

ACTS
OF
SYNOD
2015



Free Reformed
Churches
of North America

Free Reformed Publications

18 Chapala Crescent SE

Calgary, AB

Canada

T2X 3M4

Email: publications@frcna.org

Tel./Fax: 403.254.6591

website: www.frcna.org

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ACTS OF SYNOD
of the
FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF NORTH AMERICA
In Session at Brantford, Ontario
June 1-5, 2015

SESSION I
Monday June 1, 2015

Article 1 - Opening

Synod is opened with a worship service commencing at 7:30 p.m. Rev. D. Kranendonk, pastor of the convening church of Oxford County, leads the service with Revelation 2:1b as his text: *“These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.”* His theme is:

The One in the Centre

1. His Breath-taking Splendor
2. His Star-holding Power
3. His Light-giving Presence

After the service and a recess for coffee, Rev. D. Kranendonk calls the delegates to order at 9:30 p.m. We sing Psalter 242:1,4. Rev. D. Kranendonk reads Revelation 1:1-9 and leads in prayer.

Article 2 - Presentation of Credentials

The credentials are presented and found to be in good order. The roll call indicates that the churches are represented by the following delegates:

Abbotsford	Rev. J. Schoeman	
Bornholm	Elder A. Zekveld	Elder A. Pol
Brantford	Rev. R. VanDoodewaard	Elder L. Brouwer
Calgary	Rev. H. Overduin	
Chatham	Rev. T. Bergsma	Elder P. Luth
Chilliwack	Rev. J. Koopman	Elder J. VanMuyen
Dundas	Rev. L. J. Bilkes	Elder N. Koppelaar
Fenwick	Rev. H. Bergsma	Elder J. Brink

Grand Rapids	Elder H. Kleyn	Elder A. VandenToorn
Hamilton	Elder C. Keuning	Elder P. Vandenberg
Lacombe	Elder C. DeGroot	
Langley	Elder J. DenDekker	Elder J. VanderZwan
London	Elder R. Koopman	Elder J. Schinkel
Mitchell	Elder I. Pol	Elder C. Otten
Monarch	Rev. E. Moerdyk	Elder P. Feyter
Oxford	Rev. D. Kranendonk	Elder J. Otten
Prompton Plains	Elder A. Sloomaker	Elder D. Densel
St. George	Elder M. Hamstra	Elder A. Neven
St. Thomas	Elder A. VanDyk	Elder F. Pennings
Vineland	Rev. J. Overduin	Elder B. DeJong

Article 3 – Election of the Executive

Synod being legally constituted, the officers of Synod are elected by open ballot. The following brothers are elected as officers of synod:

President	Rev. D. Kranendonk
Vice-President	Rev. J. Schoeman
First Clerk	Rev. J. Koopman
Second Clerk	Rev. J. Overduin

The executive is seated and Rev. D. Kranendonk thanks the delegates on behalf of the executive for the confidence expressed through the voting. He thanks the Brantford congregation for hosting the Synod. He expresses appreciation to the consistory of the Oxford congregation for preparing the agenda.

Article 4 - Agreement with Three Forms of Unity

Rev. D. Kranendonk reads the Public Declaration of Agreement and the delegates stand to express their agreement. He invites Rev. J. Schoeman to close this session. He thanks Rev. D. Kranendonk for leading the prayer service.

After the brothers sing Psalter 348:4, 5, 6, Rev. J. Schoeman leads in a closing prayer. At 10:15 p.m., the meeting stands adjourned until 9:00 a.m.

SESSION II

Tuesday, June 2, 2015

At 9:00 a.m., Rev. D. Kranendonk calls the meeting to order. He invites Dr. G.M Bilkes to lead in opening devotions. We begin by singing from 298. We read from Luke 5:1-11. He focuses his remarks on Luke 5:5 and particularly these words: “Nevertheless at thy Word.” His theme is “The Pivot.” He speaks of:

- I. The power of this pivot
- II. The grace of this pivot
- III. The glory of this pivot

The delegates sing Psalter 76:1, 4.

Article 5 –Roll Call

The roll is called with all present, except for Elder J. Jansen is present in the place of Elder I. Pol, Dr. D. Murray in the place of Elder A. VandenToorn. Elder Schinkel of London and Elder D. Fraser of Calgary are also seated as delegates. All new delegates stand to express their agreement with the Three Forms of Unity.

The chairman welcomed all present, including Rev. Iain Wright as a visiting delegate from the Orthodox Presbyterian Churches (OPC); Rev. Douglas Gebbie from the Presbyterian Reformed Churches (PRC); Rev. J.W. Wüllschleger of the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken (CGK), and Rev. H. Heemskerk and Elder. W. deKloe of the Hersteld Hervormde Kerk (HHK).

Other guests acknowledged include Rev. G.R. Procee, theological students Ian Macleod, John Procee, and Ken Pennings. Young Jae Lee is also present whom the Theological Education Committee is recommending to accept as a new student.

Article 6 - Appointments

The executive recommends the following appointments:

- a. As advisors to Synod – Rev. G. Hamstra, Rev. H. Van Essen, Rev. C. Pronk, Rev. C. Schouls, Rev. L.W. Bilkes, Rev. VanderMeyden, Rev. K. Herfst, & Dr. G.M. Bilkes.
- b. As advisors from full corresponding denominations: Rev. J.W. Wüllschleger (CGK), Rev. D. Lipsy and Rev. B. Elshout of the Heritage Reformed Congregations. (HRC) The HRC advisors intend to be present later in the week.

- c. As Assistant Clerk – John Procee (see recommendation #1 of Publications)
- d. As Treasurer of Synod – Mr. J.D. Tamminga
- e. To prepare the Press Release – Rev. H. Overduin
- f. To prepare a report for the Messenger - Rev. L.J. Bilkes
Moved/seconded/carried

The following schedule is recommended for meeting times:

- i. 9:00 opening
- ii. 10:30 coffee
- iii. 12:30 lunch
- iv. 1:30 afternoon
- v. 3:00 coffee
- vi. 5:30 dinner
- vii. 6:30 evening
- viii. 9:00 adjourn

Article 7 – Adoption of Agenda

A motion is made *to adopt the agenda as presented.*

A question is asked about the correspondence received from the London congregation.

Moved/seconded/carried

Article 8 - Adoption of Public Acts

A motion is made: *To adopt the 2014 Acts of Synod as published.*

Moved/seconded/carried

Article 9 – Examination of Students Macleod and Procee (1)

The Theological Education Committee adds the following recommendation to its report (which was inadvertently omitted in the original report): *To examine Students Ian Macleod and John Procee with the view to their being declared eligible for call to the ministry.*

Moved/seconded/carried

Student Macleod reads 2 Corinthians 5:20-21 and leads in prayer. He then preaches his sermon on 2 Corinthians 5:20-21.

Article 10 – Address from the Hersteld Hervormde Kerk

The chairman invites Elder deKloe from the Hersteld Hervormde Kerk (HHK) with whom we have a relationship of limited correspondence to address the Synod. In this first official HHK address to our Synod, elder deKloe emphasizes how we are both Reformed churches having the same confessions. He recounts some of history of the HHK along with

various developments in the Netherlands. He speaks of their present relationship with the Free Reformed Churches, also in light of our ongoing dialogues with the Springford Reformed Church. Finally, he speaks of their desire that Christ would be made known in the churches with the anticipation of the second coming of the Saviour.

Dr. L.W. Bilkes responds on behalf of Synod. He speaks of the meeting that some of the delegates of the Interchurch Relations Committee had with the HHK delegates earlier in the week, noting the sense of brotherhood experienced at that meeting. He also speaks of our involvement with the Springford Reformed Church and our desire to grow closer with them. He closes with Paul's parting words to the Ephesian elders found in Acts 20:32: *"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."*

Article 11 – Examination of Students Macleod and Procee (2)

Student Procee reads from John 1:29 and leads in prayer. He then preaches his sermon on John 1:29.

The chairman welcomes the students from Rehoboth Christian School.

Rev. H. Overduin critiques both sermons and conducts the examination of both students in the area of homiletics.

Rev. J. Schoeman conducts the examination of both students in the area of Old Testament Exegesis, focusing on Genesis 1:1-2:3.

We adjourn for lunch. Elder D. Fraser closes the morning session with prayer, also asking for a blessing on the meal. After lunch we open with singing from Psalter 83:1, 2. Elder A. Sloodmaker reads Psalm 25 and leads in prayer.

Article 12 – Examination of Students Macleod and Procee (3)

Rev. E. Moerdyk conducts the examination of both students in New Testament Exegesis, focusing on John 20:1-10 and 2 Peter 3:1-14.

Rev. D. Kranendonk conducts the examination of both students in dogmatics and the Three Forms of Unity.

Rev. P. Vander Meyden conducts the examination of both students in the area of Church Polity and Church Order.

A motion is made to enter executive session.

Article 13 – Executive Session I

Student Procee is questioned regarding his personal relationship with the Lord and his sense of call to the ministry.

Student Macleod is questioned regarding his personal relationship with the Lord and his sense of call to the ministry.

After the examination of Students Macleod & Procee is completed, Synod deliberates on the matter of their candidacy for the ministry. The outcome of the vote is that both student Macleod and Procee are declared as candidates for the ministry of the gospel in the FRCNA.

Article 14 – Declaration of Candidacy

Rev. D. Kranendonk announces to brothers Macleod and Procee that Synod had the liberty to declare each of them a candidate for the ministry in the FRCNA. He speaks of the fact that this is a special moment for them as a very hopeful indication that the Lord is calling them to the gospel ministry. He reminds them of Psalm 71:15 where we read: *My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof.* He also addresses their wives and extended family members who are present for this wonderful occasion.

In addressing us as churches, Rev. D. Kranendonk encourages us to bring these brothers and their families before the LORD in prayer. The need for labourers in the vineyard is great in the FRCNA in light of our many vacancies. As a denomination we rejoice to receive two candidates for the ministry.

We sing from Psalter 251 after which Rev. L.W. Bilkes as chairman of the Theological Education Committee leads us in prayer with thanksgiving to the LORD.

An opportunity is provided for all of the delegates to congratulate the candidates.

Article 15 - Youth and Education

Rev. T. Bergsma reports on behalf of the committee. He expresses appreciation for Mr. H. Den Hollander's work in preparing various devotionals for publication. A question is asked whether a camp in British Columbia could be supported by this committee. Rev. T. Bergsma responds that when application is made, support can be given.

The committee's **recommendations** are considered in turn:

1. That Synod appoint Revs. Joel Overduin & Tim Bergsma as editors of the Youth Messenger for 2015-16.
Moved/seconded/carried
2. That Synod approve the recommendation to reappoint br. Jeff Bokma to a second term (ending 2018).
Moved/seconded/carried
3. That Synod approve the Financial Statement of the Y&E: 2014 statements, 2015 budget, and 2016 projections.
Moved/seconded/carried
4. That Synod approve a quota of \$3/member for 2015.
Moved/seconded/carried
5. That Synod approve the actions of the committee.
Moved/seconded/carried

Article 16 - Church Order Committee

Rev. P. VanderMeyden reports on behalf of the committee. He presents the recently published 2015 edition of the Church Order of the Free Reformed Churches, copies of which have been provided for every consistory. A short discussion is held on the report. It is noted that a change is still necessary in Article 49 to update it to reflect our current combined consistories model.

A motion is made that the Church Order Committee come to Synod 2016 with a re-wording of Article 49 that reflects our current combined consistories model.

Moved/seconded/carried

The Committee's **recommendations** are considered in turn:

1. That Synod receive and adopt the recommendations of the Study Report on Appeals (Appendix A).
Moved/seconded/carried
2. That Synod reappoint Rev. D. Kranendonk (Oxford) and Elder R. Pennings (Calgary) for a three-year term to end in 2018.
Moved/seconded/carried
3. That Synod approve the actions of the committee.
Moved/seconded/carried

Article 17 - Address from the Presbyterian Reformed Church

Rev. Douglas Gebbie addresses us, reminding us that he has been present with us many times. He expresses his appreciation for our late brother Rev. Kuldip Gangar and his work. He speaks of the joy of working with Mr. D. Baars in their attempts to have him minister in one of their congregations in North Carolina, but he also notes that the US government has recently frustrated their efforts so that the plan could not be carried out. Rev. Gebbie asks if there has been anything the PRC has done that has created offense in the FRC in this matter. In further comments, Rev. Gebbie explains that the relationship we have with each other is not fully reflected on paper and speaks with appreciation for what he has witnessed in the examination of our theological students, being convinced that this further emphasizes our similarity as denominations. Finally, he conveys personal appreciation for the youth devotionals published by the FRC Youth & Education committee, which his two children read with delight.

Rev. L. J. Bilkes responds to his address. In return, he speaks of the blessings that the Presbyterian Reformed Church has been to us. He speaks with appreciation for the work of Prof. John Murray, highlighting his book *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*. He assures Rev. Gebbie that they have not created any offense. He expresses the desire for more meetings so that we could get to know each other better.

Elder A. Neven leads in prayer for the meal. After the meal we sing from Psalter 87. Elder C. Keuning reads from Psalm 85 and closes the meal in prayer.

Article 18 - Theological Education Committee (1)

Rev. J. Schoeman, vice-chairman of the committee, reports on its behalf, highlighting several parts of the report. A discussion follows in which these major points are made:

- The importance of continuing to promote the principle of “by the Church, for the Church.”
- The value of equality of membership on the Board of Trustees at PRTS for the FRCNA in light of the level of our support and relationship with the HRC.

The Committee's **recommendations** are considered in turn:

1. To approve the Financial Statements of the Free Reformed Seminary Fund: 2014 statements, 2015 budget, and 2016 projections (see 4.1; Appendix).
Moved/seconded/carried
2. To approve the proposal for the Ministers' Retreat 2015 as outlined in the report (see 6.1).
Moved/seconded/carried
3. To approve the recommendations for Seminary Day 2015 (see 6.2).
Moved/seconded/carried
4. To accept Mr. Young Jae Lee and Mr. Mark Wagenaar as students for ministry in the Free Reformed Churches (see 3.1).
Moved/seconded/carried
5. To appoint Dr. D. Murray as full-time Free Reformed instructor at PRTS (see 1.2).
Moved/seconded/carried
6. To reappoint as primary members Rev. J. Koopman, Rev. J. Lewis, and Rev. H. Overduin for a three year term (see 8).
Moved/seconded/carried

A motion is made to enter executive session.

Moved/seconded/carried

Article 19 – Executive Session II

A supplementary report is provided by the Theological Education Committee regarding the training and care of the students.

In regard to student Young Jae Lee it is moved:

1. That student Lee, as a student for ministry, receive permission to lead worship services for five (5) Lord's Days this summer under the oversight of the Theological Education Committee, preaching sermons that have been developed in a seminar with Dr. G. M. Bilkes.
Moved/seconded/carried
2. The TEC be given permission to promote student Lee to the licensure phase at its October meeting if these requirements are satisfactorily met and the summer assignments prove fruitful.
Moved/seconded/carried

Regarding student Ken Pennings it is moved:

1. To have the cost of moving the Pennings family to British Columbia for a seven-week internship covered by the Theological Student Support Fund (amounting to around \$5,500).

Moved/seconded/carried

2. The TEC be given permission to promote student Ken Pennings to the licensure phase at its October meeting, if his summer internship proves sufficiently fruitful to give the Committee confidence that he is ready to exhort in the churches.

Moved/seconded/carried

The chair moves to re-open the floor.

Article 20 - Theological Education Committee (2)

Recommendation #7 is considered:

7. Approve the actions of your deputies.

Moved/seconded/carried

Article 21 - Ethical Public Affairs Committee

Dr. Greg Kenyon introduces the report on behalf of the Committee.

There is a discussion on the developments at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. The Committee updates us saying that there has been a legal challenge against these policies that compels doctors to go against their conscience.

The Committee's **recommendations** are considered in turn:

1. To reappoint brothers Dr. L. W. Bilkes and Dr. E. Nieuwenhuis for a term of 3 years.

Moved/seconded/carried

2. To approve the actions of the EPA Committee.

Moved/seconded/carried

Article 22 - Theological Education Committee (3)

Dr. D. Murray addresses the synod as an FRC instructor at PRTS. He speaks of the privilege of being appointed as a Free Reformed instructor.

- The faculty has expanded considerably in the last few years with the addition of Dr. W. VanDoodewaard, Dr. M. Barrett, and Rev. M. Kelderman. They function well together even with their differing personalities and understandings on some points.

- Dr. D. Murray has adjusted his schedule since becoming an FRC pastor. Initially he had withdrawn from the practice preaching course but has since rejoined it because he believes it is the best way to get a sense of the 'heartbeat' of the seminary and the students' development.
- He speaks of the changing size of the seminary and the way that it challenges them to maintain the same environment. The staff and students from diverse backgrounds provide many interesting teaching opportunities.
- He speaks of appreciation for the input of the FRCNA which at times challenges the seminary and causes them to rethink some of their practices. He also encourages the FRCNA to remain positive in its interaction.
- He emphasizes the important role of the Theological Education Committee in the training of our students. He encourages us to consider the workload of the students and their general well-being.

The chairman expresses appreciation to Dr. D. Murray for his work and thanks him for his comments.

Rev. J. Overduin leads in closing prayer. The meeting is adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

SESSION III

Wednesday, June 3, 2015

At 9:00 a.m., Rev. D. Kranendonk calls the meeting to order. We begin by singing from Psalter 307, after which Rev. D. Kranendonk invites Rev. David Lipsy of the Heritage Reformed Congregation of Burgessville to lead in opening devotions. Rev. D. Lipsy begins with prayer, after which we read from Nehemiah 9:1-21. He reflects on the fact that while the people had backslidden from the Lord, yet Nehemiah could go forward with the confidence that the Lord is faithful. It is only because of God's faithfulness and gracious Spirit present with them, that they could go on. He indicates we face similar challenges today. The character of God, especially as revealed in the Person of Christ, is what we need as well to remain standing. Let us be encouraged, as Nehemiah and these Jews were, by God's unfailing faithfulness. Rev. D. Lipsy expresses the privilege of standing alongside our denomination, and sounds thankfulness for our unity.

Article 23 – Roll Call

The roll is called with the following changes noted: Pastor S. Dibbet is now seated as a delegate for Lacombe. For Mitchell, Elder C. Otten is replaced by Elder I. Pol. For St. George, Elder M. Hamstra is replaced by Elder H. VanDoodewaard. All the new delegates stand to express their agreement with the Three Forms of Unity.

The chairman recognizes the presence of Rev. David Lipsy of the Heritage Reformed Congregations as advisor and Rev. William Van Hal of the United Reformed Churches as visitor.

Article 24 - Interchurch Relations Committee (1)

Rev. L. J. Bilkes, secretary of the committee, reports on behalf of the committee, highlighting several parts of the report. He brings forward that the HRC Synod recently moved to call a day of prayer and fasting prior to the US Supreme Court's upcoming decision on gay marriage, as well as the Canadian Supreme Court's recent decision on euthanasia. This is now being forwarded to Synod for discussion, in addition to the agenda. It will be dealt with after the recommendations.

A discussion follows during which several points are made:

- The desire of Christian Ministry to Israel (CMI) to have Rev. D. Zadok preach in our churches.
- Questions of clarification about how to call a minister from outside the FRC.

The Committee's **recommendations** are considered in turn:

1. To approve of sending Rev. L. W. Bilkes and Mr. D. Tamminga as delegates to the November 2015 NAPARC meeting in Quebec City.

Moved/seconded/carried

2. To adopt the HRC & FRC recommendations giving permission:
 - a. to IRC to coordinate concurrent synod with HRC at the same time and in a nearby venue with joint prayer service;

Moved/seconded

A discussion follows in which concerns are expressed about the actual value of meeting at the same time and place. Rev. D. Lipsy indicates that the HRC Synod has agreed to explore the possibility of meeting concurrently with the FRC Synod. He also indicates that from their side, this is seen as an opportunity to evaluate if unity is even a possibility, and should not be seen as a "drive to unity."

It is noted that ongoing discussion regarding the relationship of the two denominations is still needed.

The chairman calls the question on recommendation 2a.

Carried

- b. for FRC & HRC mission committees to communicate with each other to see if joint efforts and / mutual assistance can be enhanced;

Moved/seconded

The chairman notes that in the 2015 Church Order Article 51 C.9 provision already exists for IRC sub-recommendations 2b and 2c and suggests these two sub-recommendations are redundant.

Recommendation withdrawn

- c. for FRC & HRC emeritus committees permission to communicate with one another to work out a proposal to determine an equitable method to provide for emeritus ministers who served in both denominations.

Recommendation withdrawn

3. To approve of sending Rev. D. Kranendonk and Rev. C. Pronk as delegates to the April 2016 Synod of the HRC in Burgessville.

Moved/seconded/carried

4. To approve a standing order that the second clerk of synod send the press release of our synod to the clerk of the HRC synod.
Moved/seconded/carried
5. To approve sending two delegates to attend the May 2016 General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland Continuing.
Moved/seconded/carried
6. To approve the sending of Rev. L. W. Bilkes and Mr. C. Keuning to attend the HHK Synod in 2016.
Moved/seconded/carried
7. To adopt the proposed preaching guide as a tool to assist consistories in ensuring that the preaching of a non-FRC minister is consonant with the kind of preaching that we in the FRC seek to uphold and foster.
Moved/seconded/carried
8. To accept, process (in accordance with CO 5G) and decide on Mitchell's request to call URCNA minister Rev. C. Heiberg.
Moved/seconded

A discussion follows about the lack of consensus within the IRC concerning Mitchell's grounds for its request, as indicated in the report.

The chairman calls the question.

Carried

9. To approve the appointment of Mr. A. De Vries as primary member for the balance of his term, and Mr. D. Faasse as alternate member for a three year term.
Moved/seconded/carried

The matter of Rev. D. Zadok no longer being allowed to preach in our churches due to changes in our Church Order is now discussed. Since the new rules require one to subscribe to the Three Forms of Unity, he no longer qualifies to preach on our pulpits.

A motion is made:

Synod, acknowledging

- that our current policies require a minister outside of our federation to subscribe to the Three Forms of Unity before he can preach in our churches;
- that Rev. Zadok successfully passed a Colloquium Doctum and was approved to preach on our pulpits before this policy came into effect;

- that that CMI was created by order of our synod;
Decides to grandfather Rev. D. Zadok as a sole exception into our current policy and allow him to preach on our pulpits.

The motion is discussed and called to a vote.

Moved/seconded/carried

The matter of the HRC correspondence to the IRC inviting our churches to join their May 31st Prayer day is now brought up. A short discussion follows, but no motion is made. Appreciation for their correspondence is expressed and a suggestion is made to increasing the frequency of these days of prayer and fasting.

10. To approve the actions of your committee.

Moved/seconded/carried

Article 25 - Brantford Overture #1 re Church Order Article 5G (1)

The overture is introduced by Rev. R. VanDoodewaard of the Brantford consistory. He informs us that the Brantford consistory feels that the process to call a minister outside of the FRCNA creates an unnecessary impediment. They also think that the IRC should not need to evaluate the needs of the local church. In the discussion various points are made:

- The grounds of the overture seem to lack clarity.
- The nature of the IRC is to serve and to preserve our cherished Scriptural heritage and the apparent trend of criticizing the IRC can be discouraging to them.
- The uncomplicated nature of calling a minister outside of our denomination is underscored.
- The ability to meet as Synod more than once yearly is already provided for in Church Order Article 50, rendering this request superfluous.
- The floor is reminded of the relationship between Synods and its deputies (i.e. committees) as outlined in an IRC paper submitted to synod last year.
- Committees, especially the IRC, should be perceived as “a house of sober second thought.”

Brantford responds, making the following points:

- In some way the spirit of the overture and the Brantford consistory has been misinterpreted.
- The view of a deputy as “judging” brings us in the direction of Episcopalianism.

The overture is tabled until later in synod.

Elder B. DeJong leads in prayer for the meal. After the meal we sing from Psalter 162. Elder P. Feyter leads our devotions by reading from Psalm 67 and closing the meal in prayer.

Article 26 - Address from the Orthodox Presbyterian Churches

Rev. I. Wright addresses us from the Orthodox Presbyterian Churches. He speaks fondly of his fellowship with us over the past couple days. He reads from 1 Peter 3 and Song of Songs 5. He speaks of the OPC love for the Scripture. Next year the OPC are reaching their 80th anniversary. He introduces the OPC by speaking of various aspects of their work and of God's work among them. He speaks of the Saviour and how our love for Him is evident among us in various ways - particularly in the singing as well as the various sermons and opening devotions.

Rev. J. Overduin responds on behalf of Synod. He thanks Rev. I. Wright for his words, acknowledging that the OPC is older and larger than the FRC and that we can likely learn much from the OPC. There is also appreciation for Rev. I. Wright's expressed devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ and his sensing that this is among us as well. Finally, Rev. J. Overduin expresses the hope that as opportunities come to get to know each other more, the Lord would grant that we find that we with "one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" and more and more find that we can "receive one another" (Romans 15:5,6).

Article 27 - Fenwick Overture re Visiting Ministers

The overture is introduced by Elder J. Brink of the Fenwick consistory. The chairman questions why this concern was not forwarded in the form of an appeal, as the decision in question was made at last Synod. It is also noted that there is no new information presented in the overture in question. The orderly nature of this overture is discussed.

The chair rules the overture out of order.

The ruling is challenged, but does not garner sufficient support.

Article 28 - Address from the United Reformed Churches

Rev. W. Van Hal addresses the body. He expresses gratitude for this opportunity as well as condolences to the body on the loss of Rev. K. Gangar, citing it as a loss for them as well. He shares some of the work of the URCNA and its decisions at its recent Visalia Synod. He wishes us God's richest blessings for our denomination and our various ministries and areas of labor. He urges us to continued, faithful preaching and teaching of God's inspired Word, and to "be strong in the LORD, and in the power of his might." He closes by pointing us to Titus 2:11-13.

Rev. J. Schoeman responds by expressing appreciation for the relationship that we as churches can have, as well as the process of sharing and evaluating one another's sermons. He leaves Rev. W. Van Hal with I Thessalonians 5:26: "Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss." The sentiments of this verse, referring to brotherly love, is extended to them.

Article 29 - Publications Committee Report

Rev. D. Kranendonk asks the Vice-Chairman to assume the chair of Synod while he presents the report as secretary of the Committee. Rev. D. Kranendonk introduces the report and opens it for discussion.

In the discussion some of the major points made include the following:

- Concern is raised concerning the Committee's lack of authorization to print an updated copy of the Heidelberg Catechism curriculum with another edition/translation of the catechism.
- The Psalter Revision Committee discovered that the HRC and Protestant Reformed Churches desire to maintain archaic pronouns in reference to God to remain consistent with their use of the KJV.
- The HRC synod has agreed to join the committee, agreeing as well with the proposed guidelines regarding the Psalter revision presented in the report. The Committee is awaiting results from the PRC Synod before their participation will be known.
- Concern is expressed about the decision to use archaic pronouns in an updated Psalter only in reference to God.
- Concern is raised about frustration with using the website, as well as the email server. The secretary of the Committee apologizes for this. The email system is being migrated to a stabler, Google-based system and should be available soon. The committee is open to suggestions of people who can be involved in the website.

The Publications Committee presents the following **recommendations** to Synod 2015:

1. To appoint student John Procee as assistant to the first and second clerks of Synod 2015, with student Ian Macleod serving as backup;
Previously carried under Article 6c
2. To develop a plan to make Open Windows more of a joint magazine of the FRC and HRC (see 1.2).
Moved/seconded/carried
3. To approve the Committee Mandate and updated policies (see 4.2.1; appendix 2).
Moved/seconded/carried
4. To approve the creation of a paid Marketing Director position (see 4.2.2).
Moved/seconded
The need for a paid position is questioned and clarified.
Carried
5. To approve the recommended procedure for establishing an interdenominational Psalter Revision Committee (see 6).
Moved/seconded/carried
6. To maintain the quota of \$6.00 per member (see 7).
Moved/seconded/carried
7. To approve the financial reports for 2014, budget for 2015, and forecast for 2016 of the Publications committee (see 7);
Moved/seconded/carried
8. To reappoint Rev. J. Overduin and Mr. Hans VanDoodewaard for a three year term as committee members (see 8.1);
Moved/seconded/carried
9. To appoint Mr. John Dendekker for a three year term as committee member (see 8.1);
Moved/seconded/carried
10. To post the Synodical News Release on the website and share it with corresponding churches (see 9);
Moved/seconded/carried
11. To approve of the actions of your deputies.
Moved/seconded/carried

Article 30 - Brantford Overture #3 re Supplementary Psalter (1)

To adopt the Supplementary Psalter overture:

Moved/seconded

Rev. R. VanDoodewaard of the Brantford consistory presents the overture, noting that it continues the discussion held last synod concerning pronouns and the Psalter.

The chair notes the brevity the overture and reminds of the need for an overture to be a self-contained unit and not assume knowledge of earlier discussions at Synod.

Rev. VanDoodewaard gives its rationale, citing the need for common language, and emphasizes the need for a Psalter in the common language.

The chair reads the overture and opens the floor for discussion. The following major points are made in discussion:

- The inevitable nature of this change is highlighted, and the need for the body to be sensitive to this.
- The importance of not interpreting this change as necessarily meaning that its authors desire wholesale change (e.g., moving away from orthodoxy).
- The overture would distract focus from our existing work on the Psalter Revision Committee.
- A wholesale transition would lose the benefit of “thee” rhyming well.
- If this overture is passed, the existing Psalter revision sub-committee would need to be disbanded, as two sub-committees functioning in parallel would be unhelpful and counterproductive.

Responses to the comments are heard. The chairman reminds the body of the difference between the lawfulness and the wisdom of doing something at any given juncture. The chairman opens the floor for another round of discussion, focusing on the question of the wisdom of exploring an alternate Psalter at this time.

The following major points are made in this round:

- The different contexts of our various churches among us should be taken into account.
- It is noted that these pronouns have always been archaic, as even in the 1600’s, they were not used in everyday language.

- The transition to archaic language is a non-issue for those who transition into the Reformed faith from outside. We ought not to underestimate the ability of our people to understand language.
- We must recognize that godly people do pray reverently with contemporary pronouns.
- If we allow the natural organic transition through the generations to occur, we will avoid imposing changes now, which may well seriously disrupt families that prefer the older pronouns. To accelerate the change when a large number of people would be very upset, at this time it would be unwise, while it is not to say that the day may come when that transition will be natural, organic, and unified.
- The overture does not recognize Article 69 of our Church Order.
- It should be remembered that not achieving change immediately does not mean the church will suffer.
- Church Order Article 51.C.5 needs to be taken into account should we proceed down the path of modifying Article 69.
- It is our duty that prayerful, scriptural long-term work should be performed toward something better than what we have for the good of our posterity, meaning we would be irresponsible to leave this long-term project for future generations to address.

The Brantford delegate responds to the comments heard, expressing disagreement with many of the comments heard and further explaining the sentiments of the Brantford consistory, namely that they desire a tightening of our existing exclusive Psalmody worship and that it be in contemporary language based on the Reformed principle of clarity.

The discussion is tabled so that Pastor Lipsy of the HRC can address the body.

Article 31 - Address from the Heritage Reformed Congregations

Rev. D. Lipsy addresses the body. He stresses the need for our committees to work together, as well as the encouragement of interaction at the grassroots level, like a joint Seminary Day, a joint women's conference, a joint family camp, etc. He expresses concern about the persistent lack of understanding of each other at this time, noting this especially from the FRC side. He compares our two federations to a courting couple. He applies this by saying that marriage is not postponed until total sanctification is attained by both parties. It is the desire of the HRC to grow together and sharpen each other post-union. The very positive interactions at the committee level are an evidence of Divine direction that our paths are merging.

Rev. D. Lipsy further brings attention to the persecuted church that is united simply on the point that their faith is in Jesus Christ. He notes that we have the luxury of staying apart in our culture, and indicates that if the culture around us continues on its current trajectory, we will soon no longer have that luxury. He cites this as an important reason for exerting ourselves in the pursuit of union, exploring every possible venue, in every possible way, for this “courtship” to continue.

Rev. D. Lipsy also expresses appreciation concerning the participation of Rev. L. W. Bilkes and Rev. C. Pronk at their recent Synod, indicating that they were part of their family. In conclusion, Rev. D. Lipsy refers to Acts 15, which begins with contention between two godly sides who, by the end of the chapter, wrote a letter in which they expressed their united conviction that the Lord, by His Holy Spirit, had unified them.

Rev. J. Koopman thanks Rev. D. Lipsy for his affectionate words and indicates that the gospel is central in preaching and teaching, and we appreciate that foundational unity we share. He expresses a hope for continued growth in all the developments that are occurring, and that the regrets expressed by Rev. D. Lipsy will prove to further our mutual understanding. He reminds Rev. D. Lipsy that there are differences among us as FRC churches as well, and that even in a good marriage those differences will exist. We need the Lord to grow in unity.

Rev. J. Koopman leads in prayer for the meal. We sing Psalter 370.

After the meal, we sing Psalter 432, all four verses. Elder H. Kleyn closes the meal and opens the evening session by reading from Exodus 10:21-26. He notes that Moses was uncompromising, even to the “last hoof,” because he saw “him who is invisible” (Heb. 11:27). So, we may not compromise either in the face of increasingly hostile governments. He closes in prayer.

Elder Bill Brunsveld replaces Elder H. VanDoodewaard for St. George. He rises to express his agreement to the Three Forms of Unity.

Article 32 - Brantford Overture #3 re Supplementary Psalter (2)

In light of the lengthy discussion before supper, the chairman now moves to call the matter of this overture to a vote.

Carried

It is noted that Dr. Murray is no longer present at Synod.

The chair adjourns Synod in order to enter into a membership meeting of FRMI.

Article 33 - FRMI

The meeting of Free Reformed Missions International is called to order.

A membership sign-up sheet is distributed and the annual membership meeting of the FRMI is commenced. Mr. John J. Brink presents on behalf of the committee and highlights various aspects of the report. The report is opened to the floor for questions. Various questions follow, and Mr. J. Brink and Mr. P. Luth respond.

A brief discussion concerning the role of Rev. K. Herfst is tabled for an executive session.

The **recommendations** of the Mission Board are considered in turn:

1. That the re-appointment of P. Luth and M. Laman and the appointment of Duane Rogers and Martin Traas as directors be approved.
Moved/seconded/carried
2. That the 2014 Financial Statement be approved.
Moved/seconded/carried
3. That the budget for the year 2015 be approved.
Moved/seconded/carried
4. That the appointments of Mr. Gerrit Westerink and Mr. Greg Neven as auditors for the year 2015 be approved.
Moved/seconded/carried

The chairman notes that there is very little in the report about the future plans of FRMI. Mr. Peter Luth responds to that by outlining different plans that are underway.

5. That the actions of the Mission Board be approved.
Moved/seconded/carried

A motion is made to go into executive session.

Moved/seconded/carried

Article 34 - Executive Session III

A discussion takes place, the outcome of which is that Rev. K. Herfst will be asked to attend synod later this week.

The chairman adjourns the FRMI membership meeting.

Article 35 - Finance

Synod is re-convened and Finance committee members Mr. Gary Neven and Mr. H. Berger are invited to present the report. The Committee representatives answer several questions that rise. The committee's **recommendations** are considered in turn:

1. Ministers' Emeritus Fund:

- (a) Increase emeritus payments from \$27,333 to \$27,743, per the Canadian CPI of 1.5% and that widow's pension continue to remain unchanged at \$21,492 until they are reduced from 53.33% to 50% of the minimum recommended salary guideline as per Synod 2012. All payments to be made in Canadian dollars.

Moved/seconded/carried

- (b) Leave the assessment for 2016 at \$27.70 per member.

Moved/seconded/carried

- (c) Approve the attached financial statements for the year 2014, as well as the budgets for 2015 and 2016.

Moved/seconded/carried

2. Ministers' Salary Guidelines

- (a) We recommend that the salaries increase by 1.5% for Canadian ministers and by 0.8% for American ministers for the calendar year 2016. We therefore request approval to increase the minimum salaries for ministers effective January 1, 2016 as follows:

- Canadian ministers from CDN \$42,051 to CDN \$42,682
- American ministers from US \$42,071 to US \$42,408

Moved/seconded/carried

- (b) Increase the years of service allowance from \$493 to \$500 for up to 10 years of service.

Moved/seconded/carried

4. Needy Churches Fund

- (a) Leave the assessment at \$1.00 per member for 2016.

Moved/seconded/carried

- (b) Approve the financial statements for the year 2014.

Moved/seconded/carried

7. Miscellaneous

- (a) Re-appoint for a three year term Alex Terlouw (Vineland)

Moved/seconded/carried

- (b) Approve the actions of the committee.

Moved/seconded/carried

The chairman thanks the Finance Committee for their work.

Article 36 - Ad Hoc Emeritus Committee

Mr. Gary Neven reports briefly on the work of the Ad Hoc Emeritus Committee. They are consulting with another reformed denomination who is going through the same process.

The recommendation of the committee is considered:

To appoint Mr. Jim Koopman to this committee

Moved/seconded/carried

Article 37 - Outreach Committee (1)

The secretary of the Committee presents the radio ministry section of the report. On this point, radio minister Rev. H. Overduin tells how the radio ministry does continue to be blessed in various ways. At the same time, Rev. H. Overduin speaks concerning his desire to retire as radio minister at this time, or very shortly.

A round of comments and questions ensues, in which the following major points are made:

- Existing preached sermons could be taken by the committee and broadcast.
- Older messages could be used.
- The HRC and FRC could collaborate in this area.

The **recommendation** of the committee (#2) relating to radio ministry is considered:

2. That Synod approve a 2016 quota of \$15/member for the radio ministry, with the understanding that for congregations that hold at least one collection for this work, the quota will be \$5/member.

Moved/seconded/carried

Article 38 - Executive Session IV

The report of Combined Consistories West is heard.

Motion is made to have synodical deputies be asked to represent the federation at special occasions.

Moved/seconded/carried

In closing of our meeting we sing all the stanzas of Psalter 440. Rev. L. J. Bilkes leads in closing prayer. The meeting is adjourned at 8:50 pm.

SESSION IV

Thursday, June 4, 2015

At 9:02 a.m., the chairman calls the meeting to order. He invites Rev. J. W. Wullschleger to lead in opening devotions. We begin by singing Psalter 170, all stanzas. Rev. J. W. Wullschleger reads from Luke 14:12-24. He meditates on the parable of the feast. Jesus compares the Pharisees to those who rejected the invitation to the feast. They thought themselves worthy of this feast and despised it. He points out that Pharisaism is not yet dead: we also need to be delivered from self-righteousness. This rejection of the gospel call leads to both wrath and a renewed call, this time to the poor and blind. These must be compelled to come in, because they feel unworthy of this great offer. What a duty office-bearers have in this regard, to compel unworthy sinners to come in, so that God's house may be filled.

Rev. J. W. Wullschleger leads in prayer and we sing Psalter 262, all stanzas.

Article 39 – Roll Call

The roll is called with the following changes noted: for Chatham, Elder J. Roffel replaces Elder P. Luth; for Grand Rapids, Elder D. Prince replaces Dr. D. Murray; for St. George, Elder H. VanDoodewaard replaces Elder B. Brunsveld. The new delegates stand to express their agreement with the Three Forms of Unity.

The chairman acknowledges the presence of Rev. C. Heiberg, who is scheduled to be examined during today's Synod meetings.

Article 40 - Refugee Committee

The chairman recognizes the presence of Mr. James VanderZwan (member of the Refugee Committee), and invites him to present the Refugee Committee Report. Mr. VanderZwan explains the request for the increase of the synodical assessment. There has been a decrease in the amount received through collections and although some funds have been received from the broader Reformed community there is still a shortfall.

A discussion follows, in which the following major points are made:

- The absence of a budget for 2015 and projections for 2016 is noted. It is replied that the budget has not changed, but the Committee is instructed to include a budget in future reports, including a next-year budget, and a two-year projection.
- A question is asked about the payroll increase noted in the report. Mr. J. VanderZwan clarifies that this is due to regulation changes by the Government of Canada.

- Appreciation is expressed for the work of the Committee and the body is reminded of its duty to do good “unto the least of these [our] brethren.” The point is made that as a “Sponsorship Agreement Holder” the Refugee Committee is in a unique position to sponsor specifically *Christian* refugees.

Synod considers the **recommendations** of the committee:

1. To increase the quota from \$1 to \$5.
Moved/seconded/carried
2. To approve the attached financial statements.
Moved/seconded/carried
3. To approve the appointment of the following people for a 2-year term:
 - Ms. Fran Westeringh (Chilliwack); Mrs. Lieneke Stiksma (Chilliwack);
 - Mr. Henk Koetsier (Abbotsford); and Rev. J. Schoeman (Abbotsford).
 Moved/seconded/carried
4. To approve the actions of the committee.
Moved/seconded/carried

Article 41 - Interchurch Relations Committee (2)

Synod acts on the Interchurch Relations Committee recommendation #8 - “To accept, process (in accordance with CO 5G) and decide on Mitchell’s request to call URCNA minister Rev. C. Heiberg” which had been adopted earlier. Rev. C. Heiberg is invited to come forward to preach his sermon.

Rev. C. Heiberg reads Matthew 25:1-13. He preaches a sermon on the parable of the ten virgins, which he had recently preached in his congregation, and leads in prayer.

Rev. J. Schoeman interviews Rev. C. Heiberg in the area of Homiletics. He also makes various comments on his sermon.

Rev. C. Pronk interviews Rev. C. Heiberg in the area of Dogmatics.

A motion is made to go into executive session.

Moved/seconded/carried

Article 42 - Executive Session V

In executive session, Rev. C. Heiberg is questioned regarding his personal relationship with the Lord and his sense of call to the ministry. Rev. L. W. Bilkes conducts this interview.

We adjourn for lunch. Rev. H. Bergsma leads in prayer asking for a blessing on the meal. Rev. D. Kranendonk introduces various books from the publications committee and informs us that these are available in the fellowship hall. He particularly highlights the recently published devotional commentary on the gospel of Matthew written by our late brother Rev. K. Gangar and the collections of sermons on the Belgic Confession by Rev. C. Schouls.

After lunch, we sing Psalter 92:1, 7 and 8. Elder A. Pol reads from Ephesians 2 and closes with prayer.

Article 43 - Executive Session VI

The chairman calls the meeting into executive session to allow Rev. C. Heiberg to answer questions from the floor concerning his sermon, as well as from his interviews.

Synod deliberates on the matter of Rev. C. Heiberg (IRC report recommendation #8). The outcome of the vote is to grant the request of the Mitchell congregation to propose Rev. C. Heiberg to the congregation for call.

Elder S. Kranendonk replaces Elder P. Vandenberg as a delegate for Hamilton. He stands to express his agreement with the Three Forms of Unity.

Article 44 - Declaration of Acceptance

Rev. D. Kranendonk informs Rev. C. Heiberg that Synod grants the request of the Mitchell congregation to call him. He addresses him with a few appropriate words. Rev. J. Koopman leads the body in prayer. The delegates have opportunity to shake Rev. C. Heiberg's hand.

Article 45 - Calling of Rev. C. Heiberg

A motion is made that should there be no call from Mitchell or else no acceptance of such a call if extended, other FRCs, after presenting their situation to the IRC and receiving approval, will be permitted to extend a call to Rev. C. Heiberg.

Moved/seconded/carried

At this time, it is noted that Elder I. Pol received permission to absent himself for the rest of the day.

Article 46 - Concept Minutes (2)

Articles 1-22 of the concept minutes have been distributed. A motion is made to approve the concept minutes.

Moved/seconded/carried

Article 47 - Reconsideration of the Motion in Article 45

A motion is made that Synod reconsider its decision regarding the ability for other FRCs to call Rev. C. Heiberg (see Article 45).

Moved/seconded

A discussion follows. The concern is that this motion (Article 45) gives undue Synodical authority to the Interchurch Relations Committee. The chair calls the question to a vote.

Not carried

Article 48 - Brantford Overture #1 re Church Order Article 5G (2)

The discussion from yesterday that was tabled at that time is now taken up again.

Brantford expresses that they reluctantly withdraw this overture, not because they do not recognize a need for it, but they are willing to discuss this matter with the Interchurch Relations Committee.

Overture withdrawn

Article 49 - Theological Student Support Committee

Elder J. Brink reports on behalf of the Committee. He reminds us that the candidates are eligible for support up to six months as they await calls. This could have implications for the budget.

The Committee's **recommendations** are considered in turn:

- a) To approve the financial statement for the year 2014 as presented.

Moved/seconded/carried

- b) To increase the assessment for the Theological Student Support Fund to \$20.00 per member for the year 2016.

Moved/seconded/carried

- c) To approve the proposed budget for the year 2015 and projection for 2016 as presented.

Moved/seconded/carried

- d) To ask the churches to hold a special collection to support the immediate needs of the Support Fund before the end of 2015.
Moved/seconded/carried
- e) To re-appoint Brother Jerry Hamstra as a member of the committee for another three year term.
Moved/seconded/carried
- f) To approve the actions of this committee.
Moved/seconded/carried

The Chair calls the meeting into executive session.

Article 50 - Executive Session VII

Synod conducts an interview with Rev. K. Herfst regarding his changing circumstances.

A motion is made that Synod, with gratitude to God and to Rev. K. Herfst for many years of faithful service in Guatemala, and taking note of the fact that Rev. K. Herfst has accepted a professorship at Redeemer University College, directs the St. George consistory to report back to Synod 2016 with regard to Rev. K. Herfst's ministerial status in relation to church order articles 6 and 12.

Moved/seconded/carried

Article 51 - Address to Rev. K. Herfst

Rev. E. Moerdyk addresses Rev. K. Herfst on behalf of Synod, expressing gratitude to the Lord for what He has done through him throughout many years of labour in Guatemala. He recognizes the trauma of repatriation with sympathy and concern. He informs Rev. K. Herfst that Synod has taken note of his accepting a professorship at Redeemer College-University, and that Synod has instructed Rev. K. Herfst's consistory (St. George FRC) to report back to Synod 2016 about the implications of this for his ministerial credentials as per articles 6 or 12 of the Church Order. He reads Psalm 116, pointing to verse 6, "I was brought low and He helped me." He reflects upon how many of the ups and downs in our lives can be summarized with this simple phrase. He also points to verse 8: "for thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling." Surely we want no more than this great deliverance from God. Rev. E. Moerdyk extends the prayerful wish to Rev. K. Herfst that the Lord will supply all the needs of him and his family during this time.

Article 52 - Treasurer of Synod

The Treasurer of Synod, Mr. J. Tamminga, presents the Financial Report. Several questions are asked and answered.

The **recommendations** made in the report are considered:

1. To maintain the annual quota of \$12.00 per member for the year 2016.
Moved/seconded/carried
2. To continue to pay 85% of the car travel allowance as reported by the National Joint Council for the Province of Ontario. (These rates are published on a quarterly basis, January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1. As of April 1, 2015 it is 85% of \$0.535 = \$0.45475).
Moved/seconded/carried
3. To approve the appointment of Mr. John Wilbrink as treasurer of Synod.
Moved/seconded/carried
4. To approve the attached Financial Statements and the actions of the Treasurer of Synod.
Moved/seconded/carried

The chairman publicly recognizes that this is a significant historical moment for our Synod, seeing our Synod Treasurer has served in this capacity since 1967 (almost 50 years). His faithful, quiet, behind-the-scenes work is noted. Anyone who has had contact with him can attest to the promptness of his work. Further, the length of Mr. J. Tamminga's tenure is a testimony to the present generation of the value of lasting service. His personal concern for the welfare of the churches, and not just for the finances, is highlighted. This concern flows out of his love towards us, a love that will also undoubtedly continue even though he will no longer be serving as Treasurer. The chair extends the wish and prayer that others would have the same dedication as we find in Psalm 122:8, where we read about the prayer for the welfare of the church, "pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee." The wish is expressed that Mr. J. Tamminga and his wife may also experience this love and prosperity, for Christ's sake.

We sing Psalter 350:4-5 and Rev. C. Pronk commends him to the Lord in prayer and also asks for a blessing on the meal.

An opportunity is given for the body to express appreciation to Mr. J. Tamminga in person, as well as to Rev. K. Herfst, and the meeting is adjourned for supper.

After the meal, we sing Psalter 76. Elder R. Koopman reads Psalm 27 and closes the meal in prayer.

Article 53 - Outreach Committee (2)

Rev. J. Overduin reports on behalf the committee. He remarks that he was just putting the finishing touches on an article for the Messenger about Rev. K. Gangar's work when he heard about Rev. K. Gangar's stroke. The committee expresses their desire to continue with the work of Rev. K. Gangar by finding a replacement. The translators, some of which are in India, have said that the devotional commentary on Matthew is a very relevant and needed work for use in the Asian culture.

Rev. R. VanDoodewaard gives an update on the work in Nipissing. They have developed a "Summer Visitor's Guide" for their summer guests, including those who visit for an extended period of time. He updates us on various developments, including the addition of a few new members. He notes that it would be encouraging if more FRC families vacationing in the area would join their services. There is no further discussion other than a note of encouragement, appreciating Rev. R. VanDoodewaard's work in Nipissing, and the recognition of the difficulty of his work. The chair re-iterates this appreciation.

The **remaining recommendations** of the report are now considered (see Article 37).

1. That Synod approve a 2016 quota of \$21/member (no change from 2015) for the work of outreach, specifically the Asian Ministry and the work of Dr. K. Gangar, with the understanding that the ministry work in Powassan is to be supported through freewill offerings (next year's commitment is \$50,000).

Moved/seconded/carried

3. That Synod give direction with regard to the two special matters raised under point D, i.e., whether and/or where to seek another field of labour in order to plant another church, and whether or not to seek a meeting with the Outreach Committee of the HRC and with what particular mandate to meet.
 - Some discussion ensues concerning the nature of future opportunities, including culturally-assimilated vs. culture-specific church plants, choosing the proper timing to commence new work, and that church planting opportunities can also arise due

to a number of families from existing congregations living in a specific area.

- It is noted that the Committee has the church-orderly right (Article 51C) to correspond with their counterpart in the Heritage Reformed Congregations.
- As for a mandate, the chair advises the Committee to meet with their HRC counterpart and pursue areas of commonality and learn from each other's experiences in church planting. As there is no actual recommendation to Synod in this item, the question is not called.

Motion not required

4. That Synod approve the following appointments:

4.1. To re-appoint Rev. J. Overduin (Vineland) and Mr. R. Pennings (Calgary) to 4th terms, expiring 2018.

Moved/seconded/carried

4.2. To appoint Mr. Raymond Roth (Hamilton) to succeed Mr. Jim Koopman (Brantford, has served four terms) to a 1st term, expiring 2018.

Moved/seconded/carried

4.3. To appoint Rev. Hans Overduin and Rev. R. VanDoodewaard as ex officio members for another year. (Rev. H. van Essen asking not to be reappointed in this capacity).

Moved/seconded/carried

5. That Synod approve the financial statements of 2014, the budget of 2015, and the projection of 2016.

Moved/seconded/carried

6. That Synod approve the actions of the Outreach committee.

Moved/seconded/carried

The Chair calls the meeting into executive session.

Article 54 - Executive Session VIII

Synod hears the reports of Combined Consistories East and Combined Consistories South, as well as the report of classis contracta.

Article 55 - Brantford Overture re Article 82B

Rev. R. VanDoodewaard presents the overture and explains it. The overture is opened for a round of discussion and some of the major points made are:

- Various delegates indicate similar challenges to those expressed in this overture in their own settings.
- The point is made that this additional regulation may only create problems, and that the system we have as a federation is sufficient.
- The church is not in duty bound to bring members in, as the overture states, but individuals are in duty bound to join to church, according to Belgic Confession, article 28.

Rev. R. VanDoodewaard responds to these comments, underscoring some perceived deficiencies of the current system lets people live as members (partake of the Lord's Supper) without the commitment of being members.

Elder C. Jonkman is seated as a delegate for Dundas, replacing Elder N. Koppelaar (who left at the end of Article 54). He stands to express his agreement with the Three Forms of Unity.

Upon further discussion the following points are made:

- The subjective nature of the proposed process is noted, as well as the legal implications with respect to civil courts.
- Concern is expressed that we don't simply react to various situations but actually consider the principles involved.
- There are many other broad implications for the life of the congregation if our concept of confessional membership changes.

A motion is made:

That Synod instruct the Church Order Committee to study the matter of this overture, and to report the findings of its study to Synod 2016.

Moved/seconded/carried

Article 56 - Address from the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken (CGK)

Rev. J. W. Wullschleger addresses the body on behalf of our sister churches in the Netherlands. He expresses gratitude for the invitation and his joy at seeing so many familiar faces. He also notes with thanksgiving to see how the work of the Lord goes on from one generation to the next. He conveys warmest greetings from the churches in the Netherlands, as well as deepest sympathy in the passing away of Rev. K. Gangar. He expresses his desire that the Lord would provide a way for this work to continue.

He provides some updates on the churches in the Netherlands, highlighting that their recent study report on homosexuality is available in English on their website (ww.cgk.nl). Due to some concerns with the report, its implementation has been deferred until 2016.

He reports that their denominational theological seminary in Apeldoorn is becoming increasingly difficult to preserve. There is a push to establish a broad-based “Reformed Theological University” involving especially the Vrijgemaakte Kerken (Liberated Churches), but also aiming to include the Protestantse Kerk in Nederland (PKN), and the Hersteld Hervormde Kerk (HHK), seeking cooperation where possible, but separation where necessary.

He closes by observing that while we live in difficult times, we need not be discouraged, since we live between Pentecost and Christ’s return. He urges us to fix our eyes on Christ, and to be faithful to the Lord and His Word. He reads Jude 24-25.: “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

Rev. D. Kranendonk thanks him for his warm, enlightening words. He notes the special place Rev. J. W. Wullschleger has among us, and also that of his denomination as our “mother church.” While our relationship as churches is not as familiar as it once was, there is still a bond, experienced in different ways, but above all through the grace of the Lord. He commends the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken to the Lord with the prayer that He would establish them, bless them, and make them a blessing.

Article 57 - Correspondence from the London FRC

The chairman opens the floor for discussion about the questions from London FRC. After some brief comments by the London delegate, the chairman recognizes the need for more ministers and urges the body to prayer that the Lord would send forth labourers into his vineyard.

Article 58 - Synodical Deputies (Article 49)

Rev. P. VanderMeyden and Dr. L. W. Bilkes are assigned to be Synodical Deputies for the coming year.

Moved/seconded/carried

Article 59 - Appointment of Church Counselors/Visitors

The combined consistories West prepares their own church counselors/visitors list but it is included here for reference.

A motion is made to approve the church counselors/visitors list for Combined Consistories South and East as presented below.

Moved/seconded/carried

Church Counselors/Visitors List 2015

Combined Consistories East

Church	Counselor	Visitors (first visitor to arrange visit)
Brantford	H. Bergsma	J. Overduin, L.W. Bilkes
Dundas	J. Lewis	H. Bergsma, C. Pronk
Fenwick	R. VanDoodewaard	D. Kranendonk, L.W. Bilkes
Hamilton	L.J. Bilkes	R. VanDoodewaard, P. Vandermeijden
Prompton Plains	J. Overduin	L.W. Bilkes, C. Pronk
St. George	P. Vandermeijden	L.J. Bilkes, P. Vandermeijden
Vineland	T. Bergsma	H. Bergsma, C.A. Schouls

Combined Consistories South

Church	Counselor	Visitors (first visitor to arrange visit)
Bornholm	L.J. Bilkes	J. Overduin, P. Vandermeijden
Chatham	D. Kranendonk,	R. VanDoodewaard, C. Pronk
Grand Rapids	J. Lewis	L.J. Bilkes, D. Kranendonk
London	J. Overduin	T. Bergsma, P. Vandermeijden
Mitchell	T. Bergsma	D. Kranendonk, C. A. Schouls
Oxford	R. VanDoodewaard	T. Bergsma, L.W. Bilkes
St. Thomas	H. Bergsma	D. Kranendonk, L.W. Bilkes

Combined Consistories West

Church	Counselor	Visitors (first visitor to arrange visit)
Abbotsford	J. Koopman	T. Aicken, J. Koopman
Calgary	E. Moerdyk	E. Moerdyk, S. Dibbet
Chilliwack	T. Aicken	T. Aicken, J. Schoeman
Lacombe	H. Overduin	E. Moerdyk, H. Overduin
Langley	J. Schoeman	J. Koopman, J. Schoeman
Monarch	S. Dibbet	H. Overduin, S. Dibbet

Synod 2016 meets, God willing, on June 6-10 with the calling church being Prompton Plains FRC and the host church Dundas FRC.

Article 60 - Adoption of Executive Minutes

Executive minutes are adopted.

Article 61 - Adoption of the News Release

After various changes, the news release prepared by Rev. H. Overduin is adopted.

Article 62 - Interdenominational Psalter Revision Committee**Appointments**

It is moved that Rev. J. Overduin, Mr. D. Vandenberg (Vineland), Elder T. Postma (Brantford), and Mr. H. den Hollander (Dundas; alternate) be appointed to the Interdenominational Psalter Revision Committee.

Moved/seconded/carried

Article 63 - Censure

The chairman inquires whether there is any need for censure as outlined in Article 43 of our Church Order. The body is in agreement that this is not required. The chairman observes the brotherly spirit evident throughout the meetings.

Article 64 - Adjournment

Vice-chairman, Rev. J. Schoeman expresses his appreciation for the way in which the chairman led the body through this agenda, as well as for work done by the clerks. He recognizes the sacrifices made by elders to attend Synod, and thanks them for their time.

He closes by recommending the words of Revelation 22:12 to our further meditation: "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

The chairman then reads the last words of Rev. K. Gangar's book: "rise, and do your Master's will, while it is today."

Rev. J. Schoeman leads in prayer and the delegates sing from Psalter 246:3. The meeting is adjourned at 10:43 p.m.

FINIS

Synod 2015 - Press Release

The pre-Synodical Prayer service was held on Monday, June 1, 2015 with Rev. D. Kranendonk as minister of the calling church, Oxford FRC, leading the service. The text for the service was Revelation 2:1. "...These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." The theme and points of the sermon were: The One in the Center: 1. His Breath-taking Splendor; 2. His Star-holding Power; 3. His Light-Giving Presence. The sermon put Christ in the center of the service and was the repeated prayer for the synod meetings.

During the pre-Synod service and throughout the sessions of Synod, reference was made to the recent sudden death of Dr. Kuldip Gangar. It began with the first song at the Prayer service, Psalter 281. "Mindful of our human frailty, Is the God in Whom we trust..." At various times, prayers were made for the family Gangar. Synod also sent to Mrs. Judy Gangar and family a letter expressing our condolences and included a cd copy of Synod 2015 Prayer Service. Synod approved the expressed intentions of the Outreach Committee to continue with the Punjabi ministry, however that may develop in the future under God's blessing. A complimentary copy of the Devotional Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew by Dr. K. Gangar was given to each consistory on behalf of the Outreach Committee.

Following the service the delegates met to elect the executive. Chairman: Rev. David Kranendonk; Vice-Chairman: Rev. Jack Schoeman; First Clerk: Rev. John Koopman; Second Clerk: Rev. Joel Overduin.

The first day of Synod focused on the candidacy examinations of Students Ian Macleod and John Procee, with the joyful outcome that both men were accepted as candidates for the ministry and now eligible for call. We pray the Lord to bless these brothers and soon to use them mightily as ministers of the gospel in our churches. That same day Dr. David Murray was approved as FRC instructor at PRTS. Student Ken Pennings will have a seven week internship in the West under the mentorship of Rev. John Koopman and Rev. Jack Schoeman. Mr. Young Jae Lee (Grand Rapids FRC) and Mr. Mark Wagenaar (Vineland FRC) were accepted as new students for the ministry. Mark will be starting his seminary training and Young Jae (who has been attending PRTS for some time already) has been given summer assignments including leading services for five Sundays as directed by Theological Education committee.

Each day of Synod the delegates were privileged with extended opening devotions. On Tuesday Dr. G. M. Bilkes led us in meditating on Luke 5:5 especially the words, "nevertheless at thy word." Wednesday's opening devotions were led by Rev. D. Lipsy minister of HRC in

Burgessville, speaking on the prayer of God's people in Nehemiah 9. On Thursday morning Rev. W. Wullschleger, minister of Zeewolde CGK led us focusing on Luke 14:12-24.

Living in the "perilous times" (II Timothy 3:1) that we do, the need for prayer and setting aside a time for prayer in our homes and churches was emphasized throughout our Synod meetings. "Thy kingdom come" --"that is, rule us so by Thy Word and Spirit, that we may submit ourselves more and more to Thee; preserve and increase Thy church; destroy the works of the devil, and all violence which would exalt itself against Thee; and also, all wicked counsels devised against Thy holy Word." --Heidelberg Catechism QA 123

We had representatives from various churches give brotherly greetings including from the Hersteld Hervormde Kerk, Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken, Heritage Reformed Congregations, Orthodox Presbyterian Churches, Presbyterian Reformed Church, and United Reformed Churches. The exchange of speeches at Synod are a heartwarming highlight of each year's synod, especially hearing of the Lord's work in these other federations and the common love and devotion for the Lord and His church and kingdom.

Synod agreed to be involved in an interdenominational Psalter revision committee. Also, after a lengthy, wholesome, brotherly discussion, it was decided to have the Publications Committee appoint a subcommittee to investigate the feasibility of a supplementary Psalter using contemporary pronouns.

Rev. Ken Herfst's work as mission worker sponsored by the denominational FRMI committee is coming to conclusion at the end of 2015. In the Summer and Fall season he hopes to complete his studies for his doctorate and his months of granted furlough and repatriation time. We are thankful for Pastor Ken Herfst's many years of service in Guatemala serving as missionary and Professor of Theology. Rev. Herfst has since accepted a position as Assistant Professor for Ministry at Redeemer University-College in Hamilton starting in December 2015.

Rev. Christo Heiberg sustained an examination at Synod making him eligible to be called by Mitchell FRC, as was requested by them. Presently Rev. Christo Heiberg is minister of Zion United Reformed Church in Sheffield, Ontario.

Synod 2016 meets, God willing, on June 6-10 with the calling church being Pompton Plains FRC and the host church Dundas FRC.

Synodical Committees and Appointments 2015 – 2016

Church Order Committee

Rev. P. VanderMeyden (Chair)	Vineland	2017
Rev. J.R. Koopman (Vice)	Chilliwack	2016
Mr. R. Pennings (Secr.)	Calgary	2018
Rev. L.W. Bilkes	Grand Rapids	2016
Mr. B. Droogendyk	St. George	2017
Rev. D. Kranendonk	Oxford	2018

Ethical – Public Affairs:

Dr. L.W. Bilkes, (Chair)	Grand Rapids	2018
Mr. T. Postma (Secr)	Brantford	2016
Dr. J. Hamstra	Dundas	2017
Dr. G. Kenyon	Mitchell	2017
Dr. E. Nieuwenhuis	Pompton Plains	2018

Finance

Mr. G. Neven (Chair)	Brantford	2016
Mr. A. Terlouw (Sec.)	Vineland	2018
Mr. H. Berger (Treas.)	Hamilton	2017
Mr. B. Bruinsma	Hamilton	
Mr. K. Noordam	Abbotsford	2017
Mr. G. Kleyen	Grand Rapids)	2016

Foreign Mission

Mr. A. DeVries, (Chair)	Mitchell	2017
Rev. T Bergsma	Chatham	2016
Mr. W. Bouma	St. George	2017
Mr. E. DeKorte	Fenwick	2016
Rev. S. Dibbet	Lacombe	2017
Mr. B. Laman	Hamilton	2017
Mr. M. Laman	Pompton Plains	2018
Mr. P. Luth	Chatham	2018
Mr. R. Postma	Brantford	2016
Mr. M. Traas	Chilliwack	2018

Inter Church Relations

Primary

Rev. L. J. Bilkes	Dundas	2016
Dr. L.W. Bilkes	Grand Rapids	2016
Mr. A. DeVries	Mitchell	2016
Mr. C. Keuning	Hamilton	2016
Rev. J. Koopman	Chilliwack	2017
Rev. J. Lewis	Pompton Plains	2017
Rev. E. Moerdyk	Monarch	2017
Rev. J. Overduin	Vineland	2017
Rev. J. Schoeman	Abbotsford	2016

Mr. David Tamminga	Vineland	2017
Mr. H. VanDoodewaard	St. George	2017

Alternate:

Rev. C. Pronk (ex officio)	St. George	2016
Mr. D. Faasse	Grand Rapids	2018

Outreach

Mr. R. Pennings (Chair)	Calgary	2018
Rev. L. J. Bilkes, (Vice)	Dundas	2017
Rev. J. Overduin (Sec)	Vineland	2018
Mr. J. Dendekker, Treas.*	Langley	2017
Mr. B. Marskamp, Treas.*	Dundas	2017
Mr. B. Moerdyk	Grand Rapids	2016
Mr. R. Roth	Hamilton	2018
Rev. H. Overduin	Calgary	ex officio
Rev. R. Vandoodewaard	Brantford	ex officio

*B. Marskamp is treasurer of the Outreach fund and J. Dendekker of the Radio fund.

Publications

Dr. L.W. Bilkes (Chair)	Grand Rapids	2017
Rev. J. Overduin (Vice)	Vineland	2018
Rev. D. H. Kranendonk (Sec.)	Oxford	2016
Dr. G. M. Bilkes	Grand Rapids	2017
Mr. J. DenDekker	Langley	2018
Mr. H. DenHollander	Dundas	2016
Rev. J. Lewis	Pompton Plains	2016
Mr. H. VanDoodewaard	Fenwick	2018
Rev. R. VanDoodewaard	Powassan	2016
Rev. C. Pronk	Brantford	ex officio
Mr. H. Kleyn	Grand Rapids	ex officio

Messenger Editor – Rev. C. Pronk (appointed through 2016)

Messenger Assistant Editor – Dr. G. M Bilkes

Open Windows Editor - Rev. J. Lewis

Open Windows Managing Editor – Mrs. E. Roth

Interdenominational Psalter Revision Committee delegates – Rev. J. Overduin, Mr. D. VandenBerg, Mr. T. Postma, Mr. H. DenHollander (alternate).

Refugee Committee

Rev. T. Aitken (chair)	Langley	2016
Mrs. L. Stiksmá	Chilliwack	2017
Mr. H. Koetsier	Abbotsford	2017
Rev. J. Schoeman	Abbotsford	2017
Mr. J. VanderZwaan	Langley	2016
Mrs. F. Westeringh	Chilliwack	2017
Mr. B. Vanderwoerd	Abbotsford	ex officio

Theological Education

Primary

Dr. L. W. Bilkes (Chair)	Grand Rapids	2016
Rev. J. Schoeman (vice)	Abbotsford	2016
Rev. D. H. Kranendonk (Sec.)	Oxford	2017
Mr. C. Jonkman	Dundas	2016
Mr. C.J. Keuning	Hamilton	2017
Rev. J. Koopman	Chilliwack	2018
Rev. J. Lewis	Prompton Plains	2018
Mr. E. Nieuwenhuis	Prompton Plains	2017
Rev. H. Overduin	Calgary	2018
Rev. P. VanderMeyden	Vineland	2017

Alternate

Rev. E. Moerdyk	Monarch	2017
Mr. G. Postma	Vineland	2017

Theological Student Support

Mr. J. Wilbrink (sec.)	Dundas	2017
Mr. R. Naves (treasurer)	Hamilton	ex officio
Mr. J. Brink	Fenwick	2016
Mr. J. Hamstra	Dundas	2018
Mr. B. Pols	Grand Rapids	2017

Youth & Education

Mr. W. Bouma (chair)	St. George	2016
Mr. R. Roth (vice)	Hamilton	2017
Rev. T. Bergsma (sec.)	Chatham	2016
Mr. J. Bokma (treasurer)	Vineland	2018
Mr. B. Moerdyk	Grand Rapids	2017
Mr. E. Gritter	Calgary	2017
Rev. J. Overduin	Vineland	2017

Ad Hoc Emeritus Fund

Mr. G. Neven (Convenor)	Brantford
Mr. H. Berger	Hamilton
Mr. H. DeVries	Brantford
Mr. D. Fasse	Grand Rapids
Mr. J. Koopman	Brantford
Mr. K. Noordam	Abbotsford
Mr. J. VanGameren	Vineland

Youth Messenger Editors – Rev. T. Bergsma and Rev. J. Overduin

Youth Camp Directors:

East: Mr. Kim Hamstra, (Brantford)

West: Chilliwack and Monarch consistories

Classis Contracta: Dundas and Hamilton consistories

Coordinator Synodical Committee meetings:

Contact: Mr. H. VanDoodewaard (hvd@rogers.com; 519-621-7325)

Treasurer of Synod: Mr. John Wilbrink
8 Weneil Drive, Freelon, Ontario, L0R 1K0
john.wilbrink@gmail.com

Denominational Archives

Held in Grand Rapids under supervision of the consistory.

Archivist: Mr. Robert Nordyke
7200 Knapp St. N.E. Ada, MI 49301
Tel: 616-676-2396; E-Mail: rjn17@juno.com

**Free Reformed Churches of N.A.
Schedule and Analysis of Synodical Assessments
Approved Assessments for 2016**

	Approved 2016	Actual 2015	Increase		Actual 2014	Actual 2013
			\$	%		
Emeritus Fund	\$27.70	\$27.70		-	\$27.70	\$26.00
Publications	6.00	6.00		-	6.00	6.00
Home Missions	21.00	21.00		-	21.00	19.00
Radio Missions	* 15.00	* 18.00	(3.00)	(17)	18.00	18.00
Student Support	20.00	13.00	7.00	54	13.00	13.00
Synodical Fund	12.00	12.00	-	-	12.00	12.00
Youth & Education	3.00	3.00		-	3.00	3.00
Needy Churches	1.00	1.00			2.50	2.50
Refugee	5.00	1.00	4.00	400	1.00	1.00
TOTALS	\$110.70	\$102.70	\$8.00	7.8	\$104.20	\$100.50

* Radio Mission -\$5.00 for congregations that have at least one collection

AGENDA

of the
Free Reformed Church of North America
meeting in Synod
June 1 - 5, 2015
at Brantford FRC
Brantford, Ontario



The opening session will begin following the prayer service which begins at 7:30 pm. Monday June 01, 2015. At that time Point 1 of the agenda will be completed under the auspices of the convening church. The exact times and schedules for the balance of Synod 2014 will be established by the elected executive of the meeting.

1) OPENING SESSION

- a) Opening: Rev. Kranendonk
- b) Presentation of credentials
- c) Election of executive officers of Synod 2015
- d) Agreement with the Three Forms of Unity

2) ORDER OF BUSINESS

- a) Schedule of meeting for Synod 2015
- b) Adoption of Public Acts of Synod 2014
- c) Appointment of advisors, advisory committees, assistant clerk, treasurer
- d) Adoption of Agenda
- e) Appointment of reporters for press release and "The Messenger"
- f) Schedule of visitors representing other denominations

3) CORRESPONDENCE

- a) Treasurer of Synod, p. 4
- b) London FRC re. Shortage of ministers, p. 10

4) APPEALS - none

5) OVERTURES

- a) Grace FRC Brantford - Church Order Article 5G, p. 11
- b) Grace FRC Brantford - Church Order Article 82B, p. 14
- c) Grace FRC Brantford - Re Supplementary Psalter, p. 18
- d) Zion FRC Fenwick - Visiting Ministers, p. 19

6) STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a) Church Order Committee, p. 20
- b) Ethical - Public Affairs Committee, p. 29
- c) Finance Committee, p. 31
- d) Foreign Mission Committee, p. 44
- e) Interchurch Relations Committee, p. 55
- f) Outreach Committee Committee, p. 68
- g) Publications Committee , p. 79
- h) Refugee Committee, p. 94
- i) Theological Education Committee, p. 98
- j) Theological Student Support Committee, p. 107
- k) Youth and Education Committee, p. 112

7) AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a) Ad. Hoc Emeritus Fund Committee, p. 116

8) CHURCH REPORTS

- a) Combined Consistories West
- b) Combined Consistories South
- c) Combined Consistories East
- d) Synodical (Article 49) Deputies report

9) CLOSING OF SYNOD

- a) Appointment of church counselors and church visitors
- b) Appointment of synodical deputies
- c) Date for Synod 2016 and appointment of calling and hosting churches
- d) Adoption of Executive Minutes 2015
- e) Adoption of Concept Minutes 2015
- f) Adoption of news release
- g) Mutual censure
- h) Closing and adjournment

Correspondence

TREASURER OF SYNOD

Burlington, Ontario April 16, 2015

To the Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of North America.

Esteemed Brethren,

Attached are the Financial Statements of the Synodical Fund for the year ending December 31, 2014.

During the course of the year, the annual assessments have been received from all the congregations.

At Synod 2010 the treasurer of Synod was requested to include the financial implications of the cumulative effect of the assessments of the denomination.

The proposed assessments for the year 2016 totals \$110.70 per member, as per attached schedule, which is an increase of \$8.00 per member over the year 2015

The books of the Treasurer have been checked by Mr. Mr. Ryk Naves (Hamilton) and Mr. B. Verloop (Hamilton) The Financial records were found to be in good order.

I like to inform the Synod that the time has come to step down as treasurer. You can understand what this means for me, I have done this work with much love since 1967. I am very thankful to the Lord that He gave me the health and strength to do this for such a long time. I have approached Mr. John Wilbrink from the Dundas congregation to take it over from me, pending approval of Synod.

We would like to make the following proposals:

1. To maintain the annual quota of \$12.00 per member for the year 2016.
2. To continue to pay 85% of the car allowance as reported by the National Joint Council for the Province of Ontario. (These rates are published on a quarterly basis, January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1. As of April 1, 2015 it is 85% of \$0.535 = \$0.45475)
3. To approve the appointment of Mr. John Wilbrink as treasurer of Synod.
4. The approve the attached Financial Statements and the actions of the Treasurer of Synod.

May the Lord bless your meeting.

J. D. Tamminga, Treasurer Synod.

**Free Reformed Churches of N.A.
Schedule and Analysis of Synodical Assessments
Proposed Assessments for 2016**

	Proposed 2016	Actual 2015	Increase		Actual 2014	Actual 2013
			\$	%		
Emeritus Fund	\$27.70	\$27.70		-	\$27.70	\$26.00
Publications	6.00	6.00		-	6.00	6.00
Home Missions	21.00	21.00		-	21.00	19.00
Radio Missions	* 15.00	* 18.00	(3.00)	(16.7)	18.00	18.00
Student Support	20.00	13.00	7.00	53.8	13.00	13.00
Synodical Fund	12.00	12.00	-	-	12.00	12.00
Youth & Education	3.00	3.00		-	3.00	3.00
Needy Churches	1.00	1.00			2.50	2.50
Refugee	5.00	1.00	4.00	400.0	1.00	1.00
TOTALS	\$110.70	\$102.70	\$8.00	7.8	\$104.20	\$ 100.50

* Radio Mission -\$5.00 for congregations that have at least one collection

Free Reformed Churches of N.A.
Synodical Fund
Statement of Financial Position
December 31, 2014

ASSETS	2014	2013
Cash in bank	\$ 37,059	\$ 29,265
Total Assets	\$ 37,059	\$ 29,265
 EQUITY		
Beginning Balance	\$ 29,265	\$ 24,948
Excess (shortage)	7,794	4,317
Ending Balance	\$ 37,059	\$ 29,265

Free Reformed Churches of N.A.
Synodical Fund
Statement of Receipts and Disbursements
For the year ended December 31, 2014

	Actual	Budget	Variance		2013
	2014	2014	\$	%	
RECEIPTS					
Assessments	\$58,260	\$58,260	-	-	\$57,192
Total Receipts	58,260	58,260	-	-	57,192
DISBURSEMENTS					
Meetings & Travel:					
Delegates	19,407	19,250	(157)	(1)	18,810
Committee Meetings	19,085	18,750	(335)	(2)	18,305
Meals - Synod	978	2,300	1,322	57	1,860
Delegation Chr. Geref. Kerken			-		953
Delegation Hersteld Hervormde Kerk		3,000	3,000	100	-
Delegate United Reformed Churches	290	1,300	1,010	78	-
Delegation Heritage Reformed Congregations		260	260	100	786
Delegates ICRC			-		2,625
Delegation - NAPARC		300	300	100	1,607
ICRC membership dues	551	400	(151)	(38)	350
NAPARC membership dues	564	600	36	6	319
Church Visitation	2,584	3,500	916	26	39
Minister's Retreat	5,893	6,500	607	9	6,075
Postage	219	350	131	37	357
Stationary	52	200	148	74	47
Historical Centre FRC, Grand Rapids	443	500	57	11	342
Remuneration - Synod					
Recording Assistant	400	400	-	-	400
Miscellaneous		200	200	100	
Total Expenses	50,466	57,810	7,344	13	52,875
EXCESS (SHORTAGE)	\$ 7,794	\$ 450	\$ (7,344)		\$ 4,317

Free Reformed Churches of N.A.
Synodical Fund
Budget & Projection
 For the years ending December 31, 2015 & 2016

	Note	2014 Actual	2015 Budget	Variance		2016 Projectio n
				\$	%	
RECEIPTS						
Assessments	3a	\$58,260	\$ 59,316	\$ 1,056	2	\$ 60,000
Total Receipts		58,260	59,316	1,056	2	60,000
DISBURSEMENTS						
Meetings & Travel:						
Delegates	3b	19,407	22,000	2,593	13	20,500
Committee meetings		19,085	21,500	2,415	13	21,500
Meals - Synod		978	2,300	1,322	135	2,300
Delegation – CGK				-		1,500
Delegation –FCS (Cont.)				-		2,500
Delegation – HHK				-		3,000
Delegation – Reformed Presb. Ch. of Ireland				-		
Delegation – URC		290		(290)	(100)	600
Delegation - HRC			500	500		
Delegation - ICRC				-		
Delegation - NAPARC	3c		1,200	1,200		1,500
ICRC membership dues		551	650	99	18	675
NAPARC membership dues		564	650	86	15	675
Church visitation		2,584	3,500	916	35	3,500
Ministers' retreat		5,893	6,500	607	10	6,500
Postage		219	350	131	60	350
Stationary		52	200	148	285	200
Remuneration - Synod Recording Assistant		400	400	-	-	400
Historical Centre FRC		443	500	57	13	500
Miscellaneous			200	200		200
Total Disbursements		50,466	60,450	9,984	20	66,400
EXCESS (SHORTAGE)		\$ 7,794	\$ (1,134)	\$(8,928)		\$ (6,400)

Free Reformed Churches of N.A.
Synodical Fund
Notes to the Financial Reports
For the year ending December 31, 2014

1. Significant Accounting Policies:

The financial statements of the Synodical Fund are prepared utilizing the accrual basis of accounting. All representations are made in Canadian dollars.

2. Review of the Books:

The financial statements of the Synodical Fund have been reviewed, utilizing the 1996 standard review program, by Mr. R. Naves (Hamilton) and Mr. B. Verloop (Hamilton).

The records were found to be accurate and in good order.

3. Variance Explanations:

- a Assessment for 2014 is based on 4855 members @ \$12.00 = \$58,260
Assessment for 2015 is based on 4943 members @ \$12.00 = \$59,316

- b Synod 2015 will be 4 days instead of 3 days, because of the examination of two students.

- c NAPARC meeting in 2014 was held in Hamilton

LONDON FRC RE. SHORTAGE OF MINISTERS

Free Reformed Church London
1274 Tote Rd
London Ontario
N6K 2K0

To Synod 2015

April 18, 2015

Esteemed brothers,

The London FRC would like to bring a pressing concern before Synod.

At this present time we as a denomination have 8 vacant congregations among 21 churches. We also currently have several ministers approaching retirement age and only 3 students presently in seminary.

How do we as a denomination solve this problem?

Is the bar set too high for prospective theological students?

Are we too restrictive in calling reformed men from outside the denomination?

The consistory of the London FRC believes this is a most pressing concern facing our denomination.

May the Lord bless your deliberations.

On behalf of the consistory of the London FRC,

M. van Gaalen

Clerk - London Free Reformed Church

OVERTURES

OVERTURE 1: BRANTFORD FRC RE. CHURCH ORDER ART. 5G

Grace FREE REFORMED CHURCH

17 Patterson Avenue
Brantford, Ontario N3S 6W8

To Synod 2015

April 20, 2015

Overture Church Order Article 5G

Esteemed Brothers,

This overture arises from our own interaction with the process of calling a candidate from another denomination, and our consideration of using the procedure for a potential call of a minister from outside of the FRCNA.

Grounds:

A. The existing process is deficient within our current context. There is more awareness of Godly pastors from other orthodox denominations, and greater potential that such pastors will serve in our federation. The last twenty-five years are evidence with a number of pastors that share our love of Biblical reformed truth and experiential preaching have been called and currently serve our churches. Recently, as an effect of our involvement in Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, we are made aware of suitable men, and conversely, they are made aware of the Free Reformed Churches. This also occurs with availability of sermon recordings and various modern media sources where we may become aware of pastors that the Lord has providentially placed in a different federation, but could serve well in one of our congregations. Therefore, it is understandable that a congregation may develop a relationship with a pastor outside of the denomination, and consider calling him.

B. Further to the above, the current process for ministers from denominations with which we do not have Complete Correspondence requires that the consistory "*must inform the deputies of the reasons for considering such a minister and whether the needs of the local church justify his nomination*". This implies that the Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC) has to make a judgment upon the information, and advise synod whether that congregation should be allowed to consider that particular man. This has been the practice in the past.

This requirement should be eliminated, and the IRC should focus on their "*thorough inquiry (including a colloquium doctum) with respect to both the denomination and the person of the minister or candidate.*"

C. Another inadequacy is the length of time for the process. Currently, a pastor would have to agree to appear before the IRC by early March with the call not forthcoming until at least the middle of June. In most cases this would be publicly known. Whether the outcome would result in an accepted call or without permission to call, the current process is difficult and uncertain for both the proposing church and the church where the minister currently serves for this extended period. Further, this affects the relationship of the pastor to his current station both during, and potentially after, the process that could result in serious harm to his pastoral ministry. It would be understandable that ministers may not be willing to submit to the process out of pastoral concern. The timeline should be shortened.

D. Lastly, the frequency at which the process can be pursued is limited to once annually. Because we have agreed as churches that pulpit access remain a denominational issue, and until we move to a full classis model of church polity, only our synods can grant the permission to call in June. This is unsatisfactory because it does not sufficiently consider the need of the vacant church to find a suitable man in a timely manner. We believe that the need of a vacant congregation for a pastor warrants the churches meeting in special session, if necessary, at any time of the year for the benefit of the congregation proposing the pastor.

The Consistory of Grace Free Reformed Church of Brantford overtures Synod to revise Article 5G of the Church Order of The Free Reformed Churches of North America as per the following:

- 1) Remove sentence 2.a. - which requires judgment by the IRC on whether a congregation has sufficient reason to propose a man from another denomination.¹
- 2) Add to 1. the following sentence after "*candidate.*" - "The inquiry should occur within 30 days of the Consistory's request."²
- 3) Add sentence 6. "Upon receiving the advice of the deputies of Interchurch Relations, the Consistory shall have the right to call for a special session of Synod to be held within 60 days of the Consistory's request."³

Current Church Order 5. G. (reference)**G. Calling ministers and candidates from other denominations:**

1. A Consistory considering calling a minister or a candidate from another denomination, shall seek the advice of the Synodical deputies of Interchurch Relations. Before giving their advice, these deputies shall make thorough inquiry (including a colloquium doctum) with respect to both the denomination and the person of the minister or candidate. When their advice is negative, the Consistory shall not pursue the matter. Should the Consistory desire not to abide by the negative advice, it ought to present this case before Synod.

2. In case the minister, who is being considered for a call, does not belong to a denomination with which we have Complete Correspondence relationship (see Art. 51) the following procedure must be followed:

a. The Consistory must inform the deputies of the reasons for considering such a minister and whether the needs of the local church justify his nomination.

b. The deputies cannot give permission to extend a call. They must report to Synod, which decides whether or not the minister may be called.

c. Synod, in making such a decision, shall conduct an examination similar to a candidacy examination. Before such an examination can take place, the minister is to present good evidence of his call to the ministry as well as good testimonies with regard to his confession and walk of life.

d. If permission to issue a call is granted the Consistory may propose him to the congregation. If the call is issued and accepted he may be installed without further examination.

3. With respect to calling ministers belonging to a denomination with which we have a Complete Correspondence relationship, deputies may make a decision. If the call is issued and accepted the minister may be installed without further examination.

4. A candidate, regardless of which denomination, is to show that he has successfully completed the required studies at a reputable seminary or university in preparation for the ministry, as well as good testimonies concerning his confession and walk of life. A candidate must sustain a full examination at Synod.

5. At every colloquium doctum or examination, Synod shall be assisted by deputies of Interchurch Relations. (*Acts of Synod 2012, Article 24*)

May the Lord bless your deliberations to the benefit of His church and glory of His name.

In Christ,

The Consistory of Grace Free Reformed Church of Brantford

Jerry Benjamins, Clerk

Ed Laman, Chairman

- 1¹ Delegates to synod can make inquiries of the proposing consistory as part of their deliberations if the so desire.
- 2² Prescribing a prompt response for the benefit of the proposing congregation and the minister. Using the verbiage should recognizes this may not be possible in all requests.
- 3³ The ability of the consistory to deal with their proposal in a timely way is affirmed by stating this right of a consistory. It recognizes the matter as an "important reason to meet" (Church Order Article 50). This right is maintained wheter the advice provided by the IRC is positive or negative.

OVERTURE 2: BRANTFORD FRC RE. CHURCH ORDER ARTICLE 82B

Grace **FREE REFORMED CHURCH**

17 Patterson Avenue
Brantford, Ontario N3S 6W8

To Synod 2015

April 20, 2015

Overture C.O. Article 82B

Esteemed Brothers,

Observing that various approaches have been utilized in our churches in regards to receiving members from other churches as members of our congregations,

recognizing the challenges associated with applying confessional membership to our current context in North America,

desiring that we apply biblical principles to the process of receiving members from other churches, and

seeking to achieve consistency among our churches regarding the manner in which we receive members from other churches,

the Consistory of Brantford overtures Synod 2015 to amend Article 82.B. of the Church

Order to read as follows:

When members of other churches come to our churches, the Consistory shall make inquiry whether the Confession that they have made is in accordance with the Three Forms of Unity. The Consistory, with the advice of Combined Consistories concerning each particular case, shall use its discretion in accepting as members those that do not fully subscribe to the Three Forms of Unity.

(Currently, the article reads: When members of other denominations come to our churches, the Consistory shall make inquiry whether the Confession that they have made is in accordance with the Three Forms of Unity.)

Background

The past few years have seen a number of cases where Free Reformed congregations have taken in as members (or "associate" members) believers who do not fully subscribe to the Three Forms of Unity. With the growth in the availability of Reformed literature and the "New Reformed" movement, increasing numbers of Christians from various backgrounds are now attending historic Reformed churches and requesting membership. Varied levels of confessional subscription seem to have lead either to "partially confessing" members, or even an innovative category of membership known colloquially in some churches as "associate membership." There is lack of clarity on how to proceed with membership applications from those that differ on arguably minor issues such as feast days or the establishment principle (Belgic Confession Article 36), as well as those that are uncertain about larger issues such as end times views and credo-baptism. We believe that Article 82. B. of the church order should be amended to provide adequate guidance for consistories regarding this matter.

The article, as it now stands, may allow a practice where the process of inquiry, *regardless of its findings*, satisfies the requirement for membership as long as issues have come to light. We believe that the churches would be better served by a more explicit statement that guides consistories in making such decisions.

Biblical Principles

As churches, we must recognize that every true Christian is a member of the church of Jesus Christ, "we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." (Romans 12:5) The Bible assumes church membership when it teaches that the church has the authority to cast out those members that live in sin, "... if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 18:17–18) The community of Christians is such that we cannot live without one another, "there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all

the members rejoice with it.” (1 Corinthians 12:25–26) Those that forsake the gathering together of the assembly will find themselves under “a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.” (Hebrews 10:25-27)

We therefore believe that all Christians are duty bound to join themselves to a local church. (Belgic Confession Article 28) Joining includes placing oneself under the authority of church elders, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you.” (Hebrews 13:17) The logical corollary to this is that churches are in duty bound to bring into the fold those believers that seek to be joined to them. If a church holds off a member without a weighty cause, they leave an individual outside of the protection of church discipline. In continental Reformed history it has been the norm to have mature and established congregations built up in numbers primarily by family growth. The culture was such that it was reasonable to expect all members to confess adherence to the Three Forms of Unity, as they were a well-known systematic force that shaped the nation and culture significantly.

Practical Considerations

The situation in North America is changing rapidly, and is already much different than even a few decades ago. Society, and the broader church, seem to be slipping away rapidly from the truth, to the point that many are deceived or know little about the gospel. Yet, conservative Reformed churches are increasingly engaged in domestic missions: there has been an increase in church planting, street preaching, literature distribution, mission works, etc. These denominations are some of the few in North America that are seeing modest rates of growth. The reality is that whether one is a new convert, or has been convicted that they must leave an errant church, they usually come to our churches with significant “religious baggage.” Some come with influence from Roman Catholic errors, charismatic errors, or many of the ungodly lies that Satan spreads throughout our culture. Others are moving from the errors of Arminianism to Calvinism, and from adult baptism to infant, which may take years, if not decades of prayerful study. We are thankful when we see that the most serious errors which deal with core gospel truths often fall away quite quickly. But the reality is that issues such as covenant theology and eschatology take more time to understand.

In many cases, the irony is that these visitors, even in their limited understanding, seem to subscribe more fully to the three forms of unity than many in the existing confessional membership who quietly, or not so quietly,

harbour errant views on issues such as baptism, the Sabbath, antinomianism in general, or smaller matters such as the establishment principle. The visitors are listening to and reading solid reformed literature, and growing in their understanding, while the existing membership embraces the radio, book, and internet teaching of arminians, prosperity preachers, and antinomians. We may place pressure on someone coming from the outside to “dot every i, and cross every t” while a proportion of those on the inside do not. This may open the church to charges of hypocrisy and partisanship.

The difficulty is in how a local Reformed church should relate to people that are on this path, and at what point they should be accepted as members of the congregation. There are increasing numbers of visitors that feel themselves at home in a Reformed church, and that appreciate Free Reformed preaching. Yet it may take some years before they can with all honesty subscribe fully to the Three Forms of unity. They are, so to speak, in the merge lane and moving closer, but in their consciences are not yet able to subscribe 100% to the Three Forms of Unity. In this time of transition, they realize the need to be members of the church, and the need to contribute as they are able, to the church. They find themselves in a bind, as they ought not to partake of the Lord's Supper without being under the authority of the elders, and yet they ought to partake if they are true believers. It is not healthy or scriptural to hold these individuals at a distance.

Guidelines

Therefore, we propose that the Free Reformed Churches, at the discretion of the Consistory and with notice and an explanation of their rationale to the Combined Consistories, be able to welcome such individuals as members of the church if:

1. They confess an understanding of their sin and depravity, their personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, the one way of salvation, and a desire to live a fruitful Christian life out of thankfulness for so great a salvation.
2. They have attended Lord's Day worship faithfully for some months and have shown evidence of growth in grace, truth, knowledge, and fellowship with the body.
3. They subscribe to the ancient creeds and do not hold to errors in regard to trinitarian doctrines, the doctrines of grace, or antinomianism.

4. They show evidence that they are continuing and hope to continue in good conscience to grow closer to full confessional subscription over time.
5. They understand that the elders, being faithful in their work, will repeatedly teach them and remind them of their areas of weakness. If they have young unbaptized children, they will be regularly reminded of the danger of a testimony of covenant unfaithfulness and neglect of the sacraments.
6. Their differences in doctrinal understanding will necessitate that, regardless of their gifts, they will not be eligible for office of elder or deacon, or be able to teach in any capacity in the church, until such time as they can subscribe fully and wholeheartedly to the confessions. As their convictions will ordinarily render them inconsistent in voting for confessional office bearers that differ in doctrine from them, these members must understand that they ordinarily will not be eligible to vote for office bearers, unless it is determined by consistory on an individual basis that their doctrinal differences are of such a minor degree that this restriction is unnecessary.
7. They understand that proving to have an unteachable or divisive spirit may lead to the necessity for church discipline. Though they are at liberty to ask questions and discuss doctrine, they must promise not to promote divisiveness, teach error, or publicly contradict the confessions of the church.
8. The elders are careful to ensure that while such Christians are to be welcomed with open arms, and loved as brothers, they are also faithful in teaching sound doctrine so that a spirit of relativism is not fostered in the congregation.

In Christ's service,

The Consistory of Grace Free Reformed Church, Brantford

Ed Laman, Chairman
Jerry Benjamins, Clerk

OVERTURE 3: BRANTFORD FRC RE. SUPPLEMENTARY PSALTER

Grace FREE REFORMED CHURCH

17 Patterson Avenue
Brantford, Ontario N3S 6W8

To Synod 2015

April 20, 2015

Overture Supplementary Psalter

Esteemed Brothers,

Persuaded that the use of modern pronouns in respect to the Lord is consistent with Scripture, Reformed in principle, and appropriate for corporate worship,

recognizing that some of the congregations would be best served by maintaining use of the 1912 Psalter (or its revision presently in process) with traditional pronouns,

the consistory of the Free Reformed Church of Brantford overtures Synod 2015 to instruct the Publications Committee to appoint a sub-committee to research, evaluate, and recommend an alternate, supplementary Psalter which utilizes current language including modern pronouns.

In Christ's service,

The Consistory of the Brantford Free Reformed Church

Ed Laman, Chairman

Jerry Benjamins, Clerk

OVERTURE 4: FENWICK FRC RE. VISITING MINISTERS

Zion Free Reformed Church Box 383, Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0

To The Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of North America in Session
June 01-05, 2015

Esteemed Brothers,

Overture re: Visiting Ministers

The consistory of Zion FRC overtures Synod to reconsider the decision of Synod 2014 pertaining to the procedures of having ministers, candidates and seminarians from non-corresponding churches to fill pulpits.

Reasons

1. The new regulations are still cumbersome to utilize, hindering consistories of vacant churches from providing occasional pulpit supply, in a timely manner, for their own pulpits and in the event of churches looking to fill a Sunday due to their pastor being away as well as being able to invite guest ministers who are speaking at a local conference. The work involved in order to have a an ordained minister or eligible candidate serve a few Lord's Days discourages consistories from considering inviting men whom they know to be able confessionally Reformed preachers.
2. Our regulations are out of step with the practice of other conservative Reformed federations that we have correspondence and contact with. Their local consistories are free to invite theologically conservative pastors to fill a pulpit and depending on the federation only need to inform their Synod/Presbytery.
3. Recognizing that during the early history of the churches, pulpit access was initially granted by local congregations which led to unqualified or inappropriate persons being admitted. Hence the need for proper examination of all ministers with respect to calling, sound doctrine, upright living and adequate training. See Act of Synod 2014 appendix F, pg. 172. However, if the requirements of 1.a-d as stated in the recommendations (pg. 181) are followed, this concern is being addressed and one can conclude that the persons admitted to occupy the pulpit would be confessionally Reformed faithful preachers.

Proposal

Revise paragraph 2 of the new regulations as follows:

2. Upon meeting the requirements of item 1:
 - a. The consistory may invite a guest minister for up to two Lord's Days annually without the approval of the IRC.
 - b. If the consistory wishes to have the minister for more than two Lord's Days, the consistory shall request, in writing and on a timely basis, approval from the Interchurch Relations Committee. The consistory shall report its findings and indicate the number of additional Lord's Days it plans to have him occupy the pulpit.

May the Lord bless in your deliberations

On behalf of Zion Free Reformed Church

Eric Dekorte, Chairman
Corresponding Clerk

John J Brink,

COMMITTEE REPORTS

CHURCH ORDER COMMITTEE REPORT

April 12, 2015

2015 Synod of FRC

c/o Oxford Consistory, Convening Church

Esteemed Brethren,

Your committee met on October 21, 2014 and March 26, 2015 with the balance of our work being conducted via email and informal consultation. Rev. VanderMeyden serves as our chair, Rev. Koopman as our Vice-Chair, and Brother Ray Pennings as the Committee's secretary.

A. Publication of Church Order

The Guidelines for Synodical Procedure have been updated to incorporate various decisions of Synod since their publication in 2004. Your committee has also done some editorial work on the wording of these guidelines with a view to making them clearer and (hopefully) more user-friendly for synodical delegates.

In the course of editing this material, a few matters came to light on which there was no clear documentary record to apply and on which your committee had to exercise its judgement. These include:

- Under C – Convening Church and Agenda Establishment we have included “At each Synod, a report is received from each combined consistory and the Article 49 deputies. An opportunity is given for each congregation to report joys or concerns with Synod or to seek the advice of Synod. Church Visitors also have the opportunity to report on their work.” In this, we are formalizing the discussion at Synod 2014 (Article 45) of The Synodical Deputies report.
- We are also formalizing the consistent practice since the adoption of the Combined Consistory reports that the Chairman of Synod will provide an opportunity for each congregation to give an individual report beyond what is contained in the Combined Consistory report. (See I – Executive Session).
- We have also added under the same Article C two bullets, one asking that the convening consistory report issues/ decisions that they have made in developing the agenda and the second asking for the electronic submission of materials.

These Guidelines and an updated Church Order are in the process of being printed with an expectation that an updated version will be available at Synod. The Supplements are still in the process of being updated and verified; we are awaiting the feedback of some of the committees regarding their own mandates.

B. Process for dealing with Combined Consistory Matters at Synod

In the course of editing the guidelines, the matter of having consistories raise matters of discipline (usually seeking permission for the next step) at Synod out

of timing convenience, rather than going through their combined consistories, was discussed. It is your committee's recommendation that it would be more consistent with our combined consistory model that an opportunity is provided for the churches to meet in their separate combined consistories (perhaps the Tuesday evenings could be reserved for this) to deal with such matters rather than having such matters raised in the broader assembly.

C. Review of Appeals Process

Synod 2013 (Article 24) instructed our committee to provide some guidance regarding the appeal process. Our study report and recommendations are included as Appendix A.

D. General Overview of Mandate

At our last meeting, your committee engaged in a general discussion regarding the fulfillment of our mandate, particularly the extent to which this committee should be "making recommendations regarding the understanding and application of the Church Order and Supplements or related ecclesiastical matters as requested by particular decisions or general mandates of Synod." The discussion stemmed from varying perspectives regarding the extent to which our current processes result in decisions "by the churches" and the engagement in denominational affairs by local consistories. We considered the extent to which meeting efficiency needs to be balanced with the opportunity for office bearers, who often are attending combined consistories or Synod for the first time as a delegate, to be able to absorb and meaningfully contribute to the discussions. Your Committee concluded that any further consideration of this matter and any recommendations regarding how our procedures might be amended to encourage further local participation should await a request to do so from Synod.

E. Appointments

The terms of Rev., Kranendonk and Brother Pennings are set to expire. The committee recommends that both brothers be re-appointed.

F. Recommendations:

1. That Synod receive and adopt the recommendations of the Study Report on Appeals (Appendix A);
2. That Synod reappoint Rev. Kranendonk (Oxford) and Br. Ray Pennings (Calgary) for a three-year term to end in 2018.
3. That Synod approve the actions of the committee.

May God richly bless your deliberations.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee,
Ray Pennings, Secretary

Appendix A – Study Report: Article 31 – Appeals

I. The Background:

Synod 2013, in the course of dealing with an appeal, identified procedural ambiguities and instructed the Church Order Committee to provide some direction in this matter. The following excerpt from the *Acts of Synod 2013* clarifies the context and our mandate regarding this matter:

Article 24 – Chilliwack Appeal

In the discussion regarding the Chilliwack appeal, several questions emerged regarding the role of the convening church in dealing with appeals. More particularly, the question is whether a convening church has authority to rule on the admissibility of an appeal submitted to it, the status of a decision being appealed before the appeal is considered by the next synod meeting, and when a convening church is to call for an early synod meeting. Existing church order documents and precedents do not clearly address these issues.

A motion is made:

*To refer the procedure of handling appeals to the Church Order committee.
Moved/ Seconded/ Carried.*

Out of the above decision we draw three questions. We felt it would be helpful to provide a brief study to provide some background in these areas about appeals before proceeding to make recommendations on the specific questions asked of us in our instruction. Those three questions are:

1. Does the convening consistory have authority to rule on the admissibility of an appeal?
2. What is the status of a decision under an appeal that Synod/combined consistories has not yet dealt with?
3. Under what circumstances does an appeal warrant the calling of an early Synod/combined consistories?

II. Commentary on Article 31

A. Church Order – Article 31

The article in our Church Order states:

If anyone complain that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly, he shall have the right to appeal to a major ecclesiastical assembly, and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, unless it be proved to conflict with the Word of God or with the Articles of the Church Order, as long as they are not changed by another Synod. Everyone who appeals the decision of any ecclesiastical assembly must, within one month after the date of this decision, or if he has been notified by letter of this decision then one month after the date of such letter, advise the secretary of the Consistory in the event it concerns Consistory matters, or the calling church of the major assembly whose decision he is appealing in case it is a matter concerning this assembly. In the event the appeal is denied, notification of this shall be sent to the appellant.

The first part of this article states the right of appeal while the second outlines how this appeal is to be made to the respective assembly. After stating the right to appeal, it gives the grounds of such an appeal. We will consider each of these in a short study of this article.

B. The Reason for the Process of Appeal

History has proven that councils, synods, classis, consistories, and other ecclesiastical assemblies are not infallible. While we acknowledge that the Word of God is inerrant, church bodies have erred. Therefore reformed church polity has recognized that if one believes that an assembly has erred, they have the right of an appeal. Right of appeal also follows from the fact that all believers partake of Christ's three-fold office of prophet, priest, and king (Lord's Day 12). In addition, the Holy Spirit dwells in every believer meaning that they should be heard as well.

C. The Right of Appeal

Who has the right to appeal? The CO states the grounds of an appeal is *'If any one complain that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly, he shall have the right to appeal to a major ecclesiastical assembly.'* Since the church order is a document of the churches, it is clear that the right to appeal a decision of the churches only extends to those who are members of the congregation. Those of the general public as well as those who have withdrawn or excommunicated from the congregation have no legal right to appeal under this church order article.

The basic reason stated is simply *if anyone complain that he has been wronged...* Now this doesn't mean that the right to appeal is limited to cases of personal injury for decisions that concern the church should always be of concern for each member. To limit the appeal simply to cases of personal injury results in an individualistic view of the church. *If one believes that synod has come to an incorrect and dangerous conclusion, contrary to the Bible, the confessional writings of the church, the church order or the welfare of the churches, they may appeal...* (Monsma & VanDellen, pg. 141) When something affects the welfare of the churches in general, even though it may have more consequences for an individual, it can be appealed by whoever thinks he has been wronged. Further when an injustice has been committed against an individual member of the congregation the whole body suffers with that particular person. There may be some individuals who would have difficulty with the process of filing an appeal. Therefore consistories are wise in assisting (or recommending assistance) to anyone who wishes to appeal a decision.

An appeal is normally submitted by the person himself (or herself) who *"has been wronged by a decision of a minor assembly."* The appellant is then that person, Consistory, or assembly that has been directly affected by the decision being appealed. However, the church order doesn't limit the right of appeal to the person directly affected. Further, in the case of decisions that affect the denomination in general, appeals may be made simply because the person,

church or assembly is convinced that it conflicts with the Word of God, the Church Order, or is not in the best interest of the churches. It may be that the decision is such that obedience violates a person's conscience before God. One may also be strongly convinced that the decision does in fact not serve the well-being of the churches. In such cases there could be good grounds for an appeal. A violation of one's conscience or one's sense of justice can also be understood as being "wronged".

Here we see how the CO tries to be pastoral in how it deals with members of Christ's church. The church order is very general and charitable in granting the right to appeal. Generally we should be accommodating in hearing these appeals. Obviously if someone believes they have been wronged by the church in whatever way, it is better to discuss it in a pastoral way. Refusing to hear someone when they believe they have been wronged can lead to bitterness against the church or additional tension and/or conflict.

D. Admissibility of an Appeal

Who ultimately decides on the admissibility of an appeal? Obviously the body to whom the appeal is addressed has the ultimate authority since it determines its own agenda. If the appeal is addressed to the synod, the calling church has the responsibility to ensure that everything is done decently and in good order. The calling church is given some clear guidelines in this article in what can be included in the agenda to synod. When, according to the guidelines given in Article 31, a consistory rules an appeal *inadmissible* and therefore does not include it on the agenda, it should give a complete report to synod. Synod may then still decide to include it on the agenda. The guidelines for admissibility is given in the second paragraph of Article 31 which reads:

Everyone who appeals the decision of any ecclesiastical assembly must, within one month after the date of this decision, or if he has been notified by letter of this decision then one month after the date of such letter, advise the secretary of the Consistory in the event it concerns Consistory matters, or the calling church of the major assembly whose decision he is appealing in case it is a matter concerning this assembly.

There are several factors listed in this article:

1. **The appeal must address a decision of the assembly.** This is shown in the statement: *"Everyone who appeals the **decision** of any ecclesiastical assembly..."* Therefore the appeal itself must state the decision which is under appeal. Logically it would also imply that the objections to this decision are clearly articulated in the appeal. The admissibility of the appeal does not depend on the validity of the objections (only the assembly can make that decision) but whether they have been clearly stated.
2. **The appeal must be made in a timely fashion.** The article reads that this must be done *"within one month after the date of this decision, or if he has been notified by letter of this decision then one month after the date of such letter..."*

3. **The appeal must be addressed to the proper assembly.** The first appeal is to be made to the body which made the decision. Only after that appeal has been denied may the appeal be made to a broader assembly. The order of appeals must be Consistory, Classis (Combined Consistory), Synod. If a matter is not completed at a minor assembly it may not be appealed to a major assembly (Art. 30). Appellants may not avoid the next step by going immediately to a broader assembly, except in the case that the original decision was one made by that assembly.

These are the basic guidelines that are to be used both by consistories of calling churches as well as the assembly itself to determine admissibility of an appeal. Appeals should not be ruled *inadmissible* because either the consistory or the broader assembly feels the grounds are insufficient. That is a different discussion which concerns the sustainability of the appeal not its admissibility. Admissibility only depends on the technical details of the appeal and not the grounds of the appeal itself.

Members who express to office-bearers their grief about a decision of the Consistory or of a broader assembly, should be instructed as to the proper manner of going about appealing ecclesiastical decisions. This can help prevent them from (possibly out of ignorance) engaging in disorderly conduct in the church. The members should especially be informed about the proper timing for submitting an appeal. In the case of an appeal of a decision that is originally one of the broader assemblies, members who appeal are advised to consult with their elders about the matter and method of the appeal. Consultation and wise counsel can avoid unnecessary appeals. At times a Classis or Synod has received appeal letters that are late or are not formulated properly. This is unfortunate and disorderly. However, it faces the synod with a dilemma, since such an "appeal-like" letter can truly be a cry of the heart (*crie de coeur*). The FRCNA has in the past at times allowed such to be placed on the agenda out of pastoral motives.

E. Grounds of an appeal

This article makes a distinction of an initial appeal and subsequent appeals.¹

- The grounds stated for an **initial appeal** is: "*If anyone complain that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly, he shall have the right to appeal.*" This does not mean that someone consider making an

¹ From my (JK) Church Polity seminary notes: "In the first part of article 31 of the CO we are actually dealing with two elements; right of appeal and consideration of the decisions (on the appeal) as settled and binding. Kamphuis says there was an ecclesiastical reason why these two things were put together. He says while they are two distinct members they are very closely related. Especially in regards to appeals the decisions are binding. Jansen is critical of joining the two elements for it creates the impression that one can only appeal if the decision is contrary to the Word of God or the Church Order. He feels there is a false impression here. Kamphuis says that you can appeal if you feel wronged. The binding nature is tied to the decision of the appeal not to the grounds of the appeal itself."

appeal of every little matter. Yet if there is a sense of wrong they are to be given a hearing. This is out of a desire to be pastoral to the one who thinks they have been wronged. Obviously the appeal is stronger if the appellant can show how the decision conflicts with the Word of God, the Creeds or the Church Order but at times someone may believe that a decision is simply not in the best interest of the church. This appeal should be heard and gives the broader assembly the opportunity for sober second thought.

- The grounds for **subsequent appeals** are stated as: “whatever may be agreed upon (in response to the initial appeal) by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, unless it be proved to conflict with the Word of God or with the Articles of the Church Order” Here the bar is raised for raising an appeal for a 2nd time. Therefore after the first appeal is heard, the only grounds by which another appeal can be made on the same decision if it is contrary to the Word of God or the CO. Obviously this refers to cases which are much more serious and not for matters of wisdom. In other words, normally there should only be one appeal unless it is of a very serious nature and clearly is in conflict with the Word of God or the Church Order.

All members are admonished hereby to reflect a spirit of submission and respect for the decisions of those “who have the rule over us.”² Other than submitting an orderly appeal, any other form of protest is out of order. Even if one is in the process of appealing, public propaganda against the decisions of the church is “raising discord in the church.”

F. Status of Decision while under Appeal

Monsma and VanDellen consider the status of a decision under appeal in their church order commentary. They write:

The question is often asked: Should decision of minor assemblies await execution pending an appeal? We would answer in the affirmative. If at all possible no assembly must begin to execute a decision the correctness of which is to be judged by a major assembly. To illustrate, supposing someone objects to the installation of a certain brother as Elder, and that his objection is overruled, and that he appeals to Classis; then if the Consistory would proceed with the installation, and after a few weeks (or months JK) Classis should sustain the appellant, such a Consistory would find itself in a very difficult position. If and when possible, action on appeals should be awaited. Sometimes, however, this is not possible, or not advisable.

Therefore, there is no absolute black and white answer to the question about the status of the decision. The church order doesn't try to address every situation that may arise in the life of the church but lays out some general principles.

² Hebrews 13:17 “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”

1. Status of a Decision after First Appeal

The status of decisions that are being appealed for the first time is not directly addressed in this article of the church order. Normally an appeal should be heard in such a timely way that neither the appellant nor the assembly is frustrated with the delay of a decision on the appeal. Obviously if delaying the implementation of a decision is possible this is advisable lest the appeal be upheld and the consistory be faced with the challenge of having to reverse its action which is impossible at times.

Appeals of Consistory/Combined Consistories Decisions

If the appeal concerns a consistory decision or a combined consistory matter, a timely hearing is not as difficult to arrange. Normally, a consistory can delay the implementation of their decision for a few months until the appeal is heard. This is pastorally wise if it can be done without serious harm to the ministry of the church. If the consistory believes that implementation cannot be delayed, they could request that a combined consistory meeting be convened as soon as possible. In extreme cases delaying the implementation of the decision for even a few weeks may not be possible but then consultation with two neighbouring consistories is advisable before proceeding. However, normally the delay of the implementation of a decision is wise when it is under appeal.

Appeals of Synodical Decisions

It may be more difficult to arrange a timely hearing of a synodical decision. Since the synod meetings are called normally only once a year and since the appeal must be made within thirty days that means it would take at least eleven months for an appeal of a synodical decision to be heard. It is possible that the delay of an execution of a synodical decision could happen that does have some practical difficulties. Technically only synod has the authority to delay implementation of the decision which would require it to meet. There are cost factors involved with an additional synod meeting which would not be stewardly for frivolous appeals. In addition, someone could needlessly delay a decision simply by registering an appeal.

However, in spite of these difficulties it is advisable that the appeal be heard as soon as possible and ideally before the implementation of the decision. A calling church receiving an appeal should consider every practical means to have that appeal heard, considered, and dealt with as quickly as possible. If delay of implementation does not have serious implications, the calling church could suggest such an action to the churches or individuals involved. If there is common consensus and the delay of implementation has no serious consequences this is probably a wise course to follow. However there are a few different situations where calling an earlier synod may be advisable which is within the jurisdiction of the calling church. These situations would be:

- ❖ If they believe the matter to be is of a serious nature that the implementation of the decision should not be delayed, they could call

an earlier session of synod.³ Some appeals involve matters in which waiting until the next regularly scheduled meeting of the body who is to hear it is not of significant consequence; others have much more immediate and pastoral implications for those directly involved in the matter.

- ❖ Another factor for consideration by the calling church is if the decision of synod is under appeal by more than one congregation and/or individual. Historically if three churches of a particular classis requested a meeting, the classis would meet.⁴ Our churches had a precedent in 2003 when a number of churches appealed a synodical decision and the calling church called an extra synod.
- ❖ In considering the process and timelines for dealing with an appeal, the calling church should consider the implications of the decision for those involved. The calling church should be attentive not only to the concerns of the churches as a whole, but also the individuals/congregations which are most impacted by the matter being appealed. We should never easily dismiss the concerns of others but with the mind of Christ give a hearing to their concerns.

The calling of an extra synod falls within the jurisdiction of the calling consistory which they can do for weighty reasons. When consistories are faced with these types of situations it is advisable for them to consult with two neighbouring consistories and synodical deputies (article 49). However, the decision to call an earlier synod rests with the consistory of the calling church which they may do by the authority given to them by the synod.

2. Status of a Decision under Repeated Appeal

The church order is very clear about the status of a decision that has been made on the appeal itself. It states that whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, unless it be proved to conflict with the Word of God or with the Articles of the Church Order, as long as they are not changed by another Synod. Therefore it is to be considered 'settled and binding' in an ecclesiastical sense. There may be instances where one may have conscientious objections and to obey would be to violate their conscience. If these objections are based on the Word of God, a consistory must be careful not to compel (the conscience of) such a person⁵ to submit to the ruling. Logically, that would require them to submit another appeal to the broader assembly on the basis of the Word of God and/or the church order.

³ As churches we already have our regular synodical meetings in March and October at which time a synod could meet without incurring the full expense.

⁴ In the 1985 edition of the Church Order of the FRCNA, we read in Article 41 (under the heading: "Classis") the following statement: "*When three churches of a Classis request the calling church to convene the Classis then this church shall do so.*"

⁵ See *Belgic Confession of Faith*, Article 32, in *The Psalter*, p.21.

III. Summary/Conclusion

1. Q. Does the convening consistory have authority to rule on the admissibility of an appeal being sent to synod/combined consistories?

A. Yes, but the ruling on admissibility is only on the basis of the technical aspects (timeliness, clarity etc.) of the appeal, not its grounds. If a consistory thinks an appeal should be inadmissible it would be advisable to consult with the synodical deputies (in synodical matters) and possibly with two neighbouring consistories.

2. Q. What is the status of a decision under an appeal that the assembly has not yet dealt with?

A. Generally, every effort should be made to delay implementation of a decision with the first appeal until after it has been heard, even if an earlier meeting needs to be called. However, there may be instances where this is not possible or advisable. There can be no expectation that the implementation will be delayed when there are subsequent appeals.

3. Q. Under what circumstances does an admissible appeal by a local Consistory warrant the calling of an early Synod/combined consistories?

A. This needs to be considered on a case-by-case basis, with consideration not only to the consequences for the churches as a whole, but also the pastoral considerations for those most directly impacted. Consideration should be given to calling a meeting particularly in those cases where the decision cannot be delayed. The calling consistory does have the authority to call an earlier meeting if they deem it necessary. Again consultation with synodical deputies (concerning synod matters) and two neighbouring consistories is advisable.

Finally, it is recommended that the calling consistory present a report to each Synod/combined consistory, prior to approving the agenda, in which it provides an account of all matters in which it has exercised its discretion. This would include, when an appeal has been received, an accounting of the process followed above but also should be expanded to include other matters (as is our present practice).

IV. Recommendation

We recommend that Synod:

- a. Accept this study report as a resource for the churches when considering appeals;
- b. Agree that no further regulations are required at this time;
- c. Consider this report as fulfilling the assignment provided to the Church Order Committee as recorded in Acts of Synod 2013, Article 24.

ETHICAL PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

REPORT TO SYNOD 2015 OF THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF NORTH AMERICA

Esteemed brothers:

The Ethical Public Affairs (EPA) Committee reports the following:

- 1.0 The EPA Committee met twice during the past year, October 21, 2014 and on March 23, 2015. The current members of the EPA Committee are Dr. L. Bilkes, Dr. J. Hamstra, Dr. G. Kenyon, Dr. E. Nieuwenhuis, Mr. T. Postma.
- 2.0 The following items are brought to the attention of the 2015 Synod:
 - 2.1 The EPA Committee continues to update and refine the first section of its document entitled: Resources for Office-Bearers in Dealing with Bio-ethical Questions. The first section deals primarily with initial stages of life and the implications associated with reproductive technology. One of the outstanding challenges involves preparing this document for Messenger readership so as not to create unwarranted controversy.
 - 2.2 The EPA Committee continues to explore resources dealing with end of life issues. There are serious concerns related to defining the moment of death. These concerns have implications regarding organ transplantation. The committee has begun to develop a second section to its Resources for Office-Bearers in Dealing with Bio-Ethical Questions document. This section will articulate principles and key considerations regarding end of life issues. It could be some time yet before this document is ready for synodical consideration.
 - 2.3 The EPA Committee has responded to various emails from church members regarding certain ethical topics. Recently the committee was asked by the Bornholm Consistory to provide some practical guidelines on extreme practices in alternative medicine. Questionable alternative therapies, like applied kinesiology, are being used more and more in our churches. The EPA Committee has responded with some advice.
 - 2.4 The EPA Committee has encouraged Ontario churches to respond to the latest developments at the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons involving implementation of a policy that compels doctors to refer and even perform operations they consider immoral. This new policy not only requires doctors with conscientious objections against abortions, contraceptives, assisted suicides, or euthanasia (if and when this is legalized) to refer to doctors they know will

provide the required service, it also requires them to perform the service, if to do otherwise would “harm” the patient. The EPA Committee is deeply concerned with this development and fears this will soon spread to colleges across Canada. The Ontario College fails to recognize that the practice of medicine is a moral enterprise and that physicians, no less than patients, are moral agents.

2.5 The respective terms of Dr. L. Bilkes and Dr. E. Nieuwenhuis have concluded. Both brothers are willing to continue for another term.

3.0 Recommendations to the Synod:

3.1 To reappoint brothers Dr. L. Bilkes and Dr. E. Nieuwenhuis for a term of 3 years.

3.2 To approve the actions of the EPA Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Ted J. Postma, Secretary

Ethical Public Affairs Committee

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Esteemed Brothers,

The Finance Committee met four times in the past year and would like to make the following recommendations and report on the various matters for your approval.

At our meeting we appointed the following officers: Gary Neven (Brantford) as Chairman, Gerrit Kleyn (Grand Rapids) as Vice chairman, Alex Terlouw (Vineland) as Secretary and Henry Berger (Hamilton) as treasurer. Brian Bruinsma (Hamilton), Karl Noordam (Abbotsford) and John Pol (Pompton Plains) also serve on the committee.

We are now required to file a Charities Form annually with the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency. In connection with this, we remind all the Committees to forward their financial statements and a signed copy of the Review Program (as approved by Synod 1997) to the Finance Committee by April 30th of each year.

We recommend that all of our Canadian churches join the Canadian Council of Christian Charities, as this organization has proven to be a very valuable resource for us. You can find them on the Internet at www.cccc.org.

We also provide for your information, a requirement for the deacons to issue T5007 slips for benevolent payments made to individuals. All churches are required to issue a T5007 slip when a series of payments are made which total more than \$500. For example, a single payment of \$1,000 would not have to be reported, but five payments of \$200 each to one individual would. Churches are required to file the slips and a summary with the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency. The churches located in the USA should evaluate filing requirements in their jurisdictions.

We also inform the churches that if they pay their members interest for loans, Canada Revenue Agency requires that a T5 slip be issued.

For 2014, the Canadian Consumer Price Index ("CPI") was 1.5% and the American Consumer Price Index was 0.8%.

This report contains much information that is repetitive each year. After the completion of the updating of the Church Order and Supplements, this will not be necessary and we expect to omit some information that will be contained in the Church Order and Supplements.

1. Ministers' Emeritus Fund:

The minister's emeritus fund was designed to assist the congregations in meeting the financial needs of their emeritus pastors. This amount is in addition to the various government programs (i.e. CPP, OAS and Social Security) and personal savings that a retired minister has accumulated.

Synod 2007 has approved that the assessment for the Emeritus Fund will increase each year by the Consumer Price Index.

The Minister's Emeritus Fund financial statements have been reviewed by and by and where found to be in good order.

Regarding the lump sum payment approved by Synod 2013, a request was made to spread it out over a number of years. The committee agreed to spread it out over 4 years and consequently, payments were made in December 2013, January 2014 and January 2015 to be followed by a payment in January of 2016.

- *The Committee submits for your approval:*
 - (a) Increase emeritus payments from \$27,333 to \$27,743, per the Canadian CPI of 1.5% and that widow's pension continue to remain unchanged at \$21,492 until they are reduced from 53.33% to 50% of the minimum recommended salary guideline as per Synod 2012. All payments are to be made in Canadian dollars.
 - (b) Leave the assessment for 2016 at \$27.70 per member.
 - (c) Approve the attached financial statements for the year 2014.

2. Ministers' Salary Guidelines:

We advise congregations that it is the local congregation's responsibility to adequately provide for their ministers according to our church order Article 11.

We ask that you prayerfully consider this matter in your congregation and that your pastor is paid based on his financial needs and not based on what your congregation can afford. Members of our Finance Committee are available to meet with your congregation and/or consistory to discuss these matters. With this regard we, as a Finance Committee, feel that we cannot adequately recommend a minimum salary guideline to suit the needs of every pastor since the needs of a pastor vary based on:

- i. Their stage in life
- ii. The area they live in.

We remind the deacons that Synod requires that they meet with their pastor and emeritus pastor(s) on an annual basis to discuss his financial needs.

We remind the churches that any car allowance paid to their pastor that is not paid strictly on a per kilometer/mile basis is a taxable benefit to the pastor. The treasurer should then provide the pastor with the proper tax form. Reports need to be submitted to the church treasurer to show that the car allowance is paid on a per kilometer/mile basis.

Guidelines for the kilometer/mileage allowance are set each year by the Synodical Committee.

At Synod 2007, a motion was approved to encourage congregations to contribute a small percentage of their pastor's earnings to a Retirement Savings Plan. It is the opinion of the Committee that these contributions are necessary for a pastor to adequately retire when comparing his retirement income to another individual with a company pension plan.

- *The committee submits for your approval:*
 - (a) We recommend that the salaries increase by 1.5% for Canadian ministers and by 0.8% for American ministers for the calendar year 2016. We therefore request approval to increase the minimum salaries for ministers effective January 1, 2016 as follows:
 - Canadian ministers from CDN \$42,051 to CDN \$42,682
 - American ministers from US \$42,071 to US \$42,408
 - (b) Increase the years of service allowance from \$493 to \$500 for up to 10 years of service.

3. Pulpit Supply and Catechism Supply:

Combined Consistories East decided at their meeting in February 2013 that in regards to pulpit exchanges no honorariums need to be paid when exchanges are made by pastors for their mutual convenience. This decision does not apply to emeritus ministers.

The remuneration for pulpit supply effective January 1, 2015 is \$150 per service plus synodically approved travel allowance.

The remuneration for Catechism supply effective January 1, 2015 is \$100 per hour plus synodically approved travel allowance.

4. Needy Churches Fund:

At Synod 2006, it was approved that a church, which receives financial assistance from the Needy Churches Fund, is not required to pay the Needy Churches assessment. At Synod 2008, it was approved that a church that applies for financial assistance complete Form A for the Finance Committee. This form is available from the Finance Committee.

The Needy Churches Fund financial statements have been reviewed by and by and were found to be in good order.

- *The committee submits for your approval:*
 - (a) Leave the assessment at \$1.00 per member for 2016.
 - (b) Approve the financial statements for the year 2014.

5. Widows of Pastors and Orphans of Pastors

There are no recommendations for changes.

6. Investment and lending guidelines

There are no recommendations for changes.

7. Miscellaneous

John Prol decided to resign after 9 years of service.

- *The committee submits for your approval:*
 - (a) Re-appoint for a three year term Alex Terlouw (Vineland)
 - (b) Approve the actions of the committee.

May the Lord bless your meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Alex Terlouw
 Secretary of the Finance Committee

Free Reformed Churches of North America		
Ministers' Emeritus Fund		
Statement of Financial Position		
as at December 31, 2014		
Assets:	2014	2013
Cash	87,229	349,391
Accounts Receivable	15,660	9,668
Investments	1,484,425	1,203,790
Total Assets	1,587,314	1,562,849
Equity:		
Beginning Balance	1,562,849	1,537,139
Operating Surplus	24,465	25,710
Total Equity	1,587,314	1,562,849

Free Reformed Churches of North America					
Ministers' Emeritus Fund					
Statement of Operations					
For the year ended December 31, 2014					
	2014	Budgeted	% Variance F/U)	\$ Variance F/(U)	2013
Revenue:					
Assessments	134,484	134,484	0%	(1)	123,804
Assessment adjustment	292				(44)
Interest					
from Bank Balance		-		-	-
from Securities	60,569	69,718	-13%	(9,149)	47,495
Total Revenue	195,344	204,202	-4%	(9,150)	171,255
Expenditures:					
Emeritus Payments	150,324	128,036	-17%	(22,288)	125,016
Lump Sum Payment	20,000	20,000			20,000
Administration					
Bank Charges	20				4
Miscellaneous	535	540	1%	5	525
				-	
Total Expenditures	170,879	148,576	-15%	(22,283)	145,545
Operating Surplus	24,465	55,626	-57%	(31,433)	25,710

Free Reformed Churches of North America					
Minister's Emeritus Fund					
Budget and Projection					
For the years ended December 31, 2015 & 2016					
	2014	Budget 2015	% Variance F/U)	\$ Variance F/(U)	Projected 2016
Revenue:					
Assessments	134,484	136,921	2%	2,438	138,278
Assessment adjustment	292				
Interest					
From Bank Balance	-		0%	-	
From Securities	60,569	69,926	13%	9,357	71,129
Total Revenue	195,344	206,847	6%	11,795	209,407
Expenditures:					
Emeritus Payments	150,324	150,332	0%	(8)	160,892
Lump Sum	20,000	20,000	0%	-	20,000
Administration				-	
Bank Charges	20			20	
Miscellaneous	535	566	-5%	(31)	577
				-	
Total Expenditures	170,879	170,898	0%	(19)	181,469
Operating Surplus	24,465	35,949	33%	11,776	27,938

Free Reformed Churches of North America

Ministers' Emeritus Fund

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2014

1. Significant Accounting Policies:

The financial statements of the Emeritus Fund are prepared utilizing the accrual basis of accounting. All representations are made in Canadian dollars.

2. Review of the Books:

The financial statements of the Emeritus Fund have been reviewed, utilizing the 1996 standard review program, by Paul Vandenburg (Hamilton) and Aant Koonstra (Hamilton) and found to be in good order.

3. Cash:

				2014	2013
	TD Canada Trust Chequing			75,470	87,693
	Less O/S cheque: CCCC	#595	16-Dec-14	(535)	
	TD Waterhouse Investment Account			12,294	261,698
				87,229	349,391

4. Account Receivable:

				2014	2013
	Assessments receivable			1,939	1,846
	Accrued interest receivable from securities			14,809	6,183
	Fenwick overpaid 2013-2014 quota			(1,089)	(612)
	Jan. 1, 2014 cheque cashed in 2013				2,251
				15,660	9,668

Assessments:

Congregation	Opening Balance	Curr. Yr. Assess.	Amount Paid	Ending Balance
Abbotsford		2,410	2,410	-
Bornholm		2,687	2,687	-
Brantford		10,775	10,776	(1)
Calgary		3,047	3,047	-
Chatham		5,845	5,845	-
Chilliwack		6,842	6,842	-
Dundas		12,216	12,216	-
Fenwick	(612)	8,615	9,091	(1,089)
Grand Rapids		8,116	8,116	-
Hamilton		8,449	8,449	-
Lacombe		2,659	2,659	-
Langley		1,828	1,828	-
London	1,846	1,939	1,846	1,939
Mitchell		6,787	6,787	-
Monarch		13,739	13,739	-
Oxford		2,825	2,825	-
Prompton Plains		4,266	4,557	(291)
St. George		10,360	10,360	-
St. Thomas		7,728	7,728	-
Vineland		13,351	13,351	-
	1,234	134,484	135,159	559
		292	Adjustment	292
Actual assessments		134,775	A/R	850

5. Investments:				
The committee maintains the following investments in accordance with the prescribed guidelines:				
	2014 Book Value	Fair Market Value		2013 Book Value
Guaranteed deposits				
Nfld. & Lab. Hydro	25,000	38,282		25,000
Government of Canada Bonds	45,000	74,713		45,000
Ontario Hydro	25,000	36,232		25,000
Prov. of Saskatchewan	40,000	61,849		85,000
Prov. of Ontario	70,000	102,395		70,000
Money Mkt mutual funds	-	-		144,283
	205,000	313,471		394,283
FRC Loans				
Peace Haven	123,871			178,357
Calgary FRC	330,000			340,000
	453,871			518,357
Investments				
Indwell (formerly Homestead)	150,000			
Redeemer University College	250,000			
Shalom Manor	120,000			
	520,000			
Mutual Funds				
Sentry Cons. Balanced Income Fund	150,015	198,664		144,346
Sentry Select Cdn. Income Fund	155,539	175,129		146,804
	305,554	373,793		291,150
Total investments	1,484,425	687,264		1,203,790
The committee is reporting the investments at book value.				

Free Reformed Churches of North America		
Needy Churches Fund		
Statement of Financial Position - Balance Sheet		
as at December 31, 2014		
	2014	2013
Assets		
Cash	\$ 21,232	\$ 83,994
Investments		
Indwell (formerly Homestead)	40,000	40,000
TD GIC's	75,000	
Accounts Receivable	3,018	252
Total Assets	\$ 139,250	\$ 124,246
Equity		
Opening Balance	\$ 124,246	\$ 112,001
Operating Surplus(Deficit)	15,004	12,245
Total Equity	\$ 139,250	\$ 124,246

**Free Reformed Churches of North America
 Needy Churches Fund
 Statement of Operations - Income Statement
 For the Year Ended December 31, 2014**

	2014 Actual	2014 Budgeted	Variances F/(U)		2013 Actual
			\$	%	
Revenues					
Assessments	12,138	12,138	-	0%	11,915
Assessment adjustment	23				(6)
Interest					
Bank	80	-	80	100%	312
Indwell (formerly Homestead)	1,702	1,700	2	0%	51
TD GIC's	1,090	600	490	45%	
Total Revenues	\$ 15,033	\$ 14,438	\$ 572	4%	\$ 12,272
Expenditures					
Payments to Churches	-	-	-	0%	-
Administration					
Bank Charges	29	-	(29)	-100%	27
Total Expenditures	\$ 29	\$ -	\$ (29)	-100%	\$ 27
Operating Surplus (Deficit)	\$ 15,004	\$ 14,438	\$ 543	4%	\$ 12,245

Free Reformed Churches of North America					
Needy Churches Fund					
Budget for the Years ended December 31, 2015 & 2016					
	2014	2015	Variances		2016
	Actual	Budget	\$	%	Projected
Revenues					
Assessments	12,138	4,943	7,195	146%	4,992
Assessment w/o's	23		(23)	0%	
Interest					
Bank	80	60	20	33%	60
Indwell (formerly Homestead)	1,702	1,700	2	0%	1,700
TD GIC's	1,090	1,125	(35)	-3%	1,125
Total Revenues	\$ 15,033	\$ 7,828	\$ 7,159	48%	\$ 7,877
Expenditures					
Payments to Churches	-	-	-	0%	-
Administration					
Bank Charges	29	30	1	3%	30
Total Expenditures	\$ 29	\$ 30	\$ 1	3%	\$ 30
Operating Surplus (Deficit)	\$ 15,004	\$ 7,798	\$ 7,160	48%	\$ 7,847

Free Reformed Churches of North America	
2014 Cdn\$ Emeritus Benefits Adjustment Form	
2013 Emeritus benefits	26,862.00
2013 Church related employment income (incl. housing)	
Total	
Less 2013 Basic Minister salary (\$41,222) x 1.5	-61,833.00
Difference	
Positive difference is the excess amount of benefits to be repaid	
Pastor:	

Free Reformed Churches of North America	
2014 US\$ Emeritus Benefits Adjustment Form	
2013 Emeritus benefits	26,491.00
2013 Church related employment income (incl. housing)	
Total	
Less 2013 Basic Minister salary (\$40,756) x 1.5	-61,134.00
Less 2013 Medical Premiums & deductibles	
Difference	
Positive difference is the excess amount of benefits to be repaid in 2014	
Pastor:	

Free Reformed Churches of North America

Needy Churches Fund

Notes to Financial Statements

For the Year ended December 31, 2014

1. Significant Accounting Policies:

The financial statements of the Needy Churches Fund are prepared using the accrual basis of accounting. All representations are in Canadian dollars.

2. Review of the Statements:

The financial statements of the Needy Churches Fund have been reviewed, utilizing the 1996 standard audit program, by Paul Vandenberg (Hamilton) and by Aant Koonstra (Hamilton). The records were found to be accurate and in good order.

3. Cash:

Cash and Short Term Deposits consist of the following:

	2014	2013
Chequeing	\$ 21,232	\$ 83,994
Indwell (formerly Homestead) GIC	40,000	40,000
TD GIC's	75,000	-
	\$ 136,232	\$ 123,994

4. Accounts Receivable:

	2014	2013
Assessments Receivable	\$ 175	\$ -
Indwell GIC Interest Receivable	1,753	51
TD GIC Interest Receivable	1,090	-
	\$ 3,018	\$ 51

	Beg. Balance	2014 Assess.	Total Due	Amount Paid	O/S Balance
Abbotsford		217.50	217.50	217.50	-
Bornholm		242.50	242.50	242.50	-
Brantford		972.50	972.50	972.00	0.50
Calgary		275.00	275.00	275.00	-
Chatham		527.50	527.50	527.50	-
Chilliwack		617.50	617.50	617.50	-
Dundas		1,102.50	1,102.50	1,102.50	-
Fenwick		777.50	777.50	777.50	-
Grand Rapids		732.50	732.50	732.50	-
Hamilton		762.50	762.50	762.50	-
Lacombe		240.00	240.00	240.00	-
Langley		165.00	165.00	165.00	-
London	202.50	175.00	377.50	201.00	176.50
Mitchell		612.50	612.50	612.50	-
Monarch		1,240.00	1,240.00	1,240.00	-
Oxford		255.00	255.00	255.00	-
Prompton Plains		385.00	385.00	410.14	(25.14)
St. George		935.00	935.00	935.00	-
St. Thomas		697.50	697.50	697.50	-
Vineland		1,205.00	1,205.00	1,205.00	-
Total	202.50	12,137.50	12,340.00	12,188.14	151.86
				adjustment	23.14
				A/R	175.00

FOREIGN MISSION REPORT

To: The Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of North America
In Session June 01-05, 2015

Esteemed Brothers,

The Deputies for Free Reformed Missions International are pleased to submit the following report of our work since Synod 2014

1. COMMITTEE WORK

Since Synod 2014, the board of FRMI has met 4 times (July 09/14, October 15/14, January 28/15, and April 08/15). Two delegates, namely, brs. W. Bouma and R. Postma plan to visit the field in May of this year. The focus of the visit is to review the ongoing projects such as the education program, the translation work and the churches. In addition to the regularly scheduled meetings, communication with the mission field is maintained through regular reports, teleconferences, and personal contacts with board members. In commemoration of 25 years of FRMI mission work in Guatemala, a special anniversary edition of the Messenger was issued in September.

In addition to providing bulletin updates, the board has provided input to the periodical "The Messenger". Additionally, the website is also in the process of being updated.

The balance of the report seeks to provide you with a summary and update of the work as it is at present.

2. IGLESIA REFORMADA OF CUBULCO AND ALDEAN CHURCHES

This past year the Cubulco churches have been accepted by the Presbyterian Church of Guatemala and have formed their own Presbytery. Four of the obreros (Chema, Felipe, Santos and Marcario) have been ordained as pastors and two obreros (Celestino and Froilan) have been ordained as evangelists. All of the ordinations were performed by Pastor Xicara. A delegation consisting of representatives of the Presbyterian national church visited Cubulco to facilitate voting of the executive committee of the Reformed Presbytery of Cubulco. The voting was done by the representative of each church. A presbytery is made up of a pastor and elder of each church. The results were as follows: Celestino – president, Miguel Sunun – secretary, Felipe – treasurer, Santos Sunun – board member, Chalio – board member. Regrettably, there is presently a conflict between the executive committee and the central church of Cubulco. Since the contract with Pastor Xicara has ended, the central church requested that his contract be renewed for another three years. However, the executive committee did not agree and has ended his contract the end of December and are seeking another pastor. This has resulted in the central church deciding to leave the Cubulco Presbytery and seek another Presbytery to accept them. The Presbyterian authorities have

been contacted concerning this and hope to meet with them and discuss the issues.

Now that the churches are part of the Presbyterian churches, the board sees it stepping back somewhat with Nico in the role as more of a facilitator.

For a summary of the churches in the aldeas, please see the 2014 report to synod.

Let us continue to pray for the churches in the Cubulco area especially the central church as they struggle with the Presbytery that unity may be preserved.

3. EDUCATION PROGRAM

The program consists of the after school learning centre for children “Cristo es la Luz” and the support of Christian teachers in the aldean schools. As mentioned in the previous report to synod, an agreement between FRMI and AMG (Advancing Ministries of the Gospel) is in place; therefore the oversight of the education program is now with AMG with financial support from FRMI and with Nico providing oversight on behalf of FRMI as well. Presently, about 65 children are enrolled in the “Cristo es la Luz” program. The plan is to increase the enrollment and have the children supported through a sponsorship program with Word and Deed. Recently, the teachers have gone through an academic evaluation. Unfortunately, many of the teachers scored low which has resulted in dismissing some of them and recruiting new teachers. Presently, the Presbyterian Church is looking at the possibility of starting a Patria School (Christian school) in Cubulco. Vocational training is also being explored.

This past year AMG provided an opportunity for a group of students from the aldean schools and the learning centre to attend five days of camp. Since many parents of children in Guatemala do not have the resources to go on holidays, this is a wonderful blessing for them. The 40 acre camp, called Canaan, is located in a beautiful location about 45 minutes from Guatemala City. The goal is to send up to 75 children to the camp each year at a cost of \$4100. This is a good project for the young peoples of our churches to support.

4. TRANSLATION WORK

The translation work continues with both the OT and NT in the consultant phase. The consultant phase for Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John has been completed. This is being done with the assistance of Isela Trujillo, a qualified consultant provided to us through our agreement with the GBS (Guatemalan Bible Society). Since this is a lengthy process, the translation is expected to continue for at least two more years.

5. BROADENING THE FOCUS OF FRMI

To support theological training in Malawi, the Malawi Mission Committee (MMC) has met this past year to set standards for instructors to go to Malawi, i.e., those who have field experience etc.

An invitation has been received for the Annual general meeting of Mukhanyo Theological College to be held on May 30, 2015. Agenda items include the commemoration of 20 years of faithful ministry and a “ground breaking” ceremony for the new building in KwaMhlanga. The plan is to have Rev. Scott Dibbet attend the meeting to represent FRC.

6. MISSION WORKERS

6.1. Rev. Ken and Jackie Herfst

During the past summer and fall, Ken has again ministered in Ontario among the migrant Mexican workers through “Ministerios de Vida”. In general, the work has progressed considerably well this past year. As the men gain confidence and trust, they invite him to visit more frequently to discuss family issues, work related situations or pastoral concerns. During the Sunday services, Ken completed preaching from the gospel according to John with about 30-45 men in attendance. The soccer outreaches have also been well attended. This past year he worked through the Lord’s Prayer as a summary of what it means to be a Christian. Men who don’t normally attend the Sunday services expressed appreciation for the talks. Ken has also been privileged to preach in the FRC every Lord’s Day.

This past October, Ken met with the Academic Council at the seminary (SEP) in Guatemala for a day of meetings and planning for 2015. During the meeting, it became increasingly clear that the seminary may no longer require his services. This is due to two reasons: 1) In 2016 they will apply a minimum class size of 20 students for the first year students and are afraid they might not make the minimum, 2) There are graduates from SEP who are now qualified to teach theology, including one of his first students. Although, this news brings a degree of sadness since they have worked so well together, he feels it to be a healthy development that SEP seeks national professors and that they now have capable men. Additionally, the National Presbyterian Church has entered a time of modification as they have divided into a series of Synods under a Bi-Annual general Assembly to facilitate a better administration and the mission of the churches. As a result, SEP’s role will undergo revision as well. This will involve a complete overhaul of SEP’s mission within the National Presbyterian Church and could possibly result in the main campus being moved to another location.

Ken is presently working on a study manual “What it means to be Reformed in Guatemala in today’s world” which he hopes to present to the seminary.

Due to family circumstances, he also believes it is necessary to remain in Canada for the wellbeing and stability of his family and plans to take his furlough this summer. In the interim, since the Providence FRC is vacant he has been employed by them to provide pulpit supply and teaching until his furlough starts.

Ken does not plan to continue his ministry with “Ministerios de Vida” this summer and fall. The board of “Ministerios de Vida” is seeking a replacement for him.

His doctoral studies continue as per schedule with completion date set for this fall. The subject of his thesis is “The covenant from a missiology perspective”.

Lets us remember Ken and his family in prayer as he seeks the Lord for guidance that He would open doors for his future ministry.

6.2. Nico and Lia Kattenberg

Nico continues his role on behalf of FRMI in overseeing the projects in Cubulco and the aldean areas and also takes care of the administration. His burden for the churches is clearly displayed in his dedication to them. As noted above, there is often disagreement between the churches and the executive committee of the Presbytery. This past year he has been instrumental in mentoring and attempting to facilitate conflict resolution among them.

Last August, Nico was given an opportunity to attend a leadership summit which he found very beneficial and insightful.

The family is doing quite well. Three of their children are in school; the youngest one will start kindergarten this fall. Lia serves at the school for a few hours a week doing discipleship class. Due to the recent illness of Lia’s mother, Lia has returned home for a few weeks to take care of her mother. They also plan to come to Canada this summer for a break and reconnect with their family and friends.

To keep our churches informed of the work in Guatemala, Nico continues to maintain his blog.

See <http://nicokattenberg.blogspot.ca>.

See also www.frcmissions.org.

Let us remember our missionaries in our prayers that the Lord would enrich their work and protect their families.

7. FINANCIAL AND MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

7.1. 2014 Financial Statement

The 2014 Financial Statement is attached.

7.2. 2015 Proposed Budget

The proposed budget for the year 2015 is attached for your consideration and approval.

7.3. Appointment of Auditors

The Mission Board recommends the appointments of Mr. G. Westerink and Mr. G. Neven as auditors for the year 2015

7.4. Appointment of Directors

The terms of J. J. Brink (14 yrs) and Rev. H. Overduin (12 yrs) has been completed and therefore will not be renewed. May the Lord continue to bless them as they continue to serve the churches. The

first 3 year term of P. Luth and the second 3 year term (extended to 4) of M. Laman have also been completed. Therefore the board recommends the re-appointments of P. Luth and M. Laman for an additional three year term and the appointment of Duane Rogers (Pompton Plains FRC) and an additional director “yet to be announced”.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mission Board makes the following recommendations to Synod:

- 8.1. That the re-appointment of P. Luth and M. Laman and the appointment of Duane Rogers and “TBA” as directors be approved.
- 8.2. That the 2014 Financial Statement be approved
- 8.3. That the budget for the year 2015 be approved
- 8.4. That the appointments of Mr. Gerrit Westerink and Mr. Greg Neven as auditors for the year 2015 be approved
- 8.5. That the actions of the Mission Board be approved

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Mission Board and wishing you the Lord’s Blessing
John J. Brink, Secretary

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2014

	2014	Notes	2013
Assets:			
Cash	105,789	3	113,638
Term Deposits	180,000	4	174,000
Receivables	710		402
Capital Assets		5	
Other	<u>48,325</u>		<u>51,325</u>
Total Assets	<u><u>334,824</u></u>		<u><u>339,365</u></u>
Liabilities			
Accounts Payable	2,675	6	2,536
Auto Reserve Fund	<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>2,675</u>		<u>2,536</u>
Equity			
Beginning Balance	336,829		341,702
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	<u>-4,680</u>		<u>-4,873</u>
Total Equity	<u>332,149</u>		<u>336,829</u>
Total Liabilities & Equity	<u><u>334,824</u></u>		<u><u>339,365</u></u>

FREE REFORMED MISSIONS INTERNATIONAL

BUDGET

FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2015 & 2016

	2014 Actual	2015 Budget	%	Notes	2016 Projected
Receipts					
Free Reformed Churches	228,599	300,000	131%	9a	317,750
Gifts	17,046	17,220	101%	9b	18,000
Interest Income	10,025	9,700	97%		9,500
Miscellaneous	3,300	4,000		9c	4000
Other Churches	41,395	37,250	90%		15,000
	<u>300,365</u>	<u>368,170</u>	123%		<u>364,250</u>
Disbursements					
Exchange Gain/Loss	-115	0	0%		0
Cubulco Mission Post	65,000	90,000	138%	9d	90,000
Education-AMG	76558	91,000		9e	92,000
Mailbox	21	0	0%		0
Salary and Benefits	142,700	161,470	113%	9f	153,000
Travel/Accommodation	18,678	24,750	133%		28,000
Education/Training	0	0			0
Legal Fees	1,525	200			250
Office /Bank	677	750	111%		1,000
Telephone	0	0			0
	<u>305,044</u>	<u>368,170</u>	121%		<u>364,250</u>
Surplus (Shortage)	<u>-4,679</u>	<u>0</u>			<u>0</u>

FREE REFORMED MISSIONS INTERNATIONAL

INCOME STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2014

	2014 Actual	2014 Budget	%	Notes	2013 Actual
Receipts					
Free Reformed Churches	228,599	297,000	77%	8a	210,850
Gifts	17,046	15,950	107%	8b	30,085
Interest Income	10,025	8,000	125%		9,792
Miscellaneous	3,300	4000	83%	8c	330
Other Churches	41,395	36,500	113%	8d	32,803
	300,365	361,450	83%		283,860
Disbursements					
Exchange Gain/Loss	-114	120	-95%		1,129
Cubulco Mission Post	65,000	90,000	72%	8e	50,445
Education - AMG	76558	91000		8f	74680
Mailbox	21	250	8%		182
Salary and Benefits	142,700	140,280	102%		130,334
Travel/Accommodation	18,678	36,750	51%		25,006
Education/Training	0	0			5,189
Legal Fees	1,525	2,000	0%	8g	0
Office /Bank	677	800	85%		1,768
Telephone	0	250	0%		0
	305,045	361,450	84%		288,733
Surplus (Shortage)	-4,680	0			-4,873

**Notes to the Financial Statements
For the Year Ended December 31, 2013**

1. Significant Accounting Policies:

The financial statements of the Foreign Mission Committee are prepared utilizing the accrual basis of accounting. All representations are made in Canadian dollars.

2. Audit of the Books:

The financial statements of the Foreign Mission Committee were reviewed and approved on April 9 , 2015 by Mr. Jim Koopman and Mr. Greg Neven of Brantford.

Review Committee Report

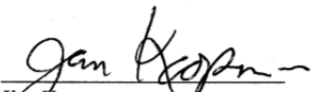
To Free Reformed Missions International

We have conducted the following review procedures on the books and records of the Foreign Mission Fund:

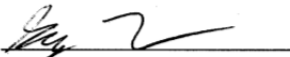
1. Reviewed the year-end bank reconciliation(s)
2. Reviewed the payroll records
3. Reviewed the cash disbursements journal and examined supplier invoices on a test basis
4. Reviewed the cash receipts journal

Based on the above procedures, we have found the financial statements accurately reflect the operations of the committee for the year ended December 31, 2014

Date: Apr 9, 2015



Jim Koopman



Greg Neven

3. Cash

Cash and Savings consist of the following:

TD Chequing & Savings	103,956
TD Chequing US Account	1,834
	\$ 105,790

The mission requires \$100,000 available cash to handle a possible emergency situation. The remaining funds are needed for a smooth operation of financial affairs.

4. Term Deposits

Christian Stewardship Services	180,000
--------------------------------	---------

5. Capital Assets:

All capital assets are removed from the balance sheet. After formal registration the mission post in Cubulco is now reporting to the Guatemala government and the assets have been transferred to the books in Cubulco.

6. Accounts payable:

Payroll Liabilities	475
Invoices to be paid	0
Unclaimed book allowance	<u>2,200</u>
	<u>\$ 2,675</u>

8. Income Breakdown:

8a From Free Reformed Churches:

Receipts from F R Churches January through December 2014

	<u>Jan - Dec 14</u>	<u>Jan - Dec 13</u>	\$ <u>Change</u>
Abbotsford	4,508	5,471	-963
Bornholm	4,167	3,636	531
Brantford	12,920	15,275	-2,355
Calgary	1,793	3,079	-1,286
Chatham	13,764	14,206	-442
Chilliwack	16,435	18,965	-2,530
Dundas	17,804	17,163	641
Fenwick	12,031	13,154	-1,123
Grand Rapids	25,111	7,462	17,649
Hamilton	34,354	30,639	3,715
Lacombe	801	0	801
Langley	2,000	5,099	-3,099
London	4,340	9,761	-5,421
Mitchell	7,214	14,669	-7,455
Monarch	9,057	3,474	5,583
Oxford	632	2047	
Prompton Plains	6,019	11,346	-5,327
St George	2,060	1,500	560
St Thomas	37,499	17,257	20,242
Vineland	16,090	16,647	-557
TOTAL	<u>228,599</u>	<u>210,850</u>	<u>17,749</u>

8b&c Gifts & Miscellaneous:

Ladies League	2,296
Camp Canaan	3,300
Gifts, Donations	<u>14,750</u>
	\$20,346

8d Income from Other Churches

Ministerios De Vida Contribution	\$21,500
Edmonton URC	<u>19,895</u>
TOTAL	\$41,395

8e

Cubulco Expense Breakdown (In Cdn \$\$)

	Expenses	Budget
Church Support	15,285	21,712
Translation	440	4,633
Education	7,090	7,295
Labour	25,888	34,683
Administration	23,250	31,531

8f The support for AMG in education is below budget, partly due to a carry over from 2013.

9. Budget Notes

9a Income from FR Churches does not include funding for Camp Canaan. See 9c.

9b Other income is support from various donors and the Ladies League. It is not possible to provide a good estimate for receipts from donors.

9c The budget for AMG does not cover the cost of sending students to Camp Canaan. The intent is to have the Young People Societies make this a funding project.

9d The weak Cdn dollar will require us to use all these funds

9e There is some carry over of funds from 2014 but these funds will be needed for 2015.

9f Salaries are based on synod guidelines for US ministers. If the Canadian dollar weakens then this budget line might be too low.

INTERCHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

ANNUAL REPORT SUBMITTED TO SYNOD 2015 OF THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF NORTH AMERICA

Esteemed brethren:

Your deputies on Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC) met on October 22, 2014 and March 26 and April 10, 2015. We are pleased to submit the following report.

North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC)

Rev. C. Pronk, Rev. J. Overduin, Mr. D. Tamminga and Mr. H. Vandoedewaard attended the NAPARC meeting (November 11-12) in Grassie, Ontario. It was hosted by the Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC). Delegates from thirteen Reformed and Presbyterian churches in North America met together over two days. The main purpose of these annual meetings is to share reports about life in each church federation and prayer for each other. Dr. Gerhard Visscher of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary preached a sermon on Ephesians 4:3: “endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” The meeting decided to request the secretaries of each IRC to send study papers or links to study papers that can be shared among all the churches. NAPARC also asked if there was a subject of mutual concern for which a study committee or conference might be arranged to which the churches might be invited. A detailed report of this NAPARC meeting was published in the December 2014 issue of *The Messenger*. Our delegates were also able to have meetings with delegates from other churches. On this occasion they met with delegates of the PRC and URCNA. The Reformed Church of Quebec (ERQ) is hosting NAPARC 2015 in Quebec City, November 10-12. We recommend sending Rev. L.W. Bilkes and Mr. D. Tamminga.

International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC)

Although there is no ICRC meeting till the fall of 2016, we have received correspondence informing us of a first annual regional conference set for February 9-11, 2016 in Orlando Florida, with the theme: “Women in the Teaching Offices.” Although this subject is not currently relevant for us, it may be good to be attuned to this discussion. At the same time, such a conference brings overlap with what NAPARC provides. At this time, we are not committed to attending this regional conference, but are open to receive instructions from synod.

CONTACT WITH CORRESPONDING CHURCHES

Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken (CGK) – Complete Correspondence

Although not much contact was had with the CGK in this past year, we do expect one of their ministers, Rev. W. Wullschleger to attend our synod meeting this year and to bring greetings from our sister churches in the Netherlands.

Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC) – Complete Correspondence

Last year we moved to complete correspondence with the HRC. In our report to synod 2014 we said that we would continue to work on matters that keep us separate. Various forms of contact have taken place with the HRC. A combined FRC & HRC office-bearers conference took place last fall, which was well attended by both HRC and FRC office-bearers with edifying subjects on biblical, theological and historical perspectives of church union. Also our HRC sub-committee met with their counterparts to discuss various matters including seminary governance, mission work, ministerial credentials, etc. Their committee is asking their synod to deliberate and decide on the following, and we believe these same matters should be forwarded to our synod for deliberation in an attempt to work closer together.

1. Whether our Synod would be interested in holding Synod 2016 at the same time and in the same (or nearby) venue as the HRC synod. The intention would be to consider a combined prayer service, combined office-bearer's conference, possible mission presentations to each other's meetings, etc.
2. That Synod give permission for the HRC and FRC mission committees to communicate with each other to see if joint efforts and/or mutual assistance can be enhanced.
3. That Synod give the respective emeritus committees permission to communicate with one another to work out a proposal to determine an equitable method to provide for emeritus ministers who served in both denominations.

Attempts will be made further to coordinate a joint family camp scheduled for 2017. Also the HRC are pursuing ways to publish the history of the FRC in their periodical. We also believe that there should be a standing order that the 2nd clerk of synod send the press release of our synod to the clerk of the HRC synod. All of this is an attempt to manifest closer unity with denominations that are close in so many ways. We also recommend that Rev. Pronk and Rev. Kranendonk be delegated to attend the HRC synod 2016 in Burgessville with Mr. D. Tamminga as alternate.

Free Church of Scotland Continuing (FCSC) – Limited Correspondence

An invitation has been received to their General Assembly meeting 2015. The last time we attend their General Assembly was in 2011. Our committee recommends that two delegates attend their General Assembly in May 2016.

Hersteld Hervormde Kerk (HHK) – Limited Correspondence

We expect two delegates from the HHK, Rev. Heemskerk and Mr. de Kloe at our synod this year. As a committee we hope to meet with them prior to the meeting of synod on June 1. In light of this meeting with these two delegates from the HHK, our committee recommends that a visit scheduled for this year to their synod (approved by synod 2014) be postponed to next year. We recommend Rev. L.W. Bilkes and Mr. C. Keuning be delegated to attend their synod meeting in June 2016.

Providence Reformed Church of America (RCA) congregation in Grand Rapids (MI) – Restricted Correspondence

Rev. J.A. Vandenberg addressed our synod last year and plans to attend our synod again this year. Various pulpit exchanges have taken place. We wish to build on the positive relationship and encourage more local contact in Grand Rapids.

CONTACT WITH LIMITED CONTACT CHURCHES

Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)

In 2013, our churches entered into a relationship of limited contact with the OPC. Our delegates had planned to meet with them at NAPARC, but because the meeting at NAPARC ended early the scheduled meeting did not take place. An invitation has been received to attend their synod at Dort College, Sioux Center, IO. We decided not to attend, but to meet with their delegates at NAPARC this fall.

Presbyterian Reformed Church (PRC)

A meeting was held with Rev. Gebbie at NAPARC. The conversation focused mainly on the development of Derek Baars being asked to serve as 'stated supply' for a small PRC in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland (RPCI)

Various attempts have been made over the years with the RPCI at the synodical level. We have attended their synod several times, but they have never reciprocated the relationship. There has been no tangible progress in our relationship. We have sensed a spiritual affinity with them and recognize that they are a small denomination with limited resources. As a committee we have discussed that due to the lack of a reciprocal relationship we are considering discontinuing the relationship with them, and will notify them of this discussion.

United Reformed Churches of North America (URCNA)

Ed Laman visited their synod in Visalia, California. Their synod adopted their CERCU recommendation regarding the conclusions of Utrecht (cf. Acts of Synod 2014 pp. 144-150). We believe this is a helpful step. However, the preaching is key to see if they espouse the emphases that we cherish. To that end, our sub-committee met with them and reviewed three sermons by URCNA ministers. Unfortunately, two of the sample sermons turned out to be quite poor, especially homiletically, and also one of them bearing very much a Kuyperian presumptive emphasis with no discrimination at all. The URC committee regretted that they did not take more care in their selection of sermons. The third sample sermon was a sermon much more in line with our understanding of the Scriptures, especially regarding the recognition that covenant people too need to be born again. We recognize that among the URCNA the ministers are not all uniform. Some of their ministers appreciate our distinctives. We are planning to meet again to try and understand each other better. At our next meeting with them, we intend to listen to and discuss some sermons from FRCNA ministers.

Reformed Church in the U.S. (RCUS)

An invitation was received from the RCUS this past spring to attend their synod. The RCUS are an historically Reformed denomination established in the 1700s, stemming from a German Reformed background. They are committed to and

preach from the Heidelberg Catechism. We plan to meet with them at NAPARC and report to synod 2016.

CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE COMBINED CONSISTORY SOUTH (CCS)

A letter was received from the Combined Consistory South expressing concerns about the policy adopted at synod 2014. They raised a number of questions. They wondered why a non-FRC minister who has sustained a CD is not able to preach in any FRC congregation beside the requesting church.

Response: He would potentially be able to preach in other FRC churches too if their consistories request the IRC. They also wonder if the IRC should inform all other congregations that a non-FRC minister has sustained a CD.

Response: this is possible, and will be done from now on informing each consistory of those who have sustained a CD. They also ask if there is no longer a “preaching license” given to non-FRC ministers from outside the denomination. This is correct and the rationale is that hereby we remove the impression that these are the only suitable non-FRC ministers to preach on our pulpits.

REQUEST TO CALL URCNA MINISTER Rev. Christo Heiberg

The consistory of Mitchell has requested permission to extend a call to Rev. C. Heiberg for pastoral ministry in their congregation. He was born in 1962 in South Africa, was called to the ministry shortly after his conversion in 1982. He received his Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Divinity at the University of Pretoria, and later studied at the Theological University of GKN. He served a Dutch Reformed Church of Rant-en-Dal for 5 years till 1994. After this, he served the Free Reformed Church of Johannesburg from 1995-2000. Since 2001, he has been the minister of the Zion United Reformed Church of Sheffield, ON. In accordance with Article 5G of the Church Order, we conducted a Colloquium Doctum (CD) with him which he sustained. As a committee we did not achieve consensus that the Mitchell consistory has given sufficient reasons to justify his nomination. The weakness of their case noted by some of the deputies regarded the straw vote (in Mitchell) which was below their normal percentage for calling a minister, and the fact that they have only called one FRC minister since becoming vacant in June 2013. Herewith we forward their request to synod (Appendix A). Rev. C. Heiberg will be asked to preach a sermon and undergo a synodical exam. As called for by our Church Order, our committee is ready to assist the chairman of synod in conducting the examination.

REQUEST TO CALL

At our fall meeting, correspondence was received from St. Thomas FRC requesting permission to call a minister from outside our denomination. However, the process was halted at their request.

PROPOSED PREACHING GUIDE

Synod 2014 mandated the IRC and consistories desiring to have a minister from outside of our denomination preach on their pulpits to ensure that his preaching is consonant with the kind of preaching that we in the FRC seek to uphold and foster (Acts of Synod, 2014, p. 181). To assist consistories in carrying out this responsibility, the IRC has produced the following guide

(Appendix B). We urge the consistories carefully to consider the questions posed in this guide before contacting the IRC.

REV. DAVID ZADOK

A request was received from CMI to have Rev. Zadok preach. He was allowed to preach in the past in our churches. However, currently we do not have a mandate to approve this as he does not subscribe to the Three Forms of Unity or Westminster Confessions. We are bringing this to synod asking synod to adjudicate.

APPOINTMENTS

Having served 12 years, the term of Mr. E. Laman as primary member expires this year. Our committee is grateful for his many years of service. We recommend Mr. A. De Vries, who is currently an alternate member of our committee, be appointed as primary member and that Mr. David Faasse (Grand Rapids) be appointed as an alternate member.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO SYNOD 2015

1. To approve of sending Rev. L.W. Bilkes and Mr. D. Tamminga as delegates to the November 2015 NAPARC meeting in Quebec City.
2. To adopt the HRC & FRC recommendations giving permission
 - a. to IRC to coordinate concurrent synod with HRC at the same time and in a nearby venue with joint prayer service.
 - b. for FRC & HRC mission committees to communicate with each other to see if joint efforts and / mutual assistance can be enhanced
 - c. for FRC & HRC emeritus committees permission to communicate with one another to work out a proposal to determine an equitable method to provide for emeritus ministers who served in both denominations.
3. To approve of sending Rev. Kranendonk and Rev. Pronk as delegates to the April 2016 Synod of the HRC in Burgessville.
4. To approve a standing order that the second clerk of synod send the press release of our synod to the clerk of the HRC synod.
5. To approve sending two delegates to attend the May 2016 General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland Continuing.
6. To approve the sending of Rev. L.W. Bilkes and Mr. C. Keuning to attend a HHK synod in 2016.
7. To adopt the proposed preaching guide as a tool to assist consistories in ensuring that the preaching of a non-FRC minister is consonant with the kind of preaching that we in the FRC seek to uphold and foster.
8. To accept, process (in accordance with CO 5G) and decide on Mitchell's request to call URCNA minister Rev. C. Heiberg.
9. To approve the appointment of Mr. A. De Vries as primary member for the balance of his term, and Mr. D. Faasse as alternate member for a three year term.

Appendix A: Request to call Rev. C. Heiberg (Mitchell)**Appendix B: Proposed Free Reformed Preaching Guide**

Synod 2014 mandated the IRC and consistories desiring to have a minister from outside of our denomination preach on their pulpits to ensure that his preaching is consistent with the kind of preaching that we in the FRC seek to uphold and foster. To assist consistories in carrying out this responsibility, the IRC has produced the following guide. We advise the consistories carefully to consider the questions posed in this guide before contacting the IRC.

Biblical

- Does he accurately and fully explain the plain meaning of the text?

Confessional

- Does he from time to time cite our confessions to further explain, substantiate or amplify parts of the sermon?
- Are his sermons consistent with what we confess?

Experiential

- Does he give due consideration to the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart and life of the believer?
- Does he acknowledge the struggle not only in coming to faith but also living out of faith in Christ and does he provide pastoral guidance in this struggle?

Structured

- Do his sermons show structure and logical development, and do they logically develop the main thought of the text?

Discriminating

- Does he pay attention to the various spiritual states of his hearers (true believers, the weak in faith, those who lack assurance, those who are deceiving themselves, those who are backslidden, those who are not saved and are living careless lives, etc...) giving a word in season to each as time and opportunity permit?

Searching

- Does he probe the hearts and consciences of his hearers (both believers and unbelievers) by asking questions for self examination, exposing sin and unbelief?

Christ centred

- Does he preach Christ from the text, pointing his hearers to Him, assuring them of His ability and willingness to save and to help?
- Does he regularly and passionately urge his hearers to faith and repentance in Christ?
- Does he freely and warmly offer Christ and all of His benefits to his hearers and does he invite all of his hearers to partake of these benefits?

Balanced

- Does he give due weight in his preaching to man's misery, how he may be delivered from his misery and what gratitude he owes to God for such deliverance?
- Does he give equal weight to divine sovereignty and man's responsibility?

OUTREACH COMMITTEE REPORT

to Synod 2015 of the Free Reformed Churches of North America

Esteemed delegates,

Your Outreach committee met twice since Synod 2014. The mandate Synod has given to us is “to facilitate, in conjunction with the churches, the spread of the gospel within North America and around the world and to establish congregations of the FRCNA where there is not yet such a church” (Outreach Order, II). We consider it a privilege and an opportunity to serve the churches in this way.

There are three main areas of outreach in which we are actively engaged. This year, with thankfulness to the Lord, we may report very positively in relation to all three of these areas.

A. Asian Ministry

Dr. Gangar continues to work hard at producing written materials that can be translated into various Indian languages to be distributed throughout North America and beyond. Last fall we rejoiced to receive in our hands the published English version of a Devotional Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew. Following that writing project, Dr. Gangar has gone on to prepare a commentary on Genesis 1-3. It was first thought to have this commentary cover Genesis 1-11, but due to the many weighty issues in Genesis 1, not to mention in chapters 2 and 3, it is now planned for the commentary to be finished at the end of Genesis 3. Since Dr. Gangar interacts with a number of contemporary issues in this commentary, we believe it will be useful not only to Indians, whether locally or abroad, but also to native westerners here in North America, especially to students attending university. Please continue to remember Dr. Gangar in his writing work, and if you’ve not had a presentation from him in a while, we’d encourage you to consider inviting him both to preach and to present.

While Dr. Gangar engages in preparing written materials, we have established two subcommittees, one of which is to oversee his work and to arrange for translation into the four major Indian languages, as well as eventually printing the booklets/books (printing as funds are available). One of the challenges this subcommittee has faced is finding suitable translators for the various languages. Synod may remember that we brought in one of our translators to address Synod last year. In addition to him, our subcommittee has met a student at PRTS who has been able to coordinate the rest of the translations and at a reasonable rate. So far we are very pleased about this and thankful for the progress that is happening. We want to highlight this point because last year in our Synod report, we mentioned the matter of finding capable translators to be a considerable challenge. We are expecting delivery of the Matthew commentary in Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu by the summertime. The other subcommittee includes a number of local young people/young adults under the supervision of Rev. L.J. Bilkes. They are responsible for the website (truepathtogod.org) and for organizing distribution throughout North America of the resources we publish. This distribution will focus on those areas where

there are concentrations of Indians, and especially also to be a help to churches in reaching out to those populations. Not too much has happened yet in terms of distribution, but the committee has done its research work, and as booklets/books become available, is ready to send out these resources through the various networks that have been established. We appreciate their work.

One final note has to do with the budget. Our current budget of approximately \$110,000 allows us to set Dr. Gangar apart for this work, including some conference and travel expenses, and it also enables us to arrange for some translations of the writing that Dr. Gangar is doing. The reality is, however, that to be able to finish all the translations and especially also to print the various manuscripts in reasonable and attractive formats, we are in need of additional funds. Rather than solicit these funds through quota, however, we simply want to make the need known to the churches via this report. For example, once a commentary has been written, it costs approximately \$7500 – 10,000 in order to translate, layout and design, and print 500 copies (note the exact pricing will vary per language as each language takes a different number of pages.) We lay this need before you, trusting the Lord to provide in His time and way. May He richly bless His Word!

B. Nipissing

The work in Nipissing continues to advance, with the blessing of the Lord. This work is well known to the churches through quarterly updates sent by Rev. VanDoodewaard. There was also a feature article in *The Messenger* in April. The committee is especially appreciative of the good efforts of the churches to support this outreach work by way of free will offerings. You may remember that a notice was sent to the churches back in November of last year, advertising that we were considerably short in funds in relation to the commitment we have made as churches (at present, \$75,000/year). Thankfully, there was a very positive response, and the end of the year showed very strong support.

Rev. VanDoodewaard and his wife and family are well. The Lord gave them another child in the spring of this year. The family is busy and settled well into the work of ministry in Powassan area. In addition to services on the Lord's day, Rev. VanDoodewaard has led a Bible study on Wednesday nights through the gospel of Luke. This was advertised to the community by way of leaflets in every mailbox. There was some response, with several people coming to visit. Regretfully, no one stayed, however. Rev. VanDoodewaard is going to try again, this time in a community a little north of Powassan. Leaflets will again be distributed and the local community invited to study God's Word.

One highlight last year was the installation of two deacons in Powassan. This has been a very positive development, with the deacons working hard, via the guidance also of the Brantford deacons. Efforts are underway to obtain charitable status for the members in Nipissing. There are other projects ongoing as well. Over all, there is much to be grateful for and excited about.

Of utmost importance, of course, is the fact that the Lord's Word is going out in Powassan, Lord's day after Lord's day. It is evident that the Lord is blessing the ministry of the Word through the pastor. We as committee are thankful for Rev. VanDoodewaard and the deacons, as well as for the good working relationship with the Brantford consistory. Let us not cease to pray that the Lord might continue to bless His church also in the Nipissing area. There are many needs, but the Lord is at work, and nothing is too hard for Him. May He receive all the praise and the glory in that place.

Presently we are in year three of a five-year-plan that is aiming at, with God's blessing, the Powassan church plant becoming an independent congregation. As mentioned above, we are still committed as churches to supporting the work in Powassan by way of free-will offerings. This year that amount continues to be \$75,000. Next year it will decrease to \$50,000, and the year after to \$25,000. The members in Powassan are aware of this plan, and they are quietly trusting the Lord to lead and bless.

C. Radio Ministry

With God's blessing, the Radio Ministry has continued to run for another year. Rev. Hans Overduin prepares weekly 30 minute broadcasts and these are heard on stations in North America (7 stations) and Africa (2 stations). By these broadcasts, we have an opportunity to proclaim the Word of God far more widely than simply within the four walls of our churches. Rev. Overduin does not receive a large amount of correspondence but when correspondence comes, it is almost always positive and encouraging, people expressing their appreciation for the messages. One interesting experience this year was when a local Alberta station mistakenly missed airing the broadcast at the regular time. It arranged for the broadcast to be heard at another time, and shortly after that, Rev. Overduin received a call from an older couple. They expressed appreciation for the message and have since been attending the Calgary FRC on occasion, both at worship services and even at other church functions. This reminds us that it's ultimately the Lord who's in charge of who hears the Word as well as when!

As mentioned in our report last year, Rev. Overduin's term as radio pastor is coming to an end this year. He has indicated that he would like to step down from the position, after serving as radio pastor since 2001. The committee is grateful for the faithful service of Rev. Overduin and is willing, albeit regretfully, to honour his request. Already at the last couple of synods, we have mentioned to the churches that this would be happening, and we invited anyone who might be interested in taking up the work to contact our committee. Receiving no response, however, we commissioned a subcommittee to propose a succession plan. The result was that in March of this year, we wrote to two individuals within our denomination who we consider able and gifted in relation to radio work. In addition to contacting them, we indicated that we were open to considering various other technological options that might be more effective (from a human point of view, although realizing of course our total dependence on the Holy Spirit for any blessing to occur) in ministering the gospel to people in the world at large. For example, in our internet age, and with smartphones and podcasts and twitter feeds, etc., it was brought to our attention that in

general people listen far less to the radio than they used to do. This is especially true of younger people. This means that we may have to think of other mediums through which we can in a more fruitful way bring the gospel to the generation in which we live. All this needs further research and more study and would be part of whatever transition might take place. In the meantime, in response to our letters, one of the individuals wrote back indicating that although he was interested, he could not take on this work at this time, due to other responsibilities. The second individual was unable to give a response before we had to submit this report to the calling church for inclusion in the Synod agenda. We hope to provide a fuller update to Synod, and we may also need the advice and direction of Synod as to how to proceed further.

We thank the churches for their faithful, prayerful support for the work of ministry. In view of the Lord's blessing us each year with sufficient funds (presently approximately \$100,000/year, within which we're able to meet our current budget), and consistent with our desire to move this work entirely to free will offerings, we are lowering the quota to \$15 for churches that do not have free will offerings for this work, and to \$5 for churches that do hold one or more collections in the year. May the Lord continue to add His blessing and build His church with this spread of the Word.

D. Two Special Matters

The committee wants to bring to the attention of Synod two special matters and to ask for counsel. The first is the matter of whether or not to seek another field of labour somewhere in North America. For example, we know that many cities and communities in the north of Ontario do not have any significant Reformed Christian witness, and we're wrestling with the question of what is/should be our responsibility in relation to that reality. We've had some initial discussions regarding this matter and decided to share that with all the churches in order to engage some conversation and perhaps also receive direction. In the committee, various points have been raised. On the one hand, there is the acknowledgement that our work in Powassan is just starting to get off the ground, and should we as it were wait for the baby to be walking before seeking another child? Is it perhaps too soon to start looking for another place to plant a church? There is also the fact that as a denomination, we have limited resources, e.g., pastors. At the same time, there are great needs and as such, great opportunities in cities like, for example, Sault Ste Marie. Then there is the fact that there is a small HRC presence north of North Bay (Temagami?), and the question of whether we should explore that some more? In connection with this, we have heard that at PRTS there is a growing interest among ministerial students to consider church planting even in hard places such as up north in Ontario. Might there be an opportunity here? In this regard, is it not so that as churches we ought to be ever outward looking? But where exactly do we go from here? All these points and questions we bring to Synod, to help initiate conversation and to see where the Lord might lead and what He might do.

The second matter concerns interaction with the HRC, and the committee wonders if in view of our growing relationship as denominations, it might be a

good idea for us as committee to seek a meeting with the Outreach committee of the HRC. If that were to happen, however, we need a mandate from Synod. We therefore bring this matter to Synod, and ask for directions as to how we should proceed.

E. Appointments

Rev. J. Overduin and Mr. R. Pennings have both completed three terms. They are willing each to serve a fourth (final) term, expiring 2018, and we are therefore recommending that to Synod. Mr. J Koopman has served our committee for four terms and therefore cannot be reappointed. We are recommending Mr. Raymond Roth to succeed him. Also, Rev. van Essen has requested no longer to serve on the committee as *ex officio*. We are grateful for the years of faithful service that both Mr. Koopman and Rev. van Essen have given to this committee and to the work of radio and outreach.

F. Recommendations

1. That Synod approve a 2016 quota of \$21/member (no change from 2015) for the work of outreach, specifically the Asian Ministry and the work of Dr. Gangar, with the understanding that the ministry work in Powassan is to be supported through freewill offerings (next year's commitment is \$50,000).
2. That Synod approve a 2016 quota of \$15/member for the radio ministry, with the understanding that for congregations that hold at least one collection for this work, the quota will be \$5/member.
3. That Synod give direction with regard to the two special matters raised under point D, i.e., whether and/or where to seek another field of labour in order to plant another church, and whether or not to seek a meeting with the Outreach committee of the HRC and with what particular mandate to meet.
4. That Synod approve the following appointments:
 - 4.1. To re-appoint Rev. J. Overduin (Vineland) and Mr. R. Pennings (Calgary) to 4th terms, expiring 2018.
 - 4.2. To appoint Mr. Raymond Roth (Hamilton) to succeed Mr. Jim Koopman (Brantford, has served four terms) to a 1st term, expiring 2018.
 - 4.3. To appoint Revs. Gangar, Hans Overduin and Vandoodewaard as *ex officio* members for another year. (Rev. van Essen asking not to be reappointed in this capacity).
5. That Synod approve the actions of the Outreach committee.

Commending you and your work to the care and blessing of Lord,

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Joel Overduin, Secretary, Outreach FRCNA

FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF NORTH AMERICA
OUTREACH COMMITTEE
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS - Income Statement
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31 2014

	2014	2014	Variances F(U)		Note	2013
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	\$	%		<u>Actual</u>
<u>REVENUES</u>						
Assessments	101,955	101,955	-	0%		90,554
Collections	79,547	75,000	4,547	6%	5	65,907
Interest	876	10	866			5
Rev. Gangar tuition repayment	4,700		4,700	0%		4,200
Needy churches fund	-	-	-	0%		-
Total Revenues	187,078	\$176,965	\$10,113	5%		\$160,666
<u>EXPENDITURES</u>						
Free Reformed Publications	-					640
Punjabi Home Ministry	97,581	100,000	2,419	2%		94,335
Gospel Doors	-	-	-	0%		-
Nipissing Church Plant	73,422	90,000	16,578	23%		88,969
Calgary FRC	-	-	-	0%		-
Calgary Radio Mission	-	-	-	0%		4,283
	171,003	190,000	18,997	11%		188,227
Other: Administration	-	100	100	0%		
Assessment Adjustments	-	-	-	0%		1,664
	-	100	100	0%		1,664
Total Expenditures	\$171,003	\$190,100	\$19,097	11%		\$189,891
Operating Surplus(Deficit)	\$16,075	\$(13,135)	\$29,210	182%		\$(29,225)

FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF NORTH AMERICA
OUTREACH COMMITTEE
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION - BALANCE SHEET
AS AT DECEMBER 31 2014

	<u>Note</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>
<u>ASSETS</u>			
Cash & Short Term Deposits	3	\$39,013	\$46,835
Assessments Receivable	4	(192)	1,349
Collections Receivable		20,820	-
GIC		70,875	70,000
TOTAL ASSETS		<u>\$130,516</u>	<u>\$118,184</u>
 <u>LIABILITIES</u>			
Accounts Payable	7	4,101	7,845
Other			
Total Liabilities		<u>\$4,101</u>	<u>7,844.79</u>
 <u>EQUITY</u>			
Opening Balance		\$110,339	139,563
Operating Surplus(Deficit)		16,075	(29,224)
Closing Balance		<u>\$126,414</u>	<u>\$110,339</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY		<u>\$130,516</u>	<u>\$118,184</u>

**FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF NORTH AMERICA
OUTREACH COMMITTEE
BUDGET
FOR THE YEARS ENDING DECEMBER 2015 AND 2016**

	2014	2015	Variances F(U)		Note	2016
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	\$	%		<u>Projection</u>
<u>REVENUES</u>						
Assessments	101,955	103,803	1,848	2%	6	104,000
Collections	79,547	75,000	(4,547)	-6%	5	55,000
Bellevue transfer		-	-	0%		-
Interest	876		(876)	100%		
Pastor Gangar tuition repayment	4,700		(4,700)	100%	7	
Total Revenues	187,078	\$178,803	\$(8,275)	-4%		\$159,000
<u>EXPENDITURES</u>						
Punjabi Ministry	97,581	106,000	(8,419)	-9%		110,000
Publications (gospel doors)		-	-	0%		-
North Bay Church Plant	73,422	75,000	(1,578)	-2%		50,000
Calgary Radio Mission	-	-	-	0%		
	171,003	181,000	(9,997)	-6%		160,000
Other: Administration	-	-	-	0%		125
Assessment Adjustments	-	-	-	0%		
	-	-	-	0%		125
Total Expenditures	\$171,003	\$181,000	\$(9,997)			\$160,125
Operating Surplus(Deficit)	\$16,075	\$(2,197)	\$(18,272)			\$(1,125)

OUTREACH COMMITTEE
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
 FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2014

1. **Significant Accounting Policies:** The financial statements of the Home Missions Fund are prepared using the accrual basis of accounting. All representations are in Canadian dollars.
2. **Review of the Statements:** The financial statements of the Home Missions Fund have been reviewed, utilizing the 1996 standard audit program, by brothers Jack Hoek and Gary Vandenberg and found to be in good order.
3. **Cash:** Cash and Short Term Deposits consist of the following:

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>
BMO Savings	\$39,013	\$46,835
BMO Short Term Deposit	70,875	70,000
	\$109,888	\$116,835

4. **Accounts Receivable:** Accounts Receivable consist of the following:
Assessments

<u>Congregation</u>	<u>Opening Balance</u>	<u>Current Yr. Assessment.</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Closing Balance</u>
Abbotsford		1,827	1,827	\$-
Bornholm		2,037	2,037	-
Brantford		8,169	8,169	-
Calgary		2,310	2,310	-
Chatham		4,431	4,431	-
Chilliwack		5,187	5,187	-
Dundas		9,261	9,261	-
Fenwick		6,531	6,531	-
Grand Rapids		6,153	6,153	-
Hamilton		6,405	6,405	-
Lacombe		2,016	2,016	-
Langley		1,386	1,386	-
London	1,349	1,470	2,819	-
Mitchell		5,145	5,145	-
Monarch		10,416	10,416	-
Oxford		2,142	2,142	-
Prompton Plains		3,234	3,426	(192)
St. George		7,854	7,854	-
St. Thomas		5,859	5,859	-
Vineland		10,122	10,122	-
	\$1,349	\$101,955	\$103,496	\$(192)

Total Accounts Receivable

\$(192)

5. Extra collections for Punjab \$5,851 and for Powassan \$71,532.
6. Propose to leave quota at \$21.00 for 2016
7. Pastor Gangar tuition repayment of \$4,700.

FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF NORTH AMERICA
Banner of Truth Radio Broadcast
BALANCE SHEET
December 31, 2014

		Current year 2014	Comparative 2013
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
ASSETS			
Cash and short term deposits	Note 3	\$95,107.26	\$63,930.00
Accounts receivable	Note 4	16,231.31	9,243.00
Securities	Note 5	16,947.75	16,834.00
Total assets		<u><u>\$128,286.32</u></u>	<u><u>\$90,007.00</u></u>
LIABILITIES			
Outstanding cheques and accounts payable		\$7,493.16	\$2,598.00
Total liabilities		<u><u>7,493.16</u></u>	<u><u>2,598.00</u></u>
EQUITY			
Opening balance		\$87,410.17	\$36,934.00
Operating surplus (deficit)		33,382.99	50,475.00
Total equity		<u><u>120,793.16</u></u>	<u><u>87,409.00</u></u>
Total liabilities and equity		<u><u>\$128,286.32</u></u>	<u><u>\$90,007.00</u></u>

FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF NORTH AMERICA
Banner of Truth Radio Broadcast
STATEMENTS OF REVENUE AND DISBURSEMENTS
For the year ending December 31, 2014

		Current year	Comparative	Budget	Budget
		2014	2013	2014	2015
Revenue	Note 6				
Assessments		\$60,686.00	\$81,324	\$45,450	\$36,500
Collections		30,009.65	\$21,611	29,000	\$25,000
Broadcast payments by congregations		15,252.70			\$15,000
Private donations		4,882.00	\$27,025	3,000	\$3,000
Bank interest		707.08	\$534	0	\$1,000
Total revenue		111,537.43	\$130,494	77,450	\$80,500
Disbursements					
Broadcasting costs	Note 7	74,036.89	\$74,444	63,300	\$75,000
Administration		3,300.00	\$3,979	3,300	\$3,300
Office and bank charges		817.55	\$1,596	10,850	\$2,200
Total disbursements		78,154.44	\$80,019	77,450	\$80,500
Operating surplus (deficit)		\$33,382.99	\$50,475	0	\$0

FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF NORTH AMERICA
Banner of Truth Radio Broadcast
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
For the year ending December 31, 2014

1. Significant accounting policies:

The financial statements of the Radio Evangelism Fund are prepared using the accrual basis of accounting. All representations are in Canadian dollars. The exchange rates used for the financial statements are as follows:

Year	<u>Average</u>	<u>Closing</u>
2011	0.990	1.020
2012	0.999	0.989
2013	0.971	0.940
2014	0.906	0.862

2. Review of the statements:

The financial statements of the Radio Evangelism Fund have been reviewed utilizing the 1996 audit program by Jonathan Houweling and Tim Patzer. They were found to accurately represent the financial transactions and current position of the fund.

3. Cash and short term deposits:

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>
Canadian chequing accounts	\$ 2,787.32	\$ 46,284.97
US\$ chequing accounts	2,487.21	13,176.00
Canadian savings accounts	89,832.73	4,469.25
	\$ 95,107.26	\$ 63,930.22

4. Accounts receivable:

Assessments and collections for 2014 received after Dec. 31, 2014	\$ 6,506.50
HST refund for years prior to 2014	6,978.53
HST refund for 2014	1,288.13
	\$ 14,773.16

5. Securities:

Securities held is a Guaranteed Investment Certificate with the Bank of Nova Scotia, #1842665, interest paid annually at 0.9%, maturity date June 10, 2015.

Face value 2008	\$ 16,600.00
Value Dec 31, 2014	\$ 16,947.75

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT to Synod 2015 of the Free Reformed Churches of North America

Esteemed Delegates,

To facilitate their ongoing activities, your Publications Committee has been enabled to meet twice since Synod 2014, namely, 20 October 2014 and 27 March 2015. Rev. L. W. Bilkes is chairman, Rev. J. Overduin vice-chairman, and Rev. Kranendonk secretary. We may report the following concerning our activities.

1. Periodicals

1.1. *The Messenger*

The Messenger was published 11 times in 2014. We are grateful for the editorship of Rev. Pronk and the administrative and editing work of his wife. We are also thankful for the regular contributors and coordinators of submissions from several of our denominational committees.

Rev. Pronk has requested that his present term as editor (of which one year remains) be his last. Your committee accepted this request and is working on a transition plan for both the editorship of the magazine and its administration, copy-editing, etc., which is currently performed by Mrs. Pronk.

Consistories are reminded that they are invited to submit articles on congregational events to the *Messenger*. Office-bearers are also encouraged to refer to articles in the *Messenger* in their contact with their members.

1.2. *Open Windows Children's Magazine*

This bi-monthly children's magazine, which began in the summer of 2008, continues to be read by around 750 subscribers, slightly down from the previous year. Almost all of our congregations order bulk subscriptions to supply this excellent magazine to their families with young children.

In light of the growing relationship with the Heritage Reformed Churches, the possibility of involving them in this magazine in a more formal way is being considered. This arrangement could extend both the readership and the pool of talent for magazine development as well as foster the relationship between the denominations. A number of their churches already order copies for their members and two magazine contributors are members of the HRC. We welcome the advice of the churches regarding whether to proceed with developing an arrangement of joint involvement in the *Open Windows* magazine.

2. Printed Publications

2.1. Yearbook

Thanks to the precise work of Mr. David Tamminga, the FRC Yearbook 2014 was printed and distributed in January 2015. It includes a year in review article by Rev. R. Vandoedewaard and article by Rev. Schouls on God's Providence.

2.2. Reading Sermons

One reading sermon was distributed in 2014. Office-bearers who may have transcribed sermons to read themselves are encouraged to submit them to Rev. Kranendonk for distribution to all the congregations. Ministers are also requested to submit two reading sermons this year.

Work is being done to increase the online deposit of published reading sermons available at frdna.org/resources/sermons.

Several ministers have not yet submitted their reading sermons on assigned Lord's Days. For this reason, the new Heidelberg Catechism reading sermon series has not yet been issued.

2.4. Publication Printed (March 2014-March 2015)

Mr. Henk Kleyn continues to serve ably as a new publications coordinator. The following publications were published since last synod.

1. *Sunday School worksheets with NKJV*. In January 2015, 500 copies were printed. These worksheets for ages 8-11 match the 163 lessons in our published Sunday School Teacher's Commentary. The KJV version of the worksheets was published in 2013.
2. *The Believer's Only Comfort*, vol. 1., by Rev. J. Schoeman. In the summer of 2014, 600 copies were printed of the student workbook and 40 copies of the teacher's handbook. Around 350 workbooks have been sold. We are grateful for the careful work of pastor Schoeman in developing these valuable resources that have been presented in an attractive way.
3. *Simply, Faith: Sermons on the Belgic Confession* by Rev. C. A. Schouls. Just prior to Reformation Day 2014, 1100 copies were printed. This series of sermons on the Belgic Confession provide clear teaching that gives insight into our beautiful, yet little known Belgic Confession. We encourage consistories to purchase copies to enable their members to become familiar with the contents of one of their confessions.
4. *My Wishes: A Guide for Arrangements after I Die* by Rev. C. J. Droger. In December 2015, 500 copies were printed. This little booklet helps guide seniors through the process of recording their desires regarding their funeral, etc. Especially when children no longer go to orthodox Reformed churches, this booklet is valuable. Office-bearers will find this useful to introduce to seniors.

2.5. Publications in Process

Publications in process as of March 2015 include:

1. *Free Reformed Church Order*. Your committee hopes to receive the manuscript of the Church Order and Synod Guidelines from the Church Order Committee so that this booklet can be published prior to Synod

2015. The Church Order Supplements should be printed prior to Synod 2016. The most up-to-date Church Order version is available on www.frcna.org.

2. *The Believer's Only Comfort*, vol. 2, by Rev. J. Schoeman. Volume 2, covering Lord's Days 25-52 should be available in August 2015 for use in the 2015-2016 teaching season.
3. *A Goodly Heritage*. Rev. Pronk is almost finished his church historical volume covering the roots of our churches especially in 19th century. He has done a great deal of invaluable work to make our roots accessible to our churches as well as other denominations that trace their roots to the Dutch Secession. We trust consistories will want to make sure that every household has a copy!
4. *Church Unity*. The speakers at the Combined HRC-FRC office-bearers' conference on Church Unity held in October 2014 are preparing their manuscripts for publication in a booklet.
5. *Joshua* by Rev. P. DenButter. These thirty-three exegetically astute and pastorally insightful bible studies covering the entire book of Joshua are in the process of being edited for publication.
6. *Hosea: Prophet of God's Love* by Rev. J. Westerink. This series of Bible studies provides a guide into the riches of this "minor prophet." Editing is underway.

Your committee also notes that it has received a request from some congregations to publish a version of *The Believer's Only Comfort* that contains NKJV Bible references and the Canadian Reformed version of the Heidelberg Catechism. Your committee did not feel it was authorized to publish a version of the Catechism that had not been authorized by Synod.

3. Promotion and Sales

- *Inventory Manager*: Appreciation is due to our inventory manager, Mr. Rae VanderSleen of the Bornholm congregation, who has voluntarily expanded his home to include a room dedicated to stock.
- *e-books*: The committee made *Sermons on the Canons of Dort* by Rev. Pronk, *Malachi: The Prophet of God's Advent* by Rev. Westerink, and *The Earnest Communicant* by Rev. A. Oxenden available in electronic form through amazon.com starting May 2014. Few sales were generated this way.
- *Other committees*: We have decided to request a commission of 5% for the books we sell on behalf of other denominational committees. This "fee" helps us recover the costs we incur in promoting, storing, and shipping books as well as invoicing buyers.
- *Top sellers for 2014*: Our Reformed Worship (945 copies), *The Believer's Only Comfort* (340 copies), and Heidelberg Catechism in Simplified Questions and Answers (192 copies).
- *Consistories*: Consistories are encouraged to promote Free Reformed Publications in their churches by making them available to their members, referring to them, and recommending them.

4. Committee Policies and Procedures

4.1. Committee Mandate and Policies

The Church Order Committee request for updated supplements led your committee to review its mandate, policies, and procedures. We desire to continue to fulfill our mandate as given to us by past synods and strengthen the way we do so. We believe synod has made our primary aim to serve the FRCNA rather than attempt to be another broadly Reformed publisher. That is why we aim to publish materials that fill needs in the FRCNA. At the same time we desire to share our resources with others. Our role is then analogous to preaching which is addressed to our specific congregations and at the same time is shared with whoever will listen (e.g. via sermonaudio).

Please see Appendix 2 for our updated policies flowing from our mandate.

4.2. Administrative Restructuring

Your committee established an ad hoc committee with a mandate to review the strategy and (publishing and promoting) processes of FRP to equip FRP to evaluate its operations with a view to strengthening its ability to carry out its mandate in a fiscally responsible and procedurally accountable way. Areas covered included:

- (1) Publications Policies & Procedures: See Appendix 2 for updated policies. The specific procedures flowing from these policies were also updated and clarified.
- (2) Publication Promotion. Currently, promotion is an area of weakness. Several individuals do some promotion, but no one person is responsible for promotion. As a result FRC members and congregations are not sufficiently aware of what has been published, not to speak of people outside our denomination. We recommend that a paid FRP promotor be hired. Such a person would work an estimated 10-12 hours per month. This promotor needs to think creatively, be organized, enthusiastic, and have the ability to delegate and oversee promotional activities. Should synod agree with this proposal, we welcome consistory suggestions for who could fill this position. We recommend paying such a person \$20/hour, which is the amount we pay for our new publications coordinator and our bookkeeper/administrator. This means adding a "marketing expense" line to the budget.
- (3) Publications Structural Organization & Operation. Job descriptions and reporting lines have been established for the following positions: New Publications Coordinator (Mr. Henk Kleyn), Book-keeper (Mrs. Janey Slingerland), Inventory Manager (Mr. Rae VanderSleen), Marketing Director (open), Treasurer (open), and Secretary (Rev. Kranendonk).

5. www.frcna.org Website

A subcommittee, chaired by Mr. Hans Vandoodewaard continues to be responsible for the official website (www.frcna.org). Mr. Tim Pronk maintains the site. The site suffered from repeated hacking which has resulting in its domain being blacklisted some places. Efforts have been made to make it more secure.

There have been numerous complaints about the frcna.org email system. Recently the Committee has shifted to a googleapps based email system which should eliminate the excessive spam and make sending and receiving email more reliable. All clerks, treasurers, bulletin editors and pastors are urged to reactivate their frcna.org email addresses (contact email@frcna.org). This will reduce the danger of denominational emails failing to reach their intended recipients.

Congregations are reminded of their ability to develop their own congregational subdomain (e.g. abbotsford.frcna.org) and manage their own email addresses. For more information they may contact the webmaster (webmaster@frcna.org).

The local congregations and denominational committees are reminded to use the news@frcna.org email account, which has been set up to keep the denomination up to date about any events or news.

6. The Psalter Revision

Synod 2013 (Art. 17, p.17) instructed “the Psalter Sub-Committees to provide sample Psalter updates in all three sections for use in obtaining feedback from other denominations.” Synod 2012 (Art. 32) established this ad hoc Psalter Revision committee and gave it the mandate to “to identify those areas that need updating and the degree of updating required and report to the Publications Committee which will report to Synod 2013. These committees are to carry out their work in the service of the mandate provided to the Publications Committee by Synod 2010” Synod 2010 (Art. 27) gave the Publications Committee the mandate to “investigate the possibility, together with other Reformed Churches that use The Psalter, of reviewing and revising *The Psalter* that we use for worship in our churches.”

In January 2015, three representatives of the Publications committee (two of which are also on the Psalter Revision committee) met with two representatives of the HRC and two representatives of the PRC (Protestant Reformed). The meeting was cordial, open, and constructive. The minutes of this meeting can be found in Appendix 3. Both the HRC and the PRC representatives intend to present the following proposal to their respective synods, which proposal your committee presents to you for your consideration:

- a. *That a committee be established to operate within the parameters outlined in the “Guidelines for Improvement of the Psalter (1912)” (see appendix 3) in pursuit of accuracy, completeness, clarity, singability, avoidance of redundancy, and connecting the selection number with the psalm number.*
- b. *That each denomination’s synod appoint three men to this interdenominational Psalter Revision committee.*
- c. *That the denominational synods request this committee to develop:*
 - *A more precise set of principles to guide the work of revision.*
 - *a proposed revision Psalms 73-89 (Book III of the psalms) to be reviewed by the synods.*
- d. *That should the PRC, FRC, and HRC be willing to proceed with an interdenominational committee, any others using The Psalter be invited*

to join as well.

Your committee also wishes to bring to your attention that the ad hoc Psalter Revision Committee has fulfilled its mandate.

7. Financial Report

- Mrs. Janey Slingerland provides precise and punctual service as your committee's financial administrator. The committee hopes to appoint a committee member as a treasurer with whom she can consult about financial matters.
- The 2014 financial statements are attached. They indicate receipts of \$129,551 and disbursements of \$128,539. There were considerable cost savings in the Messenger publication compared to the 2013 cost, even though the amount was still over-budget.
- The books for 2014 were reviewed by brothers Mike Harbour and Hugh Heaton of Calgary FRC according to the Synodical finance procedures guidelines and found in good order. Reviewers for 2015 are to be brothers Mike Harbour and Dan Wiersema of the Calgary FRC.
- The 2015 budget and 2016 forecast are also attached. We hope to be able to recover our costs without having to request a raise in the quota.

8. Appointments

8.1. Committee Members

Terms expiring in 2015 are Rev. J. Overduin (3rd term) and Mr. Hans VanDoodewaard (3rd term). Mr. John VanGameren was unable to accept his appointment last year, meaning there is one vacancy.

Your committee recommends that Rev. J. Overduin and Mr. H. VanDoodewaard be reappointed for a three year term as members. It also recommends that Mr. John den Dekker (Langley) be appointed as a committee member with a view to having him serve as treasurer.

8.2. Assistant to the Clerks of Synod

Mr. Ray Pennings is not able to attend Synod 2015. Your committee recommends that student John Procee serve as assistant to the clerks (seeing he has experience doing this a day and a half in 2013). We recognize he will be examined for candidacy, but we hope this can be done on Tuesday, so that the rest of the synod he will be able to function as assistant. As a supportive backup, we recommend student Ian Macleod.

9. Miscellaneous

- *Denominational news.* FRP recommends that the Synod clerk be mandated to send the Synodical news release to churches with which we have correspondence and post it on our denominational website. To facilitate awareness of FRC events beyond the boundaries of the FRC, the Messenger has been given permission to share time sensitive articles with the editors of other publications before they appear in the print copy of the

Messenger.

- *Ontario Marriage Bureau.* Rev. Joel Overduin has agreed to succeed Rev. Pronk as contact person of the FRCNA with the Ontario Marriage Bureau.

10. Recommendations

The Publications Committee presents the following recommendations to Synod 2015:

1. To appoint student John Procee as assistant to the first and second clerks of Synod 2015, with student Ian Macleod serving as backup (see 8.2);
2. To develop a plan to make Open Windows more of a joint magazine of the FRC and HRC (see 1.2).
3. To approve the Committee Mandate and updated policies (see 5.1; appendix 2)
4. To approve the creation of a paid Marketing Director position (see 5.2).
5. To approve the recommended procedure for establishing an interdenominational Psalter revision committee (see 6).
6. To maintain the quota of \$6.00 per member (see 7).
7. To approve the financial reports for 2014, budget for 2015, and forecast for 2016 of the Publications committee (see 7);
8. To reappoint Rev. J. Overduin and Mr. Hans VanDoodewaard for a three year term as committee members (see 8.1);
9. To appoint Mr. John Dendekker for a three year term as committee member (see 8.1);
10. To post the Synodical News Release on the website and share it with corresponding churches (see 9);
11. To approve of the actions of your deputies.

With brotherly greetings, on behalf of the Committee,

Rev. D. H. Kranendonk, Secretary

Appendix 1: Financial Statements (See FRP Report, point 7)

**Free Reformed Publications Committee
Statement of Receipts and Disbursements
for January 1 - December 31, 2014**

	2014	2014	2013	Variance		Note
	Actual	Budget	Actual	\$	%	
REVENUE						
Acts of Synod	2,635	2,800	2,627	(165)	-6%	a,b,c
Assessments	29,130	29,100	28,571	30	0%	
Miscellaneous Income	753	100	434	653	150%	
Loan Interest	1,053	800	1,053	253	24%	
Messenger Subscriptions	53,088	51,900	100,494	1,188	1%	
Messenger Advertisement	3,917	3,250	3,180	667	21%	
Open Windows	16,386	14,000	13,047	2,386	18%	
Publications Sold	22,589	28,000	40,671	(5,411)	-13%	
TOTAL REVENUE	\$129,551	\$129,950	\$190,077	-\$399	0%	
EXPENSE						
US Exchange Expense	1,700	600	489	1,100	65%	d.
Equipment Rental	-	0	25	0		
Honorarium	-	0	0	0		
Computer Expense	210	0	0	210	100%	
Total Messenger Costs	72,581	64,000	90,782	8,581	12%	
Office Supplies	264	400	124	(136)	-52%	
Misc. Expenses	82	300	74	(218)	-266%	
Professional Fees	3,300	4,000	2,968	(700)	-21%	
Open Windows Expenses	14,447	14,000	12,669	447	3%	
Gospel Doors Expense	-			0		e.
Total Publications Printed	31,717	40,000	34,673	(8,283)	-26%	
E- Books	570			570	100%	
Travel	-			0		
Total Website	3,668	3,000	2,692	668	18%	
Total Expenses	\$128,539	\$126,293	\$144,650	\$2,246	2%	
NET INCOME	\$ 1,012	\$ 3,657	\$ 45,427	-\$		

NOTES:

- a. Publications sold do not include the following (which are also not included as expenses): Youth & Ed. Books (\$8,319), Theological Ed. Books (\$8.00).
- b. Publications sold include \$1789 to RBS and \$866 to RHB
- c. Yearbook 2015 is not included in these numbers (only 2014)
- d. Includes: \$2,060 editing; \$22,786 layout; \$16,904 mailing; \$30,831 Printing
- e. includes: \$840 new publications coordinator; \$2,460 bookkeeper

**Free Reformed Publications Committee
Budget 2015 and Estimate 2016**

Revenue	2014 Budget	2014 Actual	Difference	2015 Budget	2016 Forecast
Acts of Synod	\$2,800	\$ 2,635	-\$ 165	\$3,000	\$3,300
Assessments	\$29,100	\$ 29,130	\$ 30	\$29,658	\$30,000
Donations	\$100	\$ 752	\$ 652	\$100	\$100
Loan Interest	\$800	\$ 1,053	\$ 253	\$1,000	\$1,000
Messenger Subscriptions	\$51,900	\$ 53,088	\$ 1,188	\$54,250	\$55,400
Messenger Advertisement	\$3,250	\$ 3,917	\$ 667	\$4,000	\$4,400
Miscellaneous Income	\$0	\$ -	\$ -	\$0	\$0
Open Windows Subscriptions	\$14,000	\$ 16,386	\$ 2,386	\$16,800	\$17,500
Publications Sold	\$28,000	\$ 22,589	-\$ 5,411	\$30,000	\$33,000
Total Revenue	\$129,950	\$129,550	-\$ 400	\$138,808	\$144,700
Expenses					
Yearend Adjustment	\$0	\$0	\$ -	\$0	\$0
Honorarium	\$0	\$0	\$ -	\$300	\$350
Total Messenger Costs	\$64,000	\$72,581	\$ 8,581	\$74,500	\$77,000
Office Supplies	\$400	\$264	-\$ 136	\$400	\$450
Administration services	\$4,000	\$3,300	-\$ 700	\$4,000	\$4,500
Promotion services				\$2,500	\$5,000
Open Windows Expenses	\$14,000	\$14,447	\$ 447	\$15,500	\$17,000
Publications Printed	\$40,000	\$31,717	-\$ 8,283	\$36,000	\$34,000
E-Books	\$0	\$570	\$ 570	\$400	\$450
Website	\$3,000	\$3,668	\$ 668	\$4,000	\$4,000
US Exchange	\$600	\$1,700	\$ 1,100	\$1,800	\$2,000
Computer Expense	\$0	\$210	\$ 210	\$200	\$300
Miscellaneous Expense	\$293	\$82	-\$211	\$200	\$210
Total Expenses	\$126,000	\$128,539	\$2,246	\$139,800	\$145,260
NET INCOME	\$3,950	\$1,011	\$4,961	-\$992	-\$560

**Free Reformed Publications
Balance Sheet
As at December 31, 2014**

	2014	2013	Difference
ASSET			
Current Assets			
Cash Clearing	\$50	\$50	\$0
TD Canada Trust - CND Chq	\$20,888	\$27,371	-\$6,483
TD Canada Trust - US Chq	\$8,473	\$3,692	\$4,781
Accounts Receivable – Can	\$44,501	\$42,405	\$2,096
Accounts Receivable - US	-\$4	-\$4	\$0
Total Current Assets	\$73,908	\$73,514	\$394
Inventory Assets	\$32,000	\$32,000	\$0
Investment (Homestead Christian Care)	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$0
TOTAL ASSET	\$125,908	\$125,514	\$394
LIABILITY			
Current Liabilities			
Accounts Payable	\$0	-	-
GST Payable	-\$4,006	-\$4,006	\$-
Total Current Liabilities	-\$4,006	-\$4,006	\$-
TOTAL LIABILITY	-\$4,006	-\$4,006	\$-
EQUITY			
Retained Earnings - Previous Yr	\$128,903	\$84,094	\$44,809
Current Earnings	\$1,011	\$45,426	-\$44,415
TOTAL EQUITY	\$129,914	\$129,520	\$394
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$125,908	\$125,514	\$394

**Appendix 2: Mandate and Policies (see FRP Report, point 4).
Regulation For the Publications Committee**

A. MANDATE

Whereas the ministry of the Word is the primary task of the church, the church should see to it that all efforts be made to publish material in support of this task. In order to facilitate and co-ordinate this task, a Synodical committee shall be appointed, referred to as the Publications Committee, which shall carry out its mandate to provide the churches with whatever publications may serve them.

B. ORGANIZATION:

- Members of this committee are appointed by Synod for a three year term. The committee makes recommendations to Synod for appointment and reappointment of members.
- Committee officers include chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, and treasurer. These are elected by the committee.
- Subcommittees take care of specific projects or types of work. They are comprised of members appointed by the publications committee. Subcommittees are to submit to the spring and fall committee meetings a progress report, recommendations, requests for advice, and a budget for the next calendar year (in the spring meeting).
- Administrative positions include New Publications Coordinator, Book-keeper, Inventory Manager, and Marketing Director. These positions facilitate the execution of the work authorized by the committee and are filled by committee appointees. Three year contracts for positions are standard.

C. FUNDING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- The committee is to publish materials within the cash flow generated by synodical assessments, magazine subscriptions, sale of publications, and donations.
- The committee coordinates the funding for all the projects under its supervision through the Treasurer. It requires each subcommittee or administrative position to prepare a detailed budget for each year that is incorporated into the master budget.
- The financial books are reviewed by two independent reviewers on an annual basis.
- The Inventory manager takes care that materials are stored in a safe environment.
- The committee will submit an annual report to Synod giving full account of all monies received and spent, inform on all current projects, and submit recommendations for Synodical approval.

D. LITERATURE

The mandate of the Publications Committee regarding new publications is to:

1. Identify Needs, which ought to be addressed through new publications;
2. Solicit/Receive manuscripts that address identified needs;
3. Oversee the process of publication;
4. Promote and ensure the distribution of new publications to their intended audience.

Steps 1-2: Identify needs and receive manuscripts.

The Committee aims to provide publications which:

1. Address an identified need within the Free Reformed Churches,
2. Facilitate classes, Bible Studies and Societies within the Free Reformed Churches,
3. Explain the Free Reformed Churches to those inside and outside of the denomination.

In evaluating potential publication projects, the committee shall consider:

1. Contents: The contents of the publication project should focus on either:
 - a. Explaining and promoting those distinctives which characterize the FRC;
 - b. Preserving and promoting our FRC history and heritage; or
 - c. Current issues relating to the church, doctrine, practice, or spiritual life.

In assessing projects, the committee aims to maintain an overall balance between these criteria.

2. Author: Ordinarily, the committee shall publish manuscripts from Free Reformed authors.
3. Style: manuscripts should use up-to-date language and be suited for a North American audience.

Step 3: Oversee publishing process

- The publications committee oversees the publishing process through its new publications coordinator, who is responsible to lead a manuscript into printed form and implement the committee's decisions governing that process.
- Care is given to ensure that each manuscript is reviewed for theological accuracy.
- Each manuscript receives a professional copy edit.
- Each publication is to be attractively designed.

- Quantities to be printed are determined by expected demand.
- Publication Rights of all publications become the property of the Publication Committee, unless the project is a joint project with another publisher in which case a joint agreement is established.

Step 4: Promote and distribute materials

- The publications committee makes use of its Marketing Director to promote its materials.
- Promotion is aimed at our denomination (members, consistories, societies) and beyond it, depending on the nature of the specific publication.
- Promotion is by means of correspondence, advertisements, sample copies, book tables, social media and websites.

E. PERIODICALS

The Messenger

Mission Statement: The Messenger is the official monthly publication of the Free Reformed Churches of North America and is published 11 times per year (July/August issue is combined). Its purpose is to provide mutually edifying instruction and communication for its membership and all other interested subscribers, from the perspective of the Free Reformed Churches as founded on Scripture and the Reformed Confessions.

Personnel:

- The editor of the Messenger is responsible for the content and appearance of the Messenger. He reports regularly to the Publications Committee.
- The assistant editor provides advice to the editor, performs any mutually agreed on tasks, and serves as a backup editor when required.
- The administrator serves the editor to coordinate the copy-editing, placement and invoicing of ads, and magazine design, printing, and mailing.

Appointments: The Committee appointment of the editor and assistant editor of *The Messenger* is ratified by Synod.

Open Windows

Mission Statement: The Open Windows magazine aims:

- To provide children aged 4-12 with wholesome Christian reading material in a magazine format, also as a means to reach those struggling readers who “just can't get through a whole book.”
- To bring the Christ-centred gospel message to those who have never heard it and bring the gospel and truths about Christian living in a fresh way to children who have grown up with it.
- To shed light on history, foreign countries, vocations, Biblical places and terms, musical masterpieces, artwork, and creation, all from a Biblical perspective.
- To work always in submission to Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity and with prayer for God's indispensable blessing for open windows. Malachi 3:10.

Personnel:

- The General editor of Open Windows is responsible for the content and appearance of the magazine. He reports regularly to the Publications Committee.
- The managing editor is responsible for ensuring copy is submitted and edited and the magazine is designed, printed, and distributed.
- The editorial committee is responsible for the securing writers, setting magazine themes, and developing strategies.

Appointments: The committee appointment of the editor of *Open Windows* is ratified by Synod.

E. Website

The Publications Committee is also responsible for the denominational website and online presence which is to serve the members of the denomination with denominational information, periodicals, publications, news, and other relevant resources. It is also to serve those outside the denomination with information about the denomination as well as useful resources.

Appendix 3: Psalter Revision meeting (See FRP report, point 6)

Joint Psalter Revision Exploratory Meeting

held in Grand Rapids Free Reformed Church on Tuesday, January 13 at 2:00 pm.

MINUTES

Attendance:

Rev. Garry Eriks and Prof. Russell Dykstra (Protestant Reformed Churches); Rev. Mark Kelderman and Rev. David VanBrugge (Heritage Reformed congregations) ; Dr. L. W. Bilkes, Rev. David Kranendonk and Rev. Joel Overduin (by telephone) (Free Reformed Churches).

Note: The Netherlands Reformed Congregation's Committee concerning Confessions and Forms declined to attend since they did not have a mandate to do so from their Synod.

Proceedings:

1. **Opening:** Dr. L. W. Bilkes opened the meeting. He read Psalm 78:1-7 and 1 Timothy 6:20, as well as excerpts of Calvin's commentary on these verses. He emphasizes the need to pass on to the next generation what we have received of the Lord in the best way we can. This involves carefulness and striving to improve what we pass on.
2. **Introduction to the purpose of the meeting:**
D. Kranendonk reports that the FRC Synod has mandated its Publications committee "to investigate the possibility, together with other Reformed churches that use the Psalter (including HRC, NRC, PRC) of reviewing and revising The Psalter that we use for worship in our churches" (Synod 2010). Hence the purpose of this meeting is to get a sense of the possibility of an interdenominational revision of The Psalter, the parameters within which such a project could take place, and the process by which such a project could move forward.
3. **Review of materials / efforts to date:**
 - a. PRC
 - i. Note is taken that a committee was formed in 1940 to investigate the possibility of revising The Psalter. Synod 1955 decided to "table indefinitely the work of revising our Psalter, because the schism has made the goal impossible of realization at this time; decision to retain in our churches' archives the work already done for possible future use."
 - ii. In the 1990s, the material in the back of the Psalter was reviewed for accuracy. Some minor corrections were made, particularly to the Canons of Dort.
 - b. NRC
 - i. The Committee to Evaluate the Translation of the Forms of

Unity and Liturgical Forms has presented its in depth report on the accuracy of the confessions and forms. Synod 2014 adopted a number of changes to be made. The updated forms and confessions are to be available spring 2015.

- ii. The NRC committee has indicated that for the NRC to be involved in any psalter revision work, its synod would need to be approached directly.
- c. FRC. Synod 1988 set up a Liturgy Committee, which was tasked in 1989 to study the ecclesiastical forms and update their language. The result was that the 1993 Synod approved the updated language of the Marriage form.
- d. HRC. The HRC has not done any investigation on the Psalter and the potential for revision.
- e. R. Lanning invited various parties to join an inter-denominational committee for revising, publishing and promoting The Psalter in 1993, but this did not materialize.
- f. Unofficial work. D. VanBrugge notes that some musicians have provided tunes keyed lower. R. Dykstra notes someone has gone through the whole Psalter to show what verses of the Psalms are covered and not covered.

4. Needs and priorities for a Revision

a. *The Song Portion*

- i. *Accuracy*: All agree the accuracy of the psalter selections should be reviewed.
- ii. *Completeness*: All recognize that not all the scripture verses are put to song, though they also realize that most people do not seem bothered by that. All agree completeness is a worthy aim.
- iii. *Singability*: All agree that some tunes are difficult to sing due to their range or simply the nature of the tune. Work should be done to make each selection have a desirable tune that encourages singing the words. There is a general sense there would be considerable agreement on which tunes are considered difficult.
- iv. *Variety*: There are mixed feelings about having only one or two tunes per psalm. On the one hand it encourages identification of a tune with a psalm, on the other hand it reduces the variety that can be valuable especially for longer psalms with varying content.
- v. *Balance*: Some desire to have a more balanced book that does not have only one choice for one psalm and many choices for another of similar length.

b. *The Text Portion*

- i. Note is taken that the official version of the churches is the Dutch version of the confessions, rather than the Latin, German, or French, though it is helpful to consult the later versions.

- ii. Caution is expressed about outlining each Lord's day since it involves interpretation as interrelations between clauses.
- iii. There is agreement that accuracy is important as well as smooth flow to aid memorization.
- iv. Both HRC and PRC feel it would be better to start with the song portion of the Psalter rather than the Confessions.

5. Parameters for Revision

- a. Language: Both HRC and PRC indicate there should be consistency between the King James Version of the Bible used by the churches and their songbook in terms of pronouns used with reference to God. FRC indicates some of the challenges they face as a denomination that uses both KJV and NKJV. The Committee agrees that the archaic pronouns should be retained with reference to God, even while clarity of language is pursued.
- b. Degree of Revision: The aim will not be to produce a new book of Psalms but to improve the existing Psalter in a way that makes it clearer, more accurate, and singable. This could mean a revision of 15-20% of the current Psalter. Meeting agrees that a revision effort should take care to preserve the essence of the current Psalter so that the revision is recognized as an improved version of The Psalter of 1912.
- c. Involvement: Note is taken of the importance of involving both "musicians" and "theologians" under the oversight of the churches in a revision project.

6. Proposal:

- a. The meeting agrees to propose the establishment of a committee that would operate within the parameters outlined above in pursuit of accuracy, completeness, clarity, singability, avoidance of redundancy, and connecting the selection number with the psalm number. The guidelines document will be updated and submitted to each denomination's synod.
- b. The meeting proposes that the FRC publications committee approach each denomination's synod to consider appointing three men to this interdenominational Psalter Revision committee.
- c. The meeting proposes to recommend to the synods that should they be in favor of establishing such a committee, they request this committee to develop:
 - A more precise set of principles to guide the work of revision.
 - a proposed revision for the first ten psalms to be reviewed by the synods.
- d. The meeting proposes that should the PRC, FRC, and HRC be willing to proceed with an interdenominational committee, any others using The Psalter be invited to join as well.

7. Closing: G. Eriks closes the meeting with prayer

Guidelines for Improvement of The Psalter (1912)

The following is a draft set of guidelines, first produced by the FRC, then reviewed by an exploratory meeting of representatives of the FRC, HRC and PRC and now serving as the basis for a call to each denomination to appoint three representatives to serve on an interdenominational committee to review and to improve the current Psalter.

One of the first tasks of the new committee will be to develop and approve precise principles for this work.

After agreeing on principles, the mandate which we ask all denominations to adopt is to direct this committee to prepare a sample update of the first 10 psalms and submit to the respective synods for review by the churches.

The guidelines are as follows:

- a.** Review the general accuracy of what we sing. It can already be confirmed that there are some generalization of the content of the psalms (e.g. selections 410-413 do not include the details in Psalm 150). There are also some omissions of Scripture verses (e.g. Ps. 113:9 and 137:9). Let the revision committee determine with precision what is and is not included of the psalms in The Psalter.
- b.** Evaluate the “redundancies.” For example, a whole psalm may be versified in a number of selections and then versified again in other selections (e.g. Psalm 145 is covered repeatedly in selections 394-400). Sometimes the identical versifications are set to different tunes (selections 142 and 143). The question can be raised whether so many selections are necessary/helpful. At the same time, some ‘redundant’ selections may be congregational/denominational favourites. Let there be careful sifting through the selections.
- c.** Replace when possible all instances of unfamiliar and archaic words. E.g.: “awful”, “terrible”, “minstrelsy”, “deign”, “byword”, “slake”, and “lays.” It is agreed, however, that all pronoun references to the Lord be retained in their archaic form.
- d.** Review whether all tunes match or fit with the content of the Psalm (e.g. 143); as well as when currently poor tunes are used and finally resolve the matter of tunes that are pitched too high (approx. 25-30 percent).
- e.** Aim to improve the layout of the songs on the page. This includes unhelpful musical notations (occasional fermatas) as well as the numbering system. It would be good to renumber the selections so that the selection number is determined by the psalm number. This would strengthen people’s knowledge of the book of psalms (e.g. have 1A and 1B for Psalm 1; 10A, 10B, 10C for Psalm 10, etc.).

REFUGEE COMMITTEE

Report to Synod 2015

City of Refuge received a total of 44 requests for sponsorship in the past year. They were followed up to determine if they were eligible for resettlement, and, if they were not, they were given information about other options that may be available to them. In addition to responding to new requests, we provided support and encouragement to people who were waiting to be interviewed. There were 5 people who arrived in Canada in 2014; 13 more were approved, and either have arrived by now or should arrive soon. Happily, we had no requests for emergency funds.

Several mission churches in Cyprus, Malaysia and South Korea are aware of our program and have referred people to us. City of Refuge is slowly beginning to receive requests from Syrian and Iraqi applicants, which is where our federal government would like Canadian sponsors to focus their efforts. Canada has made a commitment to sponsor 10,000 from this population within the next 3 years and is counting on private sponsors to process 60% of these.

We have several families and sponsors who have waited since 2008 for travel visas to be issued. This is a very difficult time for those families, and it is also discouraging for the church sponsor, having had to set aside funds year after year waiting for the arrival of their own family. Some churches then become very reluctant to make any new commitments to another sponsorship. Staffing and resources at the Canadian Visa offices are limited, which is why they will not respond to email enquiries, and, as a result, updates on the status of delayed applications can sometimes be very hard to obtain. Despite all that, though, it is exciting to see how God continues to bless this ministry of serving Him by loving our neighbour who is in great need.

For several years there has been some discussion of a mission statement for City of Refuge. At our fall meeting, the committee agreed that the statement, *Encourage churches to consider the needs of refugees with compassion in the light of 1 John 4:1, "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another,"* encapsulated our mandate. Hence, this statement will be included in all our correspondence. We continue to raise awareness among Reformed churches, and never has the need been greater than at the present time for churches to act with compassion and sponsor a refugee.

One serious concern facing our committee at this time is with regard to funding; this is a matter of some urgency, for the work cannot continue unless the funding is substantially increased. Synod 2010 approved the recommendation that the quota per member drop from \$6 to \$1, which may have been an appropriate action at the time. Circumstances, however, have changed drastically since then. The \$1 quota has been maintained, but year by year the funds have gone down and will soon be depleted. For the last 2 years, the City of Refuge has made special appeals to the churches for special collections, but it is difficult to know whether these have ever been gathered, or have churches simply included these offerings as part of their annual quota. In 2014, for instance, only 2 churches sent in monies from special collections in addition to

the quota. Whatever the case, these special appeals are not working, and hence City of Refuge is obliged to ask Synod 2015 to increase the quota to \$5. This figure is still a bit low, but the committee is convinced that, once the financial need is generally known, some churches will probably seek to make up the loss. This, along with very careful planning on our part, should see our committee through the coming year without a deficit.

It has been suggested that sponsoring churches be charged \$100 (the maximum allowed by the Canadian government) as a mandatory fee for administrative costs. City of Refuge has been hesitant to request that fee in the past, because it seemed excessive and it was hoped that other churches, through their collections, would make up this lost revenue. Starting this year, however, we are asking all sponsoring churches to pay that fee, or if they choose instead, to take up a freewill offering, or possibly do both. We have also requested the United Reformed Churches and Canadian Reformed Churches for financial support.

Our coordinator, Heddie Driegen, has recently been asked to serve on a national advisory committee. Wherever possible, she takes advantage of such opportunities for a Christian voice to be heard, and she continues to make herself available as well in speaking to churches expressing an interest in, or with questions for, the sponsorship program.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Tom Aicken, chairman

Recommendations:

1. To increase the quota from \$1 to \$5.
2. To approve the attached budget and financial statements.
3. To approve the appointment of the following people for a 2-year term:

Mrs. Fran Westeringh (Chilliwack); Mrs. Lieneke Stikma (Chilliwack);

Mr. Henk Koetsier (Abbotsford); and Rev. J. Schoeman (Abbotsford).

4. To approve the actions of the committee.

FREE REFORMED CHURCH – REFUGEE COMMITTEE
CITY OF REFUGE
Balance Sheet - December 31, 2014

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>VARIANCE</u>
<u>ASSETS</u>			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash - Aldergrove Credit Union	6659	11547	(4888)
Equity - Aldergrove Credit Union	29	28	1
Petty Cash	45	53	(8)
GST Receivable	266	266	-00
<u>'TOTAL ASSETS</u>	<u>6999</u>	<u>11894</u>	<u>(4895)</u>
<u>LIABILITIES:</u>			
Accounts Payable	1137	-00	1137
EQUITY			
Beginning Balance	11895	29773	(17878)
Current Earnings (Loss)	(6033)	(17878)	11845
<u>Ending Balance</u>	<u>5862</u>	<u>11895</u>	<u>(6033)</u>
<u>TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY</u>	<u>6999</u>	<u>11895</u>	<u>(4896)</u>

CITY OF REFUGE
Comparative Income Statement
For the year 2014

	Actual 01/01/2014 to 12/31/2014	Actual 01/01/2013 to 12/31/2013
REVENUE		
INCOME		
Contributions Received	10029.25	9654.91
Interest Income	1.35	9.91
TOTAL INCOME	<u>10030.6</u>	<u>9664.82</u>
TOTAL REVENUE	<u>10030.6</u>	<u>9664.82</u>
EXPENSE		
EXPENSES		
Bank Charges	83.4	78.45
Conventions, fees, membership	767.57	185
Miscellaneous	0	92.88
Office Cost	222.57	178.54
Promotional / travelling	602.65	2685.29
Salaries, CPP, EI expense	14387.5	24322.34
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>16063.69</u>	<u>27542.5</u>
TOTAL EXPENSE	<u>16063.69</u>	<u>27542.5</u>
NET INCOME	<u>-6033.09</u>	<u>-17877.68</u>

Generated On: 04/09/2015

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Report to Synod 2015

Esteemed brethren,

Your Deputies for Theological Education (TEC) are pleased to provide you with the following account of their actions since Synod 2014. We met three times: October 21, 2014, December 30, 2014, and March 24-25, 2015. The present executive consists of Dr. L. W. Bilkes (Chairman), Rev. J. Schoeman (Vice-Chairman), and Rev. D. H. Kranendonk (Secretary). Mr. J. D. Tamminga has continued to serve as Treasurer of the Seminary Fund.

1. Free Reformed Instruction

1.1. Dr. G. M. Bilkes

Dr. G. M. Bilkes continues to teach a full course-load in the Biblical Studies department. He served as OT editor of the recently published Reformation Heritage Study Bible and continues to develop much valued Bible studies, which are published in *The Messenger*, *HRC Banner of Sovereign Grace Truth*, and in book-form by Reformation Heritage Books. He also is involved in mentoring our students together with his father, Dr. L. W. Bilkes.

1.2. Dr. David Murray

Dr. Murray continues to carry a full time teaching course load at PRTS. As its part-time pastor, he preaches two Lord's Day per month in the Grand Rapids congregation and does some pastoral work. He also regularly updates his popular blog and is involved in various writing projects. He has had some health concerns in the past year that have given him reason to reassess his workload.

Prior to Synod 2014, Dr. Murray and the Grand Rapids consistory requested that the TEC withdraw its recommendation to appoint Dr. Murray as full-time FRC instructor at PRTS. Since then, your TEC has dialogued with Dr. Murray concerning his relationship to the denomination and your TEC in particular. He expresses willingness to come under the oversight of the TEC. Since he teaches a full-time teaching course load, your TEC proposes he be appointed as full-time instructor at PRTS.

1.3. Free Reformed instructors

In August 2014, Rev. P. VanderMeyden led a Church Order seminar for our students. This seminar arose out of requests from previous students for more FRC-specific instruction in church order. Our students expressed great appreciation for the seminar of Rev. VanderMeyden, such that we hope to continue having each of our future students take this seminar.

Rev. C. Pronk taught a regular three credit PRTS course on New England Theology in August 2014 and Rev. Kranendonk taught a regular three credit PRTS course on Ecclesiology in January 2015.

2. Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary

2.1. Developments

Your TEC has three of its members serving on the PRTS Board of Trustees (Dr. L. W. Bilkes, Rev. D. H. Kranendonk, and Rev. J. Schoeman). On February 25th, two of your deputies visited PRTS to attend classes and meet with professors and students. They noted in their report: “There is much to be thankful for as PRTS continues to instruct our own students and others. It is clear that the quality of instruction is superb, the professors earnest, the staff warm, and the facility more than adequate.”

In August 2014, the PRTS building expansion was completed and dedicated in an evening program. This expansion provides more space for faculty and staff offices, library, classrooms, cafeteria, and a basement. By the day of its dedication, the entire expansion had been funded.

For the past fall semester, 87 students were actively enrolled in at least one class from PRTS. These include 32 MDiv students, 25 ThM students, 10 MA students, and 18 non-matriculating students.

The course package for the M.Div. is being reworked to reduce overlap, fill gaps, and decrease the overall number of credits required to receive a M.Div. degree from PRTS. For example, the core Systematic Theology courses will be reduced from three to two credits each. Your TEC requires certain courses for your students that are not required by PRTS. The impact of this reworking of the PRTS program on the TEC program will be a slight reduction in total number of required credits from 141 to 125, provided 6 credits of Greek are already completed before entering the program.

The Board of Trustees is developing a presidential succession plan that establishes the requirements for a PRTS president and the process for selecting such a person. The emergency plan is that Dr. G. M. Bilkes serve as interim-president. Dr. Beeke hopes to have the health to continue as president for another eight years or so.

The board of trustees has agreed to have a feasibility study of a future Ph.D. program in OT and Reformation/Post-Reformation Theology. A consultant has been hired to develop this plan.

2.3. “By the church, for the church”

Your TEC met with the PRTS Board of Trustees on Wednesday, August 20, 2014. This was the first meeting ever held in the new PRTS board room. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the theological instruction “by the church, for the church” principle and how it applies to PRTS. In advance, Rev. VanderMeyden distributed his paper entitled: “Reformed Ministry Training: By the Church for the Church.” After an opening by the Board of Trustees chairman, and a brief presentation by Rev. VanderMeyden, there was a general discussion on the principle and its application.

We note the remaining tension in training “for the church (denomination)” and “for the church universal” as well as how the “for the church universal” impacts the “by the

church” aspect. We are thankful that there is agreement on the importance of the “by the church, for the church” principle and that the Board of Trustees desires to function according to it. At the same time, our interaction with the Board of Trustees and indirectly with the HRC has revealed that we do not always agree on how this principle should be applied practically. One result of this meeting was that the BOT formed an ad hoc committee which is to review seminary governance to see how this principle can be better applied in practice.

3. Men under care of the committee

3.1. New Applicants

Your TEC has interviewed two applicants and recommends synod accept them as students for ministry in the FRCNA. They are:

- *Young Jae Lee* of Grand Rapids, age 34. Young Jae grew up in South Korea, served in the Korea Coast Guard, studied English language and literature, worked at an English academy, laboured as an independent missionary in South Africa, and then began studies at PRTS in the fall of 2011, at which time he also joined our Grand Rapids congregation. He is married and has three children ages 6, 4, and 1. He will need at least one year of studies to complete the theological training program.
- *Mark Wagenaar* of Vineland, age 22. Mark grew up in St. Catherines, was a member of the Netherlands Reformed Congregation there, received his Bachelors of Business degree, and is presently working for a pet food manufacturer. He joined our Vineland congregation two years ago and made confession of faith in March 2014. He has been married to his wife Sarah since October 2014.

A brief supplementary report concerning Young Jae Lee’s license to speak an edifying word in the churches will be provided at Synod.

3.2. Current students

- *John Procee*. Your TEC is pleased with the development of John Procee. Academically he has done very well and completed all his required courses and TEC examinations. He has also been able to complete most of the coursework required for a Th.M. degree. He had an internship in the Grand Rapids congregation, as well as a mini-internship in Pompton Plains and Monarch. Your TEC recommends he undergo a candidacy examination at synod 2015.
- *Ian Macleod*. Your TEC is thankful for the maturity of Ian Macleod which it has observed during its year of having him under its care. He has completed all TEC requirements. He has demonstrated excellence in the completion of his coursework for a Th.M. degree. He has completed a lengthy internship in the Grand Rapids congregation. Your TEC recommends he undergo a candidacy examination at synod 2015.
- *Ken Pennings*. Your TEC is thankful for Ken Pennings’ desire to learn. He continues to progress in his studies. He has faced challenges in some areas, including homiletics. He led services on four Lord’s Days in the summer of 2014. Your TEC recommends that rather than give him a license to exhort in the churches generally, he receive a seven week internship under pastors Koopman and Schoeman in British Columbia. The focus will be on developing Ken’s homiletical

skills.

3.3. Candidacy examination

Pending the successful completion of their current coursework and internships, the committee recommends that Students Ian Macleod and John Procee be examined by Synod with a view to declaring them candidates for ministry in the FRCNA.

The committee proposes the following examinations:

1. Homiletics: Critique of sermon and examination on the subject of homiletics by Rev. H. Overduin.
2. OT Exegesis: Examination on general principles and two Scripture passages by Dr. K. Gangar.
3. NT Exegesis: Examination on general principles and two Scripture passages by Rev. E. Moerdyk.
4. Dogmatics: Examination on various topics in dogmatics and their treatment in the Three Forms of Unity by Rev. D. Kranendonk
5. Church Polity: Examination on principles and specifics relating to the Church Order by Rev. P. VanderMeyden.

The committee proposes that both students be examined together in these areas. Each examiner will be allotted 30 minutes to examine both students, with the exception of Church Polity which will be 20 minutes. The chairman of Synod will then conduct the separate personal examinations concerning each student's state of grace and sense of call.

Upon a positive outcome of this exam, students Procee and Macleod will be declared candidates but their ministerial credentials will not be granted until they have accepted a call to a local congregation (Acts 2008, Art. 27).

4. Theological Training Program

4.1. Student Exhorting

Consistories are requested to fill out the new student sermon evaluation form presented to Synod 2014 every time a student leads a service. Such feedback is valuable to your TEC.

Students are permitted to lead worship services during the seminary academic terms provided their academic progress, family situation, or health is not negatively impacted. They are to receive permission from their TEC mentor before accepting such engagements.

Students are encouraged to stay at elders' homes between services to encourage informal mentoring. Consistories are encouraged to confirm these arrangements with students before they arrive to avoid double-bookings.

4.2. Course package

Some discussions have been held with the HRC Theological Student Committee to align the FRC and HRC required course package. The HRC has added some required courses to come closer to the FRC requirements. Given the PRTS MDiv restructuring that reduces the overall number of credits required, your TEC did not see a need to drop any of its required courses, meaning a small gap still remains between the FRC and HRC requirements.

5. Finances

5.1. Financial statements

The financial statements for the year 2014 as well as the budget for 2015 and forecast for 2016 are attached for your approval.

We are very grateful for the generous support of the churches in 2014, leaving us with a surplus of \$25,407 at the end of the year. The main difference between 2013 and 2014 is that in 2014 the Grand Rapids congregation gave a gift of \$25,000 USD toward the salary of Dr. Murray for the pastoral services he provides the congregation.

For 2015, the costs have increased substantially due to the sharp change in the dollar exchange rate. The regular giving of the congregations needs to increase by around \$60,000 compared to the level of giving in 2014. We commend this need to your continued generosity and support.

5.2. Financial Arrangements

For many years Mr. J. D. Tamminga has served as treasurer of the Seminary Fund. He continues to do so with love and precision; however, he feels his advancing age is reason for him to pass on these responsibilities to a younger man. Your TEC is grateful for his many years of diligent service and has appointed Mr. John Wilbrink to serve as seminary fund treasurer.

Last synod instructed us to adopt several changes to the seminary fund, one being giving individuals the opportunity to donate directly to the seminary fund. This arrangement is not yet finalized, but we hope we will be able to do so with the new treasurer.

6. Events

6.1 Ministerial Retreat

Positive feedback was received from the changes made to the retreat schedule and location in 2014. We recommend that the two-day, one-night retreat be held just prior to the October 2015 committee meetings in the Elmhurst Inn (Ingersoll, Ontario) with Dr. Michael Haykin and Dr. G. M. Bilkes speaking. Every other year ministers of churches with which we have correspondence are invited.

6.2. Seminary Day

Seminary Day 2014 was held in the building of the Providence Free Reformed Church, with organization and food provided by Oxford County FRC. Rev. C. A. Schouls spoke on Providence: the Christian's Comfort in Troubled Times and Dr. M. Barrett spoke on Discerning God's Will.

The HRC Church Correspondence Committee requested that the 2015 Seminary day be advertised as the first joint HRC-FRC seminary day. Your TEC agrees with this proposal and recommends that this take place in Hamilton FRC with the speakers being Rev. M. Kelderman and Dr. G. M. Bilkes, and Rev. B. Elshout and Rev. D. Kranendonk as alternates.

6.3. Office-bearer's Conference

The Fall 2015 office-bearer's conference is to be a joint HRC-FRC conference as decided through Your Interchurch Relations Committee. Your IRC will be responsible for making the arrangements in consultation with their HRC counterpart. The Spring 2016 conference will be a regular FRC conference.

7. Historical Centre

The Free Reformed Historical Centre continues to receive some books and audio recordings relating to Free Reformed history. Mr. Roel Maartense continues to catalogue the materials. This centre is discussing how to establish an online presence to share some of its resources on a website.

8. Appointments

Rev. J. Koopman, Rev. J. Lewis, and Rev. H. Overduin have completed their three year terms as primary members of your TEC. We recommend they be reappointed for another three year term.

9. Closing thoughts

Your deputies count it a privilege to be involved in the training of men for the ministry in our churches. We are encouraged to see men in various stages of the program and encourage the churches to pray for those who are training and for God to call others to the ministry.

May the King of the Church guide you in your deliberations for the good of His church.

10. Recommendations

1. To approve the Financial Statements of the Free Reformed Seminary Fund: 2014 statements, 2015 budget, and 2016 projections (see 4.1; Appendix).
2. To approve the proposal for the Ministers' Retreat 2015 as outlined in the report (see 6.1).
3. To approve the recommendations for Seminary Day 2015 (see 6.2).
4. To accept Mr. Young Jae Lee and Mr. Mark Wagenaar as students for ministry in the Free Reformed Churches (see 3.1).
5. To appoint Dr. D. Murray as full-time Free Reformed instructor at PRTS (see 1.2).
6. To re-appoint as primary members Rev. J. Koopman, Rev. J. Lewis, and Rev. H. Overduin for a three year term (see 8).
7. Approve the actions of your deputies.

Respectfully,

D. H. Kranendonk, Secretary

Appendix: Financial statements

Free Reformed Churches of N.A.
Seminary Fund
Statement of Financial Position
December 31, 2014
(In Canadian \$)

	2014	2013
ASSETS		
Cash & Term Deposits	\$ 113,626	\$ 88,219
Total Assets	\$ 113,626	\$ 88,219
 EQUITY		
Beginning Balance	\$ 88,219	\$ 78,235
Excess (shortage)	25,407	9,984
Ending Balance	\$ 113,626	\$ 88,219

Free Reformed Churches of N.A Seminary Fund
Statement of Revenues and Expenses
For the year ended December 31, 2014
(In Canadian \$)

	Contribution per member	Note	2014	2013	Change
REVENUES					
From the churches:					
Abbotsford	\$ 24.89		\$ 2,165	\$ 2,329	\$ (164)
Bornholm	31.29		3,035	4,902	(1,867)
Brantford	54.24		21,100	17,170	3,930
Calgary	23.56		2,592	2,108	484
Chatham	25.40		5,359	9,178	(3,819)
Chilliwack	39.78		9,825	9,935	(110)
Dundas	64.56		28,470	26,406	2,064
Fenwick	21.42		6,663	9,334	(2,671)
Grand Rapids	105.50		30,911	26,425	4,486
Hamilton	96.24		29,353	36,242	(6,889)
Lacombe	6.88		660	516	144
Langley	20.38		1,345	1,655	(310)
London	38.00		2,660	5,158	(2,498)
Mitchell	15.74		3,856	3,541	315
Monarch	29.32		14,544	10,488	4,056
Oxford	21.57		2,200	1,388	812
Prompton Plains	51.49		7,929	8,314	(385)
St George	22.70		8,490	7,255	1,235
St. Thomas	9.28		2,588	3,224	(636)
Vineland	24.90		12,000	12,516	(516)
Average:	40.32		195,745	198,084	(2,339)
Other income:					
Contribution - Grand Rapids			27,714		27,714
Seminary Day			4,579	5,811	(1,232)
Elders and Deacons Conference			201	563	(362)
Prayer Service Synod			1,358	2,699	(1,341)
Sales FRC Studies				55	(55)
Interest			274	340	(66)
Foreign exchange gain (loss)			(3,482)	(2,860)	(622)
Total Revenues			226,389	204,692	21,697
EXPENSES					
Salaries & Benefits			127,749	126,832	917
PRT Seminary - donation		4a	72,057	67,273	4,784
Other General			1,176	603	573
Total Expenses			200,982	194,708	6,274
EXCESS (SHORTAGE)			\$ 25,407	\$ 9,984	\$ 15,423

Free Reformed Churches of N.A. Seminary Fund
Budget and Projection
For the years ending December 31, 2015 & 2016
(In Canadian \$)

	Note	Actual 2014	Budget 2015	Variance		2016 Projection
				\$	%	
REVENUES						
Church Gifts		\$195,745	\$ 256,100	\$ 60,355	30.8	\$ 260,000
Contribution-Grand Rapids	4b	27,714	31,778	4,064	14.7	30,500
Seminary Day		4,579	4,600	21	0.5	5,000
Prayer Service - Synod		1,358	2,100	742	54.6	1,300
Elders & Deacons Conf.		201	222	21	10.4	200
Sales FRC Studies				-		
Interest		274	200	(74)	(27.0)	
Foreign exchange gain (loss)		(3,482)		3,482	(100.0)	-
Total Revenues		226,389	295,000	68,611	30.3	297,000
EXPENSES						
Salaries & Benefits	4c	127,749	294,000	166,251	130.1	296,000
PRT Seminary - Donation	4d	72,057		(72,057)	(100.0)	
Other General Exp./ Teaching Pastors		1,176	1,000	(176)	(15.0)	1,000
Total Expenses		200,982	295,000	94,018	46.8	297,000
EXCESS (SHORTAGE)		\$ 25,407	\$ -	(25,407)		\$ -

**Free Reformed Church of N.A.
Seminary Fund
Notes to the Financial Reports
For the year ending December 31, 2014
(In Canadian \$)**

1. Significant Accounting Policies:

The financial statements of the Seminary Fund are prepared utilizing the accrual basis of accounting.

2. Review of the Books:

The financial statements of the Seminary Fund have been reviewed, utilizing the 1996 standard review program, by Mr. R. Naves (Hamilton) and Mr. B. Verloop (Hamilton). The records were found to be accurate and in good order.

3. Cash:

Cash and Term deposits consist of the following:

	2014	2013
Chequeing Account	\$ 79,162	\$ 54,028
GIC's	34,464	34,191
	\$ 113,626	\$ 88,219

4. Comments:

- a Donation 2013 U.S.\$65,000 @ \$1.0349666 = Can.\$67,273
Donation 2014 U.S.\$65,000 @ \$1.108566 = Can.\$72,057
- b 2014 Contribution by Grand Rapids U.S.\$25,000 @ \$1.108566 = Can.\$27,714
2015 Contribution by Grand Rapids, U.S.\$25,000 @ \$1.2711 = Can. \$31,778
- c As per January 1, 2015 we pay the salaries of Dr. G.M. Bilkes and Dr. D. Murray plus our FRC ministers who are teaching at the PRTS totaling U.S.\$242,583 @ \$1.211519 (average rate January 2015)= Can.\$293,894
- d PRTS Donation discontinued (see 4b above)
- e Average closing exchange rate for the year 2013 is \$1.034967
Average closing exchange rate for the year 2014 is \$1.108566
Closing exchange rate for January 31, 2015 is \$1.2711

THEOLOGICAL STUDENT SUPPORT COMMITTEE

Dundas, Ontario
April 18, 2015

Synod of the Free Reformed Churches, In Session June 1-5, 2015
Oxford, Ontario (calling church)

Esteemed Brethren,

The Theological Student Support Committee submits the following report.

We are thankful to report that all congregations paid the required assessment to the Theological Student Support Fund for the Year 2014. We acknowledge also, with appreciation, extra donations received from various congregations and others.

The books of the Theological Student Support Fund were audited by Mr. Bruce Verloop and Mr. J.D. Tamminga of the Hamilton congregation. The financial records were found to be in good order.

A copy of the financial statement for the year ending December 31, 2014 and a proposed budget for the year 2016 are included with this report.

In preparing the budget for 2016 consideration was given to 1.) Support the student presently studying; 2.) Anticipation of acceptance of two new students by Synod 2015; 3.) Completion of studies in 2015 of two current students; 4.) Exchange rate between Canadian and U.S. dollar will remain close to the current rate. Considering all these factors the committee feels that the current quota assessment must be increased to \$20.00 for the year 2016 to cover the anticipated demand on funds

Due to the impact of the exchange rate between the Canadian and U.S. dollar the fund balance is currently very low and projected to be negative by the end of 2015. To bring this balance to a more realistic level we recommend that the churches be asked to arrange for a special collection for this cause before the end of 2015.

The term of Brother Jerry Hamstra expires this year. As a committee we propose that he be re-appointed for another three year term.

Proposals to Synod

- a) To approve the financial statement for the year 2014 as presented.
- b) To increase the assessment for the Theological Student Support Fund to \$20.00 per member for the year 2016.
- c) To approve the proposed budget for the year 2016 as presented.
- d) To ask the churches to hold a special collection to support the immediate needs of the Support Fund before the end of 2015.
- e) To re-appoint Brother Jerry Hamstra as a member of the committee for another three year term.
- f) To approve the actions of this committee.

May the Lord richly bless your meetings.
 Respectfully submitted, J. Wilbrink, secretary

**Theological Student Support Fund
 Statement of Financial Position
 December 31, 2014**

Assets:	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>
Cash	57,529	97,525
Total Assets	<u><u>57,529</u></u>	<u><u>97,525</u></u>
 Equity:		
Opening Balance	97,525	111,720
Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	(39,996)	(14,195)
Total Equity	<u><u>57,529</u></u>	<u><u>97,525</u></u>
Audited by	John Tamminga	_____
	Bruce Verloop	_____
Date	<u>25-Mar-15</u>	

**Theological Student Support Fund
Statement of Operations**

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>Variance</u>		<u>2013</u>
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>% F/(U)</u>	<u>\$ F/(U)</u>	
Revenue:					
Assessments	63,075	63,000	0%	75	61,958
Collections/Donations:					
Abbotsford				-	
Bellevue				-	
Bornholm				-	
Brantford	3,027			3,027	2,615
Calgary					
Chatham				-	3,000
Chilliwack				-	
Dundas	275			275	
Fenwick					
Grand Rapids				-	
Hamilton				-	
Lacombe					
Langley	1,000			1,000	
London	-			-	-
Mitchell				-	
Monarch				-	
Pompton Plains	-			-	-
St. George				-	
St. Thomas					
Toronto				-	
Vineland	-			-	-
Synodical Prayer Svc				-	
Interest	145	50	190%	95	206
Student Repayment	1,500	1,200		300	400
Total Revenue	<u>69,022</u>	<u>64,250</u>	<u>7%</u>	<u>4,772</u>	<u>68,179</u>
Expenditures:					
Student - Support	108,898	5c 102,500	-6%	(6,398)	82,250
Administration Costs	120	5d 100		(20)	124
Total Expenditures	<u>109,018</u>	<u>102,600</u>	<u>-6%</u>	<u>(6,418)</u>	<u>82,374</u>
Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	<u>(39,996)</u>	<u>(38,350)</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>(1,646)</u>	<u>(14,195)</u>

**Theological Student Support Fund
Budget 2015 and 2016**

	<u>Actual 2014</u>		<u>Budget 2015</u>	<u>Variance</u>		<u>Project'n 2016</u>	
				<u>%</u>	<u>\$ F/(U)</u>		
Revenue:							
Assessments	63,075	5a	64,250	2%	1,175	99,000	5b
Collections/Donations:							
Abbotsford					-		
Bornholm					-		
Brantford	3,027				(3,027)		
Calgary					-		
Chatham			-		-	-	
Chilliwack			-		-	-	
Dundas	275		-		(275)	-	
Fenwick					-		
Grand Rapids			-		-	-	
Hamilton			-		-	-	
Lacombe					-		
Langley	1,000		-		(1,000)	-	
London					-		
Mitchell					-		
Monarch			-		-	-	
Pompton Plains					-		
St. George					-		
St. Thomas					-		
Vineland			-		-	-	
Synodical Prayer Svc					-		
Miscellaneous					-		
Interest	145		50	-66%	(95)	50	
Student Repayment	1,500		1,200	-20%	(300)	1,200	
Total Revenue	69,022		65,500	-5%	(3,522)	100,250	
Expenditures:							
Personnel:							
Students - Payments	108,898	5c	129,000	-18%	(20,102)	95,000	
Administrat'n Expenses	120	5d	100	17%	20	100	
Total Expenditures	109,018		129,100	-16%	(20,082)	95,100	
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	(39,996)		(63,600)	-37%	(23,604)	5,150	
Bank Balance (actual/projected)	\$57,529		-\$6,071			-\$921	

**Theological Student Support Fund of the Free Reformed Church of
North America
Notes to the Financial Statements
December 31, 2014**

1. Significant Accounting Policies:

The financial statements of the Theological Student Support Committee are prepared utilizing the cash basis of accounting.

2. Audit of the Books:

The financial statements of the Theological Student Support Committee have been reviewed. The records were found to be accurate and in good order.

3. Cash:

Cash and Term deposits consist of the following:

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>
CIBC Chequing	9,853	14,577
CIBC Savings	47,193	80,143
CIBC U.S. (Est. Canadian dollar value)	483	2,805
	<u>57,529</u>	<u>97,525</u>

4. Assessments:

Congregation	Members	Opening Balance	Quotas 2014	Amount Paid	Ending Balance
Abbotsford	87	-	1,131	1,131	-
Bornholm	97	-	1,261	1,261	-
Brantford	389	-	5,057	5,057	-
Calgary	110	-	1,430	1,430	-
Chatham	211	-	2,743	2,743	-
Chilliwack	247	-	3,211	3,211	-
Dundas	441	-	5,733	5,733	-
Fenwick	311	-	4,043	4,043	-
Grand Rapids	293	-	3,809	3,809	-
Hamilton	305	-	3,965	3,965	-
Lacombe	96	-	1,248	1,248	-
Langley	66	-	858	858	-
London	70	-	910	910	-
Mitchell	245	-	3,185	3,185	-
Monarch	496	-	6,448	6,448	-
Oxford	102	-	1,326	1,326	-
Pompton Plains	154	-	2,002	2,002	-
St. George	374	-	4,862	4,862	-
St. Thomas	279	-	3,627	3,627	-
Vineland	482	-	6,226	6,226	-
	4855	-	63,075	63,075	-

5. Variance Explanations:

- a. based on 4943 members at \$13.00 per member
- b. based on 4943 members at \$20.00 per member
- c. Living expenses, books and christian education expenses
- d. Bank charges

YOUTH & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Report to Synod 2015 of the Free Reformed Churches of North America

Esteemed delegates,

Your deputies are pleased to provide you with the following account: We met twice during the time of the Fall and Spring committee meetings. The present executive consists of Mr. Willem Bouma (Chairman), Mr. Raymond Roth (Vice-Chair), Rev. T. Bergsma (Secretary), and Mr. Jeff Bokma (Treasurer).

A. YOUTH MESSENGER

We continue to publish two issues of the Youth Messenger per year. We thank all those who contribute articles to this work. Derek Baars has resigned his position as editor, and we thank him for his work over the last two years. In his place, we are recommending that Revs. Joel Overduin and Tim Bergsma become co-editors to the Youth Messenger.

B. YOUTH DEVOTIONALS

Due to the diligent work of Herman DenHollander we are on track to publish another devotional this fall, directed at ages 6-8, titled, "I Live, He Lives". Once this is published we will have five youth devotionals.

C. CAMPS

Our mandate from Synod is to "*give advice and direction to the youth in regards to Camp.*" Our committee also funds "approved" Youth Camps for 20% of their costs. To be "approved" we ask these camps to report to our spring and fall meetings, telling us of their previous summer's camp and discussing plans for the next. To that end, we pray for God's blessing on three FRC Youth Camps that are planning to be held this summer: Camp East, & Camp Alberta Sr. & Jr.

D. FINANCIAL REPORT

As our financial records show, we have a solid surplus heading into 2016. Nevertheless we anticipate having to spend significant funds publishing "I Live, He Lives." In the meantime, our present quota of \$3/member allows us to continue publishing the Youth Messenger and assisting with young people's camps. Therefore, we are requesting the continuation of our quota into 2016 at \$3/member.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS TO SYNOD 2015:

1. That Synod appoint Revs. Joel Overduin & Tim Bergsma as editors of the Youth Messenger for 2015-16.
2. That Synod approve the recommendation to reappoint br. Jeff Bokma to a second term (ending 2018).
3. That Synod approve the Financial Statement of the Y&E: 2014 statements, 2015 budget, and 2016 projections.
4. That Synod approve a quota of \$3/member for 2015.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Tim Bergsma, Secretary

**Youth & Education Committee of the Free Reformed Churches
Statement of Revenue and Expenditures
For the Year Ended December 2014**

	2014	2013	2012
Receipts			
Quotas	\$ 13,107.85	\$ 13,482.61	\$18,805.87
Collections		\$ -	\$0.00
Book Sales	\$ 2,832.87	\$ 870.00	\$9,531.04
Messenger Sub.	\$ 140.00	\$ 72.00	\$0.00
Other		\$ -	\$0.00
Total Receipts	\$ 16,080.72	\$ 14,424.61	\$28,336.91
Disbursements			
Purchase of Books		\$ -	\$0.00
Seminar Expenses		\$ -	\$0.00
Office Expense	\$ 12.66	\$ 37.70	\$413.36
Committee Exp.		\$ -	\$0.00
Magazine Exp.	\$ 693.84	\$ -	\$0.00
Camp(s) Exp.	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 6,750.00	\$5,500.00
Bank Charges	\$ 1.00	\$ -	\$81.78
Publication Exp (Youth Messenger)	\$ 7,066.46	\$ 6,891.39	\$8,186.85
Devotional Books	\$ 9,344.31	\$ 695.27	\$10,040.61
Total Disbursements	\$ 24,118.27	\$ 14,374.36	\$24,222.60
Operating Surplus	-\$8,037.55	\$ 50.25	\$4,114.31

**Youth & Education Committee of the Free Reformed Churches
Balance Sheet December 31 2014**

	Dec. 2014	Dec. 2013	Dec, 2012
Assets			
Cash & Term Dep.	\$ 20,249.20	\$ 28,286.75	\$28,236.50
Total Assets	\$ 20,249.20	\$ 28,286.75	\$28,236.50
Liabilities			
Accounts Payable	\$ -	\$ -	\$0.00
Loans Payable	\$ -	\$ -	\$0.00
Total Liabilities	\$ -	\$ -	\$0.00
Equity			
Beginning Balance	\$ 28,286.75	\$ 28,236.50	\$24,122.19
Operating Surplus (-)	-\$ 8,037.55	\$ 50.25	\$4,114.31
Ending Balance	\$ 20,249.20	\$ 28,286.75	\$28,236.50
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$ 20,249.20	\$ 28,286.75	\$28,236.50

**Youth & Education Committee of the Free Reformed Churches of North
America**

Notes to Financial Statements for the year ended December 2014

1. Significant Accounting Policies:

The financial statements of the Youth & Education are prepared utilizing the accrual basis of accounting. All representations are in Canadian dollars

2. Review of Books:

The financial statement of the Youth & Education have been reviewed, utilizing the 1996 standard review program by Justin Hannaford and Steve Groen. The records were found to be in good order.

Youth & Education Committee of the Free Reformed Churches

Budget for Year 2016

	2014 Actual	2014 Budget	Variance		2015 Budget	2016 Projection
			\$	%		
Receipts						
Quotas	\$13,107.85	\$14,298	-\$ 1,190.15	-8%	\$14,565	\$14,829
Collections		\$500	-\$ 500.00	-100%	\$500	\$0
Book Sales	\$ 2,832.87	\$10,000	-\$ 7,167.13	-72%	\$8,000	\$3,000
Messenger Sub.	\$ 140.00	\$200	-\$ 60.00	-30%	\$200	\$200
Other		\$2	-\$ 2.00	-100%	\$0	\$0
Totals	\$16,080.72	\$25,000	-\$ 8,919.28		\$23,265	\$18,029
Disbursements						
Purchase of Books	\$ -	\$200	-\$ 200.00	-100%	\$200	\$200
Seminar Expenses	\$ -	\$200	-\$ 200.00	-100%	\$200	\$200
Office Expense	\$ 12.66	\$500	-\$ 487.34	-97%	\$500	\$500
Committee Exp.	\$ -	\$200	-\$ 200.00	-100%	\$200	\$200
Magazine Exp.	\$ 693.84	\$0	\$ 693.84		\$0	\$0
Camp(s) Exp.	\$ 7,000.00	\$8,000	-\$ 1,000.00	-13%	\$8,000	\$8,000
Bank Charges	\$ 1.00	\$25	-\$ 24.00	-96%	\$25	\$25
Publication Exp (Youth Messenger)	\$ 7,066.46	\$8,500	-\$ 1,433.54	-17%	\$8,500	\$7,500
Devotional Books	\$ 9,344.31	\$11,000	-\$ 1,655.69	-15%	\$2,500	\$2,500
Total	\$24,118.27	\$28,625	-\$ 4,506.73	-16%	\$20,125	\$19,125
Operating Surplus	-\$8,037.55	-\$3,625	-\$ 4,412.55		\$3,140	-\$1,096

Ad Hoc Committee Reports

EMERITUS FUND COMMITTEE

Report to Synod submitted April 2105

The committee continues to meet, with the challenge of how to re-work the existing Emeritus / Benevolent fund. There are several major challenges in how to transition from the existing system to a revised program. This needs to be done in a way that is fair to both the Emeritus Pastors and the current full time Pastors. The revised system also needs to be financially feasible, without putting an additional financial burden on our members and congregations. This all has to be done, in a way that meets Revenue Canada Agency guidelines and requirements.

At this time we are reviewing the URC report to Synod and their upcoming decisions, to see how they are dealing with a similar situation.

John VanGameren was appointed to this committee, but regrettably is not able to serve. In his place, we have asked Jim Kopopman, to be an advisor to this committee.

The committee requests Synod to appoint Jim Koopman to this committee.

It is the committee's intention to come to Synod 2016, with a complete recommendation on how to change the current system and a proposal of how to implement it.

Submitted on behalf of the Ad Hoc Emeritus Committee,

Gary Neven - - Convenor