenor), Samit Mishra, Gerald Procee
  - Africa – RPCA (Uganda)  
Bob Tarullo, Patrick Malphrus (convenor), Gé Drayer
  - India – ARPCBI, ECI  
Patrick Jok Wic, Travis Grassmid (convenor), Reinier Noppers
- #6 – Church Reports  
Ben Glasser (convenor), Graeme Craig, Lungawiruol Khawbung

Appointment of panel discussion moderators and members:

- For Mohan Chacko's paper:  
Heinrich Zwemstra (moderator), Brian de Vries, Andrew Nugteren, John van Eyk, Bruce Parnell
- For Douw Breed's paper:  
Dick Moes (moderator), Wilbur Chipenyu, Joseph Matei, Tony Curto, Willem Jan van der Toorn
- For Henk van den Belt's paper:  
David Mackay (moderator), Albert Coetsee, Alistair Wilson, Heon Soo Kim, Eric Moerdyk

### ***ARTICLE 9 – REGIONAL CONFERENCE REPORT: AFRICA***

Rev. Fred Kabenge reported on the Regional Conference in Africa. He described the first two conferences that were held, in August 2015 and (via video conferencing) in July 2021, noting who attended and outlining which speakers spoke on what topics. The full report can be found in Appendix to article 9. The report was received with gratitude.

Opportunity for discussion was given and made use of. Discussion focused in particular on the presence of Islam in Africa and how Christians interact with them. Rev. Dr. Brian de Vries led in prayer for the Regional Conference of Reformed Churches in Africa.

*Lunch break  
Reconvene at 2:10pm*

### ***ARTICLE 10 – MOTION TO TERMINATE RCN(L) MEMBERSHIP***

The chairman explained the process for dealing with the matter of the membership of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (liberated) (RCN(I) aka Gkv) in the ICRC, noting that the vote would be per church and by a public “yes”, “no”, or “abstain”.

The Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC) made the following motion:

To terminate the membership of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (liberated) (RCN(I) or Gkv), as its decision on women in office no longer qualifies it for membership in the ICRC as per Constitution Art. IV.4 which states:

*“.. [T]ermination of membership in the Conference shall be by a two-thirds majority vote of the delegations of the Member Churches, each Member Church having one vote, whenever the Conference concludes that the Member Church, in its doctrine and/or practice (which includes the ordination of persons to the offices of minister or ruling elder contrary to the rule prescribed in Scripture, cf., Belgic Confession, Article 30), is no longer in agreement with the Basis...”*

The motion was seconded by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC).

On behalf of the CanRC, Rev. Dr. Karlo Janssen spoke in favour of the motion. On behalf of the OPC, Mr. Mark Bube spoke in favour of the motion. On behalf of the RCN(I), Rev. Henk Venema spoke against the motion. Discussion followed, with all speakers who sought the floor speaking in favour of the motion. This discussion was closed when no one sought the floor to speak. A question was asked as to the implications of terminating membership. Rev. Dr. James Visscher indicated it would mean the RCN(I) could no longer vote and no longer have its members serve on ICRC committees. RCN(I) delegates could still attend the ICRC as “Other Guests” and (by a two-thirds majority vote) be given the privilege of the floor.

The conference was adjourned for 15 minutes to allow delegations time to discuss among themselves how they would vote.

A question was asked as to what not adopting the motion would imply: would the suspension of the RCN(I) also be lifted? Rev. Dr. Douw Breed indicated the suspension would not be automatically lifted; the question of lifting or continuing the suspension would be a next item of business.

The chairman called upon the member churches present and in good standing to express their vote by saying “yes”, “no” or “abstain”. The final tally indicated 29 votes in favour, 0 votes against, and 1 abstention. The motion was declared adopted and, with a heavy heart, the ICRC noted that the membership of the RCN(I), one of its founding members, had been terminated.

Rev. Dr. James Visscher led in prayer.

*Advisory Committee and Interchurch meetings  
Dinner break*

*The evening was opened with the singing of Psalm 134.*

### ***ARTICLE 11 – INTRODUCTION OF ARPC BANGALORE, INDIA***

Rev. Edwin P. Singh introduced the Anugraha Reformed Presbyterian Church of Bangalore, India.

*The ARPCBI is a product of the work of Mission to the World begun in 2008. Currently there are 23 congregations. We are in the southern part of India. States are divided along the lines of language groups, and we work in several states. We have*

*18 ordained ministers, 26 ruling elders, and 15 deacons. In India there are many Christian outreach projects, the Prosperity Gospel is strong. We are seeking membership in the ICRC to strengthen our union with the global Reformed community. We also seek good advice in our mission to reach out.*

Opportunity was given for questions and was made use of.

### ***ARTICLE 12 – INTRODUCTION OF RPCA UGANDA***

Rev. Robert Mabonga introduced the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Africa Uganda.

*Our church has 8 local congregations divided over 2 presbyteries. The church is served by several ordained ministers and by assistant ministers. We also have some church plants in western Uganda. We have contact with some ICRC member churches, and have been through the process of becoming members of the ICRC. We hold to the small and large catechism, and hold to the Trinity. We have come here to seek advice from others in outreach. We want to encourage our pastors to work. We have been recommended for membership in the ICRC by the URCC and PCU and pray that you will welcome us.*

Opportunity was given for questions, though not made use of.

### ***ARTICLE 13 – PAPER PRESENTATION***

The Chairman had Rev. Dr. Mohan Chacko briefly introduce himself.

Rev. Dr. Chacko then presented his paper entitled: *Seminaries: Centres for Theological Education, Ministry Training or Spiritual Formation? An Integrated Approach*. For the text of the paper (not presented in whole) see Appendix to article 13.

Opportunity was given to raise questions for the panel to consider, and good use was made of this. It was noted that the panel discussion was the second item of business for the next day.

### ***ARTICLE 14 – CLOSE OF THE DAY***

Rev. Samit Kumar Mishra, a former student of Dr. Mohan Chacko, thanked Dr. Chacko for the presentation of his paper and for showing his passion for the church. He also expressed thanks to those who introduced their churches earlier in the evening. He then led in closing prayer.

*Adjournment for the night*

## **Day 2 Friday, 14 October 2022**

### ***ARTICLE 15 – OPENING OF THE DAY***

Rev. Dr. Albert Coetsee led in opening devotions. He led in a prayer for illumination and read Scripture from Deuteronomy 3:23-29. For the text of his devotion, see Appendix to article 15. Rev. Dr. Coetsee led in prayer. The Conference sang the hymn “Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise”.

The Chairman thanked Rev. Dr. Coetsee for his message.

### ***ARTICLE 16 – THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE***

Rev. Dr. L. Anthony Curto presented the Theological Education Committee. See Appendix to article 16 for the text of the report.

Opportunity was given for discussion and made good use of. One thing noted was the limitation of the mandate of the Theological Education Committee: it can only interact with seminaries as recommended or approved by the member churches.

The following recommendations were adopted by the Conference:

1. *That Mandate A re Consultation continue to have the attention of TEC:*
  - a. *Arrange for a consultation among representatives of the ICRC Member Churches for the purposes of exchanging information on current and planned programs of Report of TEC to Namibia 2022 theological education for their ministers, discussing issues of mutual concern, and exploring ways for possible bi- or multi-lateral cooperation in theological education among the Member Churches.*
2. *That Mandate B re the ICRC Seminary Directory continue to have the attention of TEC:*
  - b. *Gather information regarding and distribute a booklet summarizing (by both Member Church and nation) the institutions of theological education that are operated (or approved) by the ICRC Member Churches for distribution to the ICRC Member Churches through the ICRC website and presentation to the next meeting of the Conference.*
3. *That, regarding Mandate E, re a list of qualified instructors, the TEC communicate with the ICRC TEC seminary representatives on a regular basis to ascertain upcoming course and professorial needs (with logistical details) and to communicate such needs to other seminaries.*
4. *That, in connection with Mandate G, the ICRC agree to a budget of \$15,000 USD for the work of the Theological Education Committee.*
5. *That it be noted that all present members of the TEC are willing to serve on the committee again, and that Gerhard H. Visscher, if reappointed, should be appointed as a regular member rather than as an advisor.*
6. *That thanksgiving be expressed for the considerable labours of Rev. Pieter VanderMeyden as past secretary of the Theological Education Committee.*

Note: Mandates A, B, E, and G are those decided to by ICRC 2017 and can be found in the report to the ICRC 2022.

Rev. Dr. Aaron Bae led in prayer for the work of the Theological Education Committee.

### ***ARTICLE 17 – PANEL DISCUSSION FOLLOWING DR. CHACKO’S PAPER***

Rev. Dr. Mohan Chacko, Rev. Heinrich Zwemstra, Rev. Dr. Brian de Vries, Rev. Andrew Nugteren, Rev. John van Eyk, and Rev. Bruce Parnell took their seats as panelists for the discussion following Rev. Dr. Chacko’s paper. Rev. Heinrich Zwemstra moderated the discussion.

Discussion focused, among others, on the following matters:

- The academic (mind) and/or spiritual (heart) and/or ministerial (hand) character of theological training in our churches. It was observed that Reformed theological training tends to lean towards academia, though there is a shift to seeking more balance. A strong case was made for ensuring that theological students do not grow big heads and small bodies but are in tune with the pastoral application of their learning.
- The relationship between seminaries and church: should a seminary be run by a church or be independent of a church? A strong case was made for church supervision of theological training.

#### *Morning break*

- Models for theological education. A model used in Africa by Mukhanyo Seminary was described in detail as an example of how academia need not be abandoned where challenges exist.
- The importance of academic training in seminaries.
- Whether spiritual maturity is a concern of the seminary or the church. A case was made for the

seminary playing a role also for those already in active ministry via refreshment courses. Local churches should do a good job of vetting young men for training, a seminary is often better positioned and more qualified to provide spiritual guidance.

- Preparing students sufficiently for the challenges they will face in the ministry.
- Should propriety be given in the seminary to vocational skills? It was noted that on this score there is often a partnership between seminaries and local churches.

Rev. Bruce Parnell expressed thanks to Rev. Dr. Mohan Chacko for his stimulating paper. He then led in prayer

### **ARTICLE 18 – APPOINTMENTS**

With a view to the formulation of new mandates to be adopted later by the ICRC 2022, the following arrangements were made for committee appointments of the ICRC:

**Theological Education Committee:** Douw Breed and Tony Curto will come with a proposal.

**Diaconal Committee:** David Nakhla (convenor), Pieter Boon, Rick Postma, Gé Drayer, Chris Boersma, Rick Postma, Aaron Bae + an Australasian representative to be sought by the diaconal committee.

**Missions committee:** Mark Bube (convenor), Dirk Boersma, Arjan de Visser, Patric Jok, Yonson Dethan, Richard Bout.

**Regional Conference Committee:** Reinier Noppers (convenor; Asia), Laurens den Butter (Europe), Fred Kabange (Africa), Steve Swets (North America).

**Coordinating Committee:** Mark Bube (coordinator), Karlo Janssen (corresponding secretary), James Visscher (corresponding secretary, emeritus), Kyle Lodder (treasurer), Pieter Boon (diaconal), Douw Breed (TEC), Reinier Noppers (Regional Committee), Aaron Bae (vice chair).

**Publications Committee:** to be decided later this conference.

Rev. Dr. Douw Breed led in prayer.

*Lunch break*

*Following the lunch break the conference sang Psalm 133.*

### **ARTICLE 19 – MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION: INDIA**

On behalf of Advisory Committee 5: India, Rev. Travis Grassmid reported on the membership application of the Anugraha (Grace) Reformed Presbyterian Churches (ARPC) in India (Bangalore). For the report see Appendix to article 19.

Upon recommendation of the committee, reading “That the application for membership of the Anugraha Reformed Presbyterian Churches be approved”, duly moved and seconded, ICRC 2022, voting by church, decided unanimously to receive the ARPCBI as members.

Advisory Committee 5: India reported on the membership application of the Evangelical Reformed Churches in India. Upon recommendation of the committee, reading “That the application for membership of the Anugraha Reformed Presbyterian Churches be approved”, duly moved and seconded, ICRC 2022, voting by church, decided unanimously to receive the ERCI (India) as members.

Rev. Gerald Procee led in prayer.

The chairman gave thanks to the advisory committee for its work.

*Committee and Interchurch meetings*

*Dinner break*

*Following the dinner break the Conference sang the hymn “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”.*

### **ARTICLE 20 – INTRODUCTION OF THE RPCCEE**

A welcome was extended to Dr. Henk van den Belt who had just arrived.

Rev. Imre Szoke introduced the Reformed Presbyterian Churches in Central and Eastern Europe

*The RPCCEE is a small domination: 20 churches and 16 pastors. Our churches are located in Hungary, Romania (Transylvania), and Ukraine. We minister to Hungarian speaking people in these countries, as well as Romanians and Gypsy peoples. We hold to the Second Helvetic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, and Westminster Standards. Our church began in 1998 when our pastors were ousted from the Hungarian Reformed Church. Our history is outlined in an article to be published in Lux Mundi. Our first time at an ICRC was in 2001. It took us 20 years to apply for membership as we had to set ourselves up. There are now Hungarian churches which have actively professing members, are mostly self-sufficient, and are Bible believing. We have our own publication house, translating materials into Hungarian. We look forward to finally being members of the ICRC.*

Opportunity was given for questions and was made use of.

### **ARTICLE 21 – MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION: EUROPE**

On behalf of Advisory Committee 5: Europe, Rev. Dr. Pieter Boon reported on the membership application of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Central and Eastern Europe. For the report see Appendix to article 21.

Upon recommendation of the committee, reading “That the application for membership of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Central and Eastern Europe be approved”, duly moved and seconded, ICRC 2022, voting by church, decided unanimously to receive the RPCCEE as members.

### **ARTICLE 22 – INTRODUCTION OF RPCA IN UGANDA**

Rev. Robert Mabonga introduced the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Africa (Uganda).

*The RPCA (Uganda) longs to be a member of the ICRC. We are young, have only existed since 2008, and we are small, just 8 churches with 5 ministers, and one church plant. We face many challenges, such as the training of ministers, and need ICRC churches to support us.*

Opportunity was given for questions and was made use of.

### **ARTICLE 23 – MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION: AFRICA**

On behalf of Advisory Committee 5: Africa, Rev. Patrick Malphrus reported on the membership application of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Africa (Uganda). For the report see [Appendix to article 23](#).

Upon recommendation of the committee, reading “That the application for membership of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Africa (Uganda) be approved”, duly moved and seconded, ICRC 2022, voting by church, decided unanimously to receive the RPCA (Uganda) as members.

### **ARTICLE 24 – PAPER PRESENTATION**

Rev. Dr. Douw Breed then presented his paper entitled: *Models or Alternate Strategies for Ministry Training*. For the text of the paper see [Appendix to article 24](#).<sup>1</sup>

As vicing chair Rev. Dr. James Visscher expressed thanks for the presentation of the paper.

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<sup>1</sup> To be released in the course of November 2022.



### ***ARTICLE 25 – CLOSE OF THE DAY***

Rev. Dr. James Visscher made some announcements regarding tours on Saturday and the worship services on the Lord's Day. He then led in closing prayer.

*The conference adjourned until Monday morning 9:00am*

*On the Saturday, delegates had an opportunity to visit the Sanveld Mission Project of the RCSA in east Namibia. On the Sunday morning delegates attended worship with the two local RCSA congregations in Windhoek. On the Sunday evening a church service was conducted in the Resort.*

## **Day 3 Monday, 17 October 2022**

### ***ARTICLE 26 – OPENING OF THE DAY***

The Conference sang Psalm 36. Gratitude was expressed by the Chairman for the interaction of ICRC delegates with members of the Windhoek congregations. Gratitude was also expressed for the preachers on the day before (Rev. Dr. L. Anthony Curto, Rev. Dr. Karlo Janssen, Rev. John van Eyk), as well as those leading devotions during the Conference (Rev. Dr. Dick Moes, Rev. Dr. Albert Coetsee, Rev. Henning Venter, Rev. Dr. Heinrich Zwemstra).

Rev. Henning Venter led in opening devotions. He read Scripture from Revelation 18. For the text of his devotion, see Appendix to article 26. Rev. Henning Venter led in prayer.

The Chairman thanked Rev. Henning Venter for his message.

### ***ARTICLE 27 – REV. DR. JAMES VISSCHER***

Following some administrative announcements, Rev. Dr. Karlo Janssen informed the conference that last Saturday Rev. Dr. James Visscher could celebrate fifty years in the Ministry of the Word. Rev. Dr. James Visscher has been involved with the ICRC since its inception in 1982 and has served as its Corresponding Secretary since 2013. He was congratulated with this milestone and gratitude was expressed for his services, especially in interchurch relations. Rev. Dr. Karlo Janssen led in prayer.

### ***ARTICLE 28 – WELCOME***

A welcome was extended to Elder Michel Kamanda Kabongo from the Congo. The delegation from Congo had been troubled by visa issues, of the four delegates only one finally made it into Namibia.

### ***ARTICLE 29 – DIACONAL COMMITTEE***

Rev. Dirk van Garderen presented the members of the Diaconal Committee and its mandated activities. He spoke briefly on the widow's copper coins (Luke 21) and pointed out how the ICRC in the picture of the world can only contribute but a little. Yet the Lord Jesus notices.

Rev. Dr. Pieter Boon then presented the report. See Appendix to article 29 for the text of the report. He noted how the committee is revising its mandate to make it executable by volunteers; the current mandate would require full time staff. He pointed specifically to the statement crafted on the diaconal task of the church and urged that this not just be filed but spread in the churches. Gratitude was expressed for Rev. Dirk van Garderen's many years of service as chairman of the committee and he was wished well in retirement. Gratitude was also expressed for the service of br. Ko Serier of the RCN(I), who has been replaced already by Rev. Gé Drayer.

Opportunity was given for discussion. The Chairman pointed out that there are limits to what the ICRC can do, both when it comes to capacity and when it comes to the character of the ICRC as a network rather than an organization.

The following mandate was adopted by the Conference:

**Mandate of the Diaconal Committee:**

1. Work towards a **common understanding** of what a fully orbed Reformed diaconal ministry ought to look like, confer with ICRC member churches on such an understanding, and challenge them to pursue establishing such ministry in their churches.
2. Encourage and facilitate **networking** among representatives of the diaconal agencies/ministries of the ICRC member churches for the purposes of exchanging information on the work of deacons locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally, discussing issues of mutual concern, and exploring ways for possible cooperation in ministries of mercy among the member churches.
3. **Bring focus to the diaconal ministry at ICRC conferences** by employing various formats (presentation of papers, round-table discussions, information table, video presentation, etc.) to encourage networking and present material that has been collected and/or developed.
4. In response to the request of a member church in case of a **major disaster**, identify entities connected with member churches, working in the area and/or responding to the disaster and provide contact information. This committee serves to facilitate networking and does not serve as a source or channel of funding for member churches.

The other material in the report, though not formally endorsed in every detail by the ICRC, will be appended to this mandate.

Rev. Bob Gad Kalyowa led in prayer.

*Morning break*

**ARTICLE 30 – PANEL DISCUSSION**

Rev. Dr. Dick Moes expressed gratitude to Rev. Dr. Douw Breed for his speech last Friday evening. He then introduced the panel, Rev. Dr. Wilbert Chipenyu, Rev. Dr. L. Anthony Curto, Rev. Willem Jan van der Toorn, and Rev. Joseph Mutei. He explained how the panel would interact with the speech and with questions from the floor.

*Rev. Dr. Wilbert Chipenyu: the presentation challenged all of us. North-West University (NWU) in South Africa was originally a Christian university and is now state run. Something similar has happened in Scotland. This is a wake-up call for us all. We should have complete control over the education of our students. Regarding contextualization: it is necessary for God's people to be taught in the way they understand it best. So there is a triangulation of what, how, and who to teach. The "what" is generic. The "how" is determined by context, where worldview and culture are to be taken note of.*

*Rev. Dr. L. Anthony Curto: I appreciated the emphasis on the fear of the Lord and trust in the Lord. All theological education is about communion and union with God through Christ. All three formations (academic, spiritual, ministerial) are present in the model presented, but which has the primary place in what manner? For example, can you have spiritual formation through Internet? Not if it is the primary place for spiritual formation. But if it is secondary, because the church is primary, then it is less of a concern.*

*Rev. Willem Jan van der Toorn: there was overlap with Rev. Dr. Chacko's paper,*

*consistency from the first to the second paper. I appreciated your emphasis on the fear of the LORD as the primary concern of Theological education. Proposal 2 troubles me somewhat. Mission is important, but the sheep also need to be fed. If everything is mission driven, the primary task of the minister (cf. John 21) can be overlooked.*

*Rev. Joseph Mutei: In the world, many pastors are actually not trained in theology. I appreciate the paper, the proposed models were helpful and applicable. I will borrow some of them, because they are workable. It should be realized though, that all models have pros and cons, and all can be helpful. The question is whether we can leverage what we have and make it work. Some places will not have the resources to get the ideal form of education. I suggest that a blended model would be best: do the more theoretical courses in a class setting and do the more practical courses on site in a church setting.*

The following points were raised during general discussion:

- The manner of teaching: the teacher imparts knowledge to students. One can focus just on theological education (in which case online is fine) or focus on the creation of a university. A university creates community and then becomes a means for mission.
- What is exactly meant by contextualization? There is a suspect way to use this term. – In our discussion, it refers to the manner in which education is done. For example, the San people do not work with writing, and thus the context determines a focus on the oral. For Africa, the theology needs to interact with the context: Islam, Prosperity Gospel, secularism.
- The necessity of accreditation for theological education. It is important for our education to be transparent and public. There can be a situation in which we may say, let governments be. – However, it is noteworthy that when government gets involved in universities, the universities take on the colour of the world. In the North American context, we have accreditation run through a Reformed/Presbyterian association, rather than seek civil accreditation. – In Africa, there is a push for accreditation and for maintaining standards. The church should offer the best, as it was in Medieval Europe. Standards are important, but we have to make sure that education can be offered to all whom God calls to Kingdom service. – Besides university there should always be the possibility for people gifted in a special way to serve. – We have to watch out for interference that is not proper.
- Reformed churches have always believed in the academic character of the ministry. In the UK theology departments have become religious faculties. Theological colleges even find themselves “untied” from university; theology is being squeezed out of academic studies. The question is: why do we want university accreditation? The world doesn’t care about the degrees we have. For pastoral ministry, if you preach the truth and pastor faithfully, then your people are fed and God is honoured. God’s people are not concerned about accreditation. And the number of degrees you have does not make you a better pastor. Godliness is important (as the paper emphasized). Increasingly the church will have to forget about universities.
- The opinion was expressed that theological training should be answerable to the church, not to independent boards but to the courts of the church.
- Accreditation is context determined. Accreditation can be by the state, but also by associations for a specific purpose. In Scotland we have been pressed to take different points of view seriously and present them accurately in theology classes. I have never found them to say that we could not teach a certain thing, though I recognize that in a different context it may be otherwise.
- Accreditation is also helpful to allow educators to move around the world, serving the missional task of the church. It is easier to enter certain places with a recognized academic degree than simply as a pastor. A difficulty we have is that we cannot tell at the start of someone’s theological education who will serve in pastoral ministry and who will go on into education. If there is no accreditation at the start, it may hinder progressing on in studies with

a view to mission work.

- We need to be focused on what kind of accreditation we seek and from who. Ultimately it comes down to the church and world, there is a polarisation (cf. Rev. 18). We don't look to the world for applause. Accreditation in Africa is an opportunity, a means to an end, so we have a voice in society. That said, Mukhanyo is planning for the day when we will lose our accreditation. While we can and where we can we live by standards presented to us. But when we lose it, a body like the ICRC becomes very important for us. Maybe we could set standards for each other?
- Accreditation is a big challenge in Indonesia. We cannot grant degrees if we are not accredited. My college has 4 lecturers to grant a masters degree, the government demands that we have 6. Something needs to come out of our discussion: could the Theological Education Committee create a meeting of theology educators that allow us to assist each other in a practical way, e.g. sponsoring our students to study overseas and get proper degrees?
- Accreditation is a matter of context. In Uganda, you cannot grant a degree without accreditation. In Uganda, for a church to be registered with the government, the pastor needs to have a recognized diploma. In Uganda if you graduate any student in an unaccredited institution, you are asking the government to come after you. We seek accreditation, but we do not want to be a university controlled by the government.
- In society, airline pilots are accredited not by governments but by the manufacturers of airplanes. Let the primary accreditation be from the churches, and anything secondary from the government. If the secondary bites the primary, then focus on the primary. Given how institutions of education pop up like mushrooms in the African context, accreditation is to be appreciated.
- It maybe thought that Africans have to be taught by stories. Not so. It would be good to have the same academic standards among us all.

Rev. Dr. Douw Breed was given a chance to respond to what was raised. He explained how he struggled as a curator / governor with NWU regarding theological education. It is coming to a point where the theological school of the RCSA will break ties with the NWU, to ensure that the theological school is protected. – When it comes models, handing the spiritual just to the churches is not wise, for it quickly goes astray. – We need to be more mission minded, but I agree we should not swing too far and loose sight of taking care of the sheep. – The discussion on accreditation has been very important. The Theological Education Committee might have to do some study on this topic, for that is a reason for the ICRC. – In Potchefstroom we have created a private company to facilitate online learning by theology professors. Maybe a group of churches in a country could look after this.

Rev. Dr. Wilbert Chipenyu led in prayer. The Conference sang the hymn “Take My Life And Let It Be”.

*Lunch break*

### ***ARTICLE 31 – REPORT OF THE TREASURER***

Mr. Kyle Lodder presented the Treasurer's Report. See Appendix to article 31. This report included the budget put together with the help of Advisory Committee 2. Mr. Lodder pointed out that he did not yet have all the information needed for the assessment totals. However, the data yet missing would not likely change the amounts to a great extent.

Opportunity was given for questions and was made use of.

The review report was received for information.

Upon motion, duly seconded, Mr. Kyle Lodder was discharged with respect to his responsibilities for the past conference period (2017-2022).

The budget for the next conference was approved.

The formula for assessments was approved and thus the assessment document was approved in principle.

Rev. Pila Njuka led in prayer.

### **ARTICLE 32 – APPOINTMENTS**

Rev. Dr. James Visscher presented the following names for appointments:

**Diaconal Committee:** David Nakhla (convenor), Pieter Boon, Rick Postma, Aaron Bae, Gé Drayer, Chris Boersema, Lungawiruol Khawbung.

**Missions Committee:** Mark Bube (convenor), Dirk Boersema, Arjan de Visser, Patrick Jok, Yonson Dethan, Richard Bout, Hyosang Kwon.

**Theological Education Committee:** Douw Breed (convenor), Gerhard Visscher, Tony Curto, Jim Beeke, Matthew Ebenezer, Philip Scheepers, Kim Jae Yoon (alternate: Mahon Chacko) .

**Regional Conference Convenors:** Reinier Noppers (convenor; Asia), Laurens den Butter (Europe), Fred Kabange (Africa), Steve Swets (North America).

**Publishing Committee:** Karlo Janssen (convenor), Ben Glaser (North America), Chris Boersema (South America), Albert Coetsee (Southern Africa), Paul Bukonya (Sub Sahara Africa), Lungawiruol Khawbung (India), Heon Soo Kim (East Asia), Sjirk Bajema (Pacific), William Middelkoop (Europe), Frank Ezinga (website), James Visscher (website).

**Treasurer:** Kyle Lodder.

**Coordinator:** Mark Bube.

**Corresponding Secretary:** Karlo Janssen.

**Recording Secretary:** Albert Coetsee.

Appointments were made by the Conference as presented.

*Committee and Interchurch meetings*

*Dinner break*

*Following the dinner break the Conference sang Psalm 98.*

### **ARTICLE 33 – INTRODUCTION OF FERC IN GERMANY**

Rev. Dr. Victor E. d'Assonville introduced the Free Evangelical Reformed Churches in Germany (German abbreviation: SERK).

*The true Gospel is to be proclaimed to lead the nations into obedience: thus both Luther in his 62<sup>nd</sup> thesis and Calvin at the close of his Romans commentary. The FERC in Germany is found in Germany, where most Christians (53% of the population) are nominal (1 – 4% attending worship regularly). Germany is the geographic hub of Europe and thus is of strategic importance for outreach into the continent. Christianity is waning in Germany. The “Free” in FERC is to distinguish it from other Reformed denominations in Germany (those with historical ties to the Heidelberg Catechism). While the FERC is new in the church order sense of the term, it is the confessional continuation of the Reformed Churches of the sixteenth century. The word “evangelical” in the name means “protestant” in the German context (literally: “Gospel”). The FERC of Heidelberg was founded in 2010 with Presbyterian support from the USA. The FERC adopted the Three Forms of Unity. In 2017 the FERC Hannover was instituted in Hannover, with help from South Africa and The Netherlands and under the oversight of the FERC Heidelberg. The FERC have a sister church relation with the RCN, and contact with the CRCN, and confessionally Reformed churches in Berlin (EPCEW) and Austria & Switzerland (Evangelical Reformed Churches Westminster Confession). Contact exists with other churches in various parts of the world. The FERC have a direct relation with the Reformed Theological Seminary in Heidelberg. RTS Heidelberg graduates know they will become missionaries in their own country. We hope to plant another two or three Reformed churches in the next 10 years. We seek your prayers, ask you to encourage your members, if they come to Europe, to contact us, and, as we are small churches,*

*to provide financial support. Recently we participated in a meeting in Romania called Reformation in Europe (Central and Eastern Europe) with pastors present from Hungary, Romania, Italy, Turkey, Moldova, Germany.*

Opportunity was given for questions and was not made use of.

### **ARTICLE 34 – INTRODUCTION OF RCN**

Elder Jaap Vreugdenhil introduced the Reformed Churches The Netherlands.

*A minister in our churches, Rev. Aalzen de Jager (chairman of the ICRC 1993) passes on his greetings. There is pain in this speech, as I introduce to you the RCN, a federation of churches in The Netherlands seeking to be faithful to Scripture as confessed in the Reformed confessions. Twenty years ago, most of our members, and all of our ministers, were a member of the RCN(I). In the last decades an enormous shift occurred in the RCN(I). Women in office is one issue. But that change in the RCN(I) was preceded by other developments. Due to those developments in the RCN(I), concerned members, including a few ministers, elders and deacons, left those churches already in 2003, and that is how the RCN started. Its formal organization was in 2009. Many of our members testify they left the RCN(I) because they found the preaching in the RCN too human-centred.*

*Currently the RCN is only a small denomination, with about 1500 members in the whole country in 11 congregations. The last 5 years the average grow was more than one congregation and one minister per year. Some congregations have two or even three meeting places, so every Sunday morning and afternoon we have 17 worship services with 17 pulpits. These congregations are served by only seven ministers. About five retired ministers are still healthy enough to preach more or less frequently, but still there are more pulpits than ministers to fill them. In my own congregation in Apeldoorn, about half the services we have no minister to preach, and instead a sermon is read. Many of us were used to the GkV as it was about 20 years ago: a big denomination with a lot of institutions, such as an own seminary, reformed schools, Bible study organizations, magazines and so on. Now we are about 80 times smaller, and we have lost those institutions. We are struggling how to organize church life; how to use a church order that was designed for a bigger group of churches; and so on. Part of the heritage from the RCN(I) we still use with thankfulness. We use the Psalter-Hymnal adopted by the RCN(I) some 40 years ago. The same holds for the confessions, liturgical forms and church order. The RCN is not the only church to come out of the RCN(I), there is also the TRC (aka DGK) that came out in 2003. The RCN and TRC are in a process of merging. The TRC is thankful for our application for membership in the ICRC. We also have contact with other Reformed churches in The Netherlands, have a sister church relationship with the FERC, and have contact with churches similar to our own in Canada, South Africa, and Australia. Our prayer is that we remain strong in the face of a quickly secularizing society in The Netherlands.*

Opportunity was given for questions and was not made use of.

### **ARTICLE 35 – MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION: EUROPE**

On behalf of Advisory Committee 5: Europe, Rev. Pieter Boon reported on the membership application of the Reformed Churches The Netherlands (RCN). For the report see [Appendix to article 35](#).

Opportunity was given for questions and made use of.

Upon recommendation of the committee, reading “That the application for membership of the Reformed Churches The Netherlands (RCN) be approved”, duly moved and seconded, ICRC 2022, voting by church, decided unanimously to receive the RCN as members.

Rev. Willem Jan van der Toorn led in prayer.

### ***ARTICLE 36 – PAPER PRESENTATION***

Rev. Dr. James Visscher introduced Rev. Dr. Henk van den Belt, professor at the Free University in Amsterdam. He explained how originally Rev. Dr. Arnold Huijgen was to have spoken, but for various reasons was not able to come to the Conference. Thankfulness was expressed for the willingness of Dr. Van den Belt to take his place.

Dr. Van den Belt then presented his paper entitled: *The Authority of the Scriptures in Diverse Situations and Ethical Contexts*. For the text of the paper see [Appendix to article 36](#).

The chairman expressed thanks for the presentation of the paper.

### ***ARTICLE 37 – CLOSE OF THE DAY***

Elder Mark Bube expressed thanks to the speaker for opening up the topic and giving the conference lots to think about. He then led in closing prayer.

*Adjournment for the night*

## **Day 4 Tuesday, 18 October 2022**

### ***ARTICLE 38 – OPENING OF THE DAY***

The Conference sang Psalm 25:2,4,6 (Genevan Psalter). Rev. Dr. Heinrich Zwemstra led in opening devotions. He prayed for enlightenment and read Scripture from 1 Peter 2:3-13. For the text of his devotion, see [Appendix to article 38](#). Rev. Dr. Zwemstra led in prayer.

The chairman thanked Rev. Dr. Zwemstra for his message.

### ***ARTICLE 39 – THANK YOU***

On behalf of the ICRC 2022, Rev. Dr. James Visscher expressed thanks to Mr. Christo de Jager, a member of a Windhoek RCSA and employed with the Windhoek Country Club Resort, for all his services prior and during the Conference, making sure all things went smoothly. An ESV Study Bible was given to Mr. De Jager as thank you gift.

Rev. Dr. Visscher made some announcements regarding travel arrangements.

### ***ARTICLE 40 – PANEL DISCUSSION***

The Chairman outlined the procedure for the panel discussion this morning.

Rev. Dr. Alistair Wilson expressed gratitude to Rev. Dr. Henk van den Belt for his speech last evening. The panel consisted of Rev. Eric Moerdijk, Rev. Dr. Albert Coetsee, and Prof. Rev. Heon Soo Kim (Rev. Dr. David McKay had left the Conference already). Rev. Moerdijk led in opening prayer.

*Rev. Dr. Albert Coetsee: A number of things are positive, such as the role of the Holy Spirit not only in inspiration but also in illumination. Positive too is the encouragement to read Scripture as it presents itself. But how then does Scripture present itself? At the heart of your discussion is hermeneutics. There is the question of what texts are used as hermeneutical keys (e.g. using Romans or Sermon on the Mount; Pentecostals use Acts). I would argue that some hermeneutical lenses are clearer than others. Just as one uses clearer texts to understand less clear texts, the same should be true for hermeneutics. I believe this allows us to defend the use of a*

certain hermeneutical lens in preference to another. Second, in hermeneutics we distinguish between prescriptive and descriptive texts. For example, take your reference to OT prophetesses, which is descriptive, and NT texts such as 1Tim 2 and 1Cor 14, which are prescriptive. Finally, I am concerned about the danger that at the end of the day things become relative.

Rev. Eric Moerdijk: I too appreciate the thought-provoking speech. It is good to be encouraged to ponder our hermeneutical filters. I appreciate your commitment to the Scripture as the final word. I would like to focus on the weight given to general revelation. In your dissertation you stress the work of the Holy Spirit more, it seems that general revelation gets more weight here. The way, for example you deal with same sex attraction. Your emphasis on the need for compassion is good. But what science is true? Is there indeed genetic proof for same sex attraction? While the science may not lie, the gatherers and interpreters of science are liars by nature (e.g. Romans 3). We note also that great men of God can be naïve (as in the reference to Brakel). I wonder if European people are too naïve when it comes to science.

Prof. Rev. Heon Soo Kim: I also appreciate the thought-provoking paper. The lecture reminded me of a McDonalds hamburger: bread on the outside and meat and vegetables of choice on the inside. The outside layers are a Reformed understanding of Scripture and a call back to the Reformation. I have a comment on dividing “Word” from “Spirit”: that is indeed an issue in later times. However, in the *Institutes* and in Reformed confessions, Word and Spirit are mentioned in the context of preaching God’s Word; if that fact is emphasized more the argument on the *viva vox dei* (living voice of God) would be more convincing. A first question: you suggest we fight post-modernism with pre-modern weapons, looking at the pre-modern approach to Scripture; what would you advise those who prefer to just stick with the modernist Herman Bavinck (as happens often in Korea)? A second question: Calvin is in the bread of the hamburger (beginning and end) but not in the patty (the centre). Why do not reference Calvin when considering women in office or church separation?

Rev. Dr. Henk van den Belt responded. Thank you for your honest and open responses. I felt it would be good to be provocative rather than simply confirm what we all agree on. I agree that we should not fall into relativism, picking a hermeneutical key text. We need to focus strongly on *Tota Scriptura* (all of Scripture). My concern is that one hermeneutical key text is absolutized, and that is a tendency we can fall into. We can learn from Herman Bavinck that we can always learn from others. The distinction between descriptive and prescriptive is valid, though Scripture has no footnote telling you what category a text falls into. And yes, relativism is a danger, but relativism should not be confused with openness: we know in part and prophesy in part. Turning to the issue of special and general revelation, I used it to explain why Reformed Christians may differ on issues. Listening to positions in church history warns me not to be judgmental. Logic and the rules of logic remain something of Creation. We should not be skeptical of science, God’s truth is also in creation (science). Koreans have a high view of authority, which can be difficult in thinking critically of those who have gone before: Calvin, Bavinck. We should also realize that there is more diversity among those who have gone before.

The Chairman, Rev. Dr. Douw Breed, then moderated the discussion. (During the discussion Rev. Dr. Victor E. d’Assonville, delegate of an observer church, was given the privilege of the floor by the Conference.)

- Our situation is diverse. We need to read God’s Word continually. The Word does not contradict itself. The ICRC is properly structured and has a Constitution. We are based on shared convictions in doctrines. Our beliefs are a product of the Word of God. Therefore we



always must refer back to the Word of God. Think of when Israel wanted a king. Their desire was not the will of God. The majority pleaded for Barnabas to be released and Jesus to be crucified, but this was not the will of God. One cannot rely on what the people think.

*Morning Break*

*Following the break the Conference sang the Hymn "Jesus Shall Reign"*

- It is not correct to say that sola Scriptura was used by Luther against the Reformed, it was used by Luther and Melancthon prior to Calvin's time. Regarding the Secession and the Belgic Confession, the Belgic Confession (BC) art 29 was the reason why they left the church; thus their departure was not contrary to the confession. *(Rev. Dr. Van den Belt acknowledged the accuracy of this. But Lutherans did use it against the Reformed when it comes to the doctrine of the presence of the body of the Lord Jesus in the Lord's Supper. As to the Secession, the implications of BC 29 are differently understood: the BC suggests one must conclude that the other church is a false church before leaving.)*
- I certainly did not feel comfortable during the presentation. The reference to context suggested to me that the context that Scripture give us is different from mine. Take the topic of women in office: 1 Timothy 3 speaks of an elder should be the husband of one wife. When I then appoint a female elder, it comes out of my context, not Scripture. *(Rev. Dr. Van den Belt expressed agreement. He is not advocating female office bearers. The reality is that there is more to the offices than just a Scriptural background.)*
- From the perspective of missiology, I have worked with contextualization. Thus I appreciate the discussion. I have four discussion questions: (1) Unity at all cost or unity in the Spirit of Truth? (2) We share pain of heart when the RCN(I) was excluded from the ICRC. Who is the cause of your pained heart? (3) Why so much attention for the light of general revelation where it is not clear? (4) Does your position on staying with mother church force you to find fellowship with Christians who may be clouding your vision? *(Rev. Dr. Van den Belt: I realize that my vision might be clouded; but we need to have the discussion about Christ's call for unity. My pain is that, given my view of the church since the Reformation, there should be no multiple denominations in any one locale.)*
- The caution about endless splintering is relevant: some splits were over silly issues, like the dress code of ministers. John 17 is often quoted, but why is the truth aspect so often neglected? Can I be in a church with an atheist? There is a tension here between truth and unity.
- The issue before us is an illustration of intercultural communication. And an underlying element here is epistemology. Epistemology (the way you think) shapes one's hermeneutics. Western Europe is divided: Continental epistemology tends towards skepticism, seem unsure and naïve, while British epistemology tends towards evidentialism (common sense philosophy is strong in the Presbyterian tradition). They both have their texts, 1Cor 13 has been mentioned already "we know in part". Evidentialists will refer to 1John 2: "you know all things". Further, a comment on the "linguistic turn", the conviction that language constructs reality. If this is so, can one still articulate convictions in confessions and bind to those confessions? Finally, we should admit there is a tendency towards doctrinal perfectionism in the Presbyterian / Reformed tradition. Realize, sins of doctrine are committed and God forgives those too. *(Rev. Dr. Van den Belt: Given the European context of skepticism, I'm probably more of an evidentialist. Sometimes that creates difficulty for me.)*
- I stand here with two legs in two worlds, not just South Africa and The Netherlands, but also the First World and Third World. As ICRC we come together with an equal voice and on an equal footing. The response to Dr. Kim, that Koreans need to be more independent, suggests a short cut. Koreans do think independently (and can be stubborn). There is a cultural issue, but there is more, such as personal context. What I appreciate at the ICRC is the willingness to challenge politics, science, and media. As ICRC we are not traditional, when it comes to western

science, there is much academia in our churches that runs counter to our society. (*Rev. Dr. Van den Belt: I did not mean to hurt. As a historian I need to look at what was said from a distance with a critical eye. Further, we don't agree with Brakel (regarding heliocentricity) because we have changed. We should not be skeptical of science, but be honest in recognizing how positions we hold today are different from the past (e.g. slavery).*)

- As Korean, the material in the middle is surrounded by Calvin, but not defended by Calvin. Reference was made to true and false church. BC art. 27 defines the church as the gathering of *true believers*. There is also a dynamic aspect to the church, which is not in the paper. When it comes to general revelation, think of Acts 14:3 and 17: the emphasis has to be on God's testimony.
- *Rev. Dr. Van den Belt: At bottom we have to stand in awe of the Lord, and hold fast the reality that all of Scripture is the Word of God. May the Lord correct us where we err. We should realize that things are not as self-evident as we may think or like.*

Rev. Dr. Wilson expressed gratitude for the way the discussion went and for the paper of Rev. Dr. Van den Belt and his willingness to engage. Thanks were also expressed to the panelists.

Rev. Dr. Coetsee led in prayer.

### **ARTICLE 41 – MISSIONS COMMITTEE**

Mr. Mark Bube presented the report of the Missions Committee. For the report see Appendix to Article 41. Opportunity was given for discussion but not made use of.

The following mandate was adopted:

#### **Missions Committee Mandate**

*a. Arrange for consultations among representatives of the world missions agencies of the ICRC Member Churches for the purposes of exchanging information on current and planned work, discussing issues of mutual concern, and exploring ways for possible bi- or multi-lateral cooperation in mission among the Member Churches.*

*b. Gather information regarding and distribute a booklet summarizing (by both Member Church and field) the mission works of the ICRC Member Churches for distribution to the world missions agencies of the ICRC Member Churches and presentation to the next meeting of the Conference.*

*c. Arrange for the periodic submission of articles on Reformed missions suitable for inclusion in an online ICRC magazine, which might include descriptions of opportunities for missionary service and/or mission project participation pending in the Member Churches, and articles intended to promote interest in Reformed missions. When appropriate, such articles may also be posted on the ICRC website.*

*d. Help provide and facilitate arrangements for papers on mission topics of mutual interest to be used during the Regional Conferences and/or the ICRC itself.*

*e. Gather and study the relevant documents from the Member Churches regarding their mission vision, policies, programs or projects, including the training of missionaries and mission methodologies, and to report on its study of these documents, as appropriate.*

*f. Disseminate to the Member Churches, pursuant to the PROTOCOL FOR RESPONDING TO OPPORTUNITIES TO ASSIST PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS (Proceedings of the ICRC, October 16–22, 2009, Christchurch, New Zealand, Article 71, pages 59–60 and 85–87), information regarding opportunities to assist persecuted Christians*

*and their families, especially among those who profess the Reformed faith, and to designate a Missions Committee representative for the purpose of implementing the PROTOCOL.*

*g. Develop and maintain a list of mission contact representatives for each Member Church. Each representative will be responsible for disseminating ICRC missions information and materials to their respective churches and for gathering and transmitting to the Missions Committee the relevant information from their respective churches necessary for the accomplishment of (a)–(f) above.*

*h. Continue contact with the Mission and Evangelism Commission of the World Reformed Fellowship.*

*i. Send a report to the Corresponding Secretary at least six months before the next ICRC.*

*j. Propose a budget for the following four years to the next ICRC.*

The Conference further adopted the following recommendations:

*1. That the Committee, consisting of five members (with two alternates), be continued with the mandate in Part III of the Report.*

*2. That Regulation VI.2 be suspended, in part, so as to allow the Missions Committee to meet in person at the time of the consultation of the representatives of the world mission agencies of the Member Churches every three years (for three days each).*

### ***ARTICLE 42 – EVALUATION***

A moment was taken for evaluation of the Namibia experience via a quick survey. A more extensive survey will be distributed via email following the conference.

The survey results (60 returned) were as follows:

*On a scale of 1 – 10, where 1 is “very negative” and 10 is “very positive”:*

*A. How did you find the facilities? Average: 9.5*

*B. How did you find the outings? Average: 9.0*

*C. How did you find the worship services and interaction with local congregations?  
Average 9.0*

Rev. Nathan Hilton led in prayer.

*Lunch break*

*Following the lunch break the Conference sang the hymn “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”.*

### ***ARTICLE 43 – NEXT CONFERENCE***

Rev. Dr. James Visscher informed the Conference that the next Conference will be hosted by the Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea (KPCK). The place will either be Seoul (easily accessed) or Busan (where most of the Kosin churches are located). The conference will likely be in October 2026, as that is when it is least humid in Korea and still comfortably warm. A long list of topics has been submitted via the church report sheets, more topics were submitted from the floor, and more are welcome to be submitted following the conference. Invitations were extended for the churches to submit speakers. Given the span of the conference, there will be three speakers. One of the speakers will be from the KPCK.

A request was made for more attention to reports from the churches. A request was made to celebrate communion at some point during the conference. A request was made for the creation of advisory committees to review the reports of the facilitating and operating committees of the ICRC. A suggestion was made that more established churches take a “weaker” church under its wings and assist it. A suggestion was made to create “table groups” for prayer and for breakout discussion when it comes to papers. A request was made for papers to be distributed ahead of time, as English is not the first language of the listeners, or even of the speaker.

Appreciation was expressed from the floor for how the Conference had been organized and conducted. It was an encouraging experience.

#### ***ARTICLE 44 – PRESS RELEASE & PROCEEDINGS***

The Recording Clerk, Rev. Dr. Karlo Janssen, mentioned that printed copies of the Press Release were available and that he had emailed out the Press Release. For the Press Release, see Appendix to article 44. The Proceedings of the Conference will be adopted by the Coordinating Committee and then distributed among all delegates for a final check.

#### ***ARTICLE 45 – CLOSE OF THE CONFERENCE***

The Chairman, Rev. Dr. Douw Breed led in closing devotions. He expressed appreciation for how we had come to know each other and interacted with each other. May this conference mean a lot to all of us, and may the Lord bless it unto our spiritual growth. He read Genesis 47:1-12, concentrating on the verses 7 and 10, speaking on how God changed Jacob from someone who stole blessings to becoming a distributor of God’s richest blessings. He then led in prayer.

The Conference sang the Doxology “Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow”.

The Conference was declared closed.

During the evening dinner gratitude was expressed by Rev. Dr. James Visscher to Rev. Dr. Douw Breed for his capable moderating during the Conference.