

Press Release ICRC 2017

The ninth meeting of the International Conference of Reformed Churches was held in Jordan, Ontario, Canada, from July 12 – 19, 2017, in the facilities of the Immanuel United Reformed Church and the Heritage Christian School. It was a blessed time of fellowship with one another as delegates and with our hosts, which not only included the calling Immanuel United Reformed Church of Jordan, and her local sister churches, but also regional church members of the Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC), Free Reformed Churches (FRCNA), Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), and Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC). The welcome was warm and generous, and a great opportunity to see and experience the Lord's work in this part of his vineyard. Following the beginning of the meeting with a Prayer Service held under the auspices of the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA) on Wednesday evening, July 12, we were able to work our way steadily through the schedule, capably led by the Chairman, the Rev. Dick Moes.

It was our brother Moes, who, throughout the meeting, in light of the 500th year since the nailing of Martin Luther's 95 Theses, focused on four of the Reformational Solas – Solus Christus, Sola Gratia, Sola Fide, and Sola Scriptura in the morning devotions.

It was a joy to receive into the membership of the ICRC the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia (CRCA) and the Presbyterian Church of Uganda (PCU) after reports from sponsoring denominations and consideration by the Membership Committee. We look forward to a fruitful work together with them. Already the CRCA is involved with the Presbyterian Church in Eastern Australia (PCEA) in hosting the 2019 Asia-Pacific Regional Conference due to be held in Australia.

It was with much sadness, however, that the Conference suspended the membership of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (RCN), as it was deemed that they have broken with Article IV:4 of the Constitution in their recent synodical decision to permit the ordination of persons to the offices of minister and ruling elder contrary to the rule prescribed in Scripture. This took up much time in the meeting as there was much discussion and various options considered. A number spoke of the blessed help the RCN have been in the past to their federations and so this involved an extra heaviness of heart. Yet it was quite clear that the view of the RCN is not the view of any of the other churches in the ICRC, and certainly was not the view of any of those, apart from the RCN, who spoke at our meeting. Please pray for our brethren there, that the Lord in his grace would turn them in repentance to his Word and so be able to join fully with us once more.

The various Committee Reports brought out the Lord's blessing upon the member churches and service to him in various spheres – Theological Education, Diaconal, and Missions. A new Committee set up is the Publications Committee which takes in the new ICRC magazine – *Lux Mundi* – and the current website. In connection with these different aspects of ICRC work there were four very well received and helpful panel discussions on theological education and growing future leaders for the Reformed faith, the ministry of

mercy and the Reformed faith, bringing the Reformed faith to Asia, and on the future direction of the ICRC.

There was also much time given for bilateral and multilateral meetings among the member delegations. It was also a blessing to have a number of observer churches present.

Financially the ICRC is very healthy with an excess from the past four-year period. It was felt prudent to retain such a balance and continue to receive membership assessment payments to meet the actual costs for the next four-year period.

A highlight of the meetings were the evening addresses, given respectively by the Rev. Hiralal Solanki on 'A Brief Overview of Christian Mission in India', the Rev. Dr. Derek Thomas on John Calvin's preaching on the Book of Job, Dr. Matthew Ebenezer on 'Bringing the Reformed Faith to India', and Dr. Joel Beeke on 'Reformed Piety: Covenantal and Experiential.'¹ There was also a valuable time of discussion on these occasions where we were joined by many from the local Reformed churches.

We were well provided for – physically and spiritually. We leave refreshed in the precious faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and looking confidently for future worship and service of him, praying the Head of the church to keep us faithful to his Word.

¹These will, in due time, be made available on the Internet.