

Conference Minutes

Session 1

Morning, Thursday
October 16, 1997

1. Opening

Dr. S.G. Hur, representing the host church, opened the session by inviting the meeting to sing Ps. 122:1-3, after which he read John 17:15-26. He then addressed the delegates on behalf of the Presbyterian Church of Korea and led in prayer. (See *Proceedings* pp. ??.)

2. Roll Call

Following the calling of the roll, the consistory of the host church (Seo-Moon Church) examined the delegates' credentials and reported that all member churches were properly represented (according to Regulations Article V).

The following list records the participating Churches and their delegates. (Note: "D" = voting delegate; "A" = Advisor.)

Member Churches

The Canadian Reformed Churches

Mr. C. VanSpronsen (D)
Dr. N.H. Gootjes (D)

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland

Dr. Robert C. Beckett (D)
Mr. Stephen J. Roger (D)

The Free Church of Central India

Mr. David John (D)

The Free Church of Scotland

Prof. Clement Graham (D)
Mr. John A. Macleod (D)
Mr. David C. Meredith (A)
Mr. Peter Morrison (A)
Mr. John Ross (CWI)

The Free Church in Southern Africa

Mr. David Miller (D)

The Free Reformed Churches of North America

Mr. Lawrence W. Bilkes (D)

Mr. Peter Vander Meyden (D)

The Free Reformed Churches in South Africa

Mr. Christo F. Heiberg (D)

Gereja Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia N.T.T.

Mr. M.B. Radjah (D)

Mr. Pila Njuka (D)

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Mr. Jack J. Peterson (D)

Mr. John P. Galbraith (D)

Dr. Richard B. Gaffin Jr. (A)

Mr. Mark T. Bube (A)

The Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia

Mr. W. Peter Gadsby (D)

Dr. Rowland S. Ward (D)

The Presbyterian Church in Korea (Kosin)

Dr. Soon Gil Hur (D)

Mr. Sung Bok Park (D)

Mr. Eun Cho Park (A - 15-19/10)

Dr. Keun Doo Jung (A - 20-23/10)

Dr. Yookwang Hyon (A)

The Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (liberated)

Mr. C.J. Haak (D)

Mr. H. van Veen (D)

Mr. A. de Jager (A)

The Reformed Church in the United States

Mr. Vernon Pollema (D)

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland

Prof. W. David J. McKay (D)

Churches Applying for Membership

The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church

Mr. Jack C. Whytock

The Christian Reformed Churches in The Netherlands

Mr. Jacob Westerink

Mr. Paul Den Butter

Prof. Willem H. Velema

Mr. Adrian W. Overwater

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England and Wales

(No delegates)

Gereja Gereja Masehi Musyafir N.T.T.

Mr. Eli Fangidae

Mr. Melky Bulan

The Reformed Churches of New Zealand

Mr. Michael Flinn

Mr. John Goris

Mr. Dick Vanderpyl

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America

Dr. John H. White

Mr. Shigeru Takiura

The United Reformed Churches in North America

Mr. Joghinda S. Gangar

Visitor Churches

The Independent Presbyterian Church of Mexico

Dr. Joseph Michael Velazquez

The Lanka Reformed Church

Mr. Prabhath de Silva

The Korean Presbyterian Church in America

Dr. Jin Sup Kim

The Presbyterian Church of Australia

Dr. Allan M. Harman

The Reformed Church in Japan

Mr. Masao Yamashita

Mr. Hideaki Suzuki

Mr. Yasunori Ichikawa

The Reformed Churches in South Africa

Dr. C.J. Smit
Mr. B.C.G. Fourie
Prof. J.M. Vorster

The Reformed Presbyterian Churches in Cardiff (UK)

Dr. Peter J. Naylor
Mr. Richard H. Haines
Mr. C. Richard H. Holst

Taiwan Reformed Presbyterian Church

Mr. Yao Cheng Chien
Mr. Whan Joon Yoo

Reformed Presbyterian Church, North East Synod, India

Mr. L. Kiemlo Pulamte (cf. Article 46)

Church of Christ in Sudan among the Tiv (Nongu U Kristu U ken Sudan hen Tiv)

Mr. G.N. Oragbe (cf. Article 46)

3. Order of the Day

After a coffee break the meeting was reopened at 10:40 am with the singing of Ps 84:1. The following schedule of normal meeting times was proposed and adopted:

9:00 -10:30	AM	Conference
10:30 -11:00		Recess for Coffee
11:00 -12:00		Conference
12:00 -1:30	PM	Recess for Lunch
2:30 - 4:00		Conference
4:00 - 4:30		Recess for Coffee
4:30 - 5:30		Conference
6:00 - 7:30		Recess for Dinner
7:30 - 9:00		Conference
9:00 -		Coffee

4. Committee Appointments

1. The executive proposed that the Press Committee consist of Mr. Galbraith and Mr. Gadsby.

This proposal was accepted by the meeting.

2. The following seven Committees were appointed to review the applications of the Churches:

1. Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church: Dr. Gootjes and Mr. John;
2. Christian Reformed Churches in The Netherlands: Prof. Graham and Mr. Miller;
3. Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England and Wales: Mr. Bilkes and Mr. Van Spronsen;
4. Gereja Gereja Masehi Musyafir N.T.T.: Mr. Roger and Mr. Heiberg;
5. Reformed Churches in New Zealand: Mr. Haak and Dr. Hyon;
6. Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America: Mr. Van Veen and Dr. Ward;
7. United Reformed Churches in North America: Dr. Beckett and Mr. De Jager.

It was suggested that during a recess the Committees meet and be ready to respond sometime in the coming sessions.

5. Secretary's Report

The Corresponding Secretary, Mr. M. van Beveren, read his report. It summarized the work of the Interim Committee and the preparations for this meeting. (See *Proceedings* pp. ??.)

Appreciation for it and Mr. van Beveren's work was expressed.

6. Advisory Committee re: OPC Resolutions

Correspondence consisting of three letters was received from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The executive proposed that the Advisory Committee for the presented Resolutions of the OPC consist of Mr. Ward and Mr. De Jager.

The proposal was accepted by the meeting.

7. Schedule for Papers

The following schedule was adopted for the presentation and discussion of papers:

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|--------|----------------------|---|
| Oct.16 | Thursday Afternoon - | Mr. Mark T. Bube: "The Principles of Reformed Missions" |
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| Oct.17 | Friday Afternoon | - | Dr. Soon Gil Hur: "Women in Office: especially about 'deaconesses'" |
| Oct.18 | Saturday Morning | - | Dr. R.C. Beckett: "Biblical Principles for the Relation between Church and State" |
| Oct. 20 | Monday Evening | - | Dr. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr.: "Challenges of the Charismatic Movement to the Reformed Tradition" |
| Oct. 21 | Tuesday Evening | - | Mr. David John: "The Ministry of the Word amongst Asian Religious People (Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and Zoroastrians)" |
| Oct.22 | Wednesday (all day) | - | "An experience of Korean Culture" |
| Oct.23 | Thursday | - | |

8. Recess

The meeting entered into recess to allow the Committees to review the various applications.

9. Applicant Churches

The meeting reconvened to begin considering the applications for membership to the ICRC.

A. Application of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church

The Committee which examined the application of this Church reported and recommended that this Church be admitted. The sponsoring Churches for this application were the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

After some discussion it was agreed to postpone the acceptance of the ARPC until later in the conference.

B. Application of the Christian Reformed Churches in The Netherlands

The Committee which examined the application of this federation of churches reported and recommended that this federation be admitted. The sponsoring Churches for this application were the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (liberated) and the Free Reformed Churches of North America.

This was adopted unanimously.

C. Application of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales

Mr. Van Spronsen reported that the Committee received a favourable impression of this applicant. There were no delegates from this Church present at the 1997-Conference. The sponsoring Churches for this application were the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland and the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (liberated).

The Committee reported that they found the documents satisfactory.

It was moved to accept the EPCEW.

This was adopted unanimously.

10. Closing

The session was closed with Dr. Gootjes leading in prayer. The meeting was adjourned for lunch.

Session 2

Afternoon, Thursday
October 16, 1997

11. Opening

At 2:30 pm the Chairman called the meeting to order. Ps 87:1-4 was sung by the delegates *a capella*. Prof. Graham led the meeting in prayer.

12. Applicant Churches

D. Application of the Gereja Gereja Masehi Musyafir N.T.T.

Upon request for information, a delegate of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (lib.), Mr. Haak, gave some further details about this “Pilgrim” Church. He indicated that accepting this federation of churches will serve the Reformed cause in Indonesia. The sponsoring Churches for this application were the Gereja Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia N.T.T. and the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (lib.).

It was moved to accept the GGMM as member. This proposal was unanimously adopted.

E. Application of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand

This federation of churches is a combination of several Reformed traditions. They have Four Forms of Unity. The sponsoring Churches for this application were the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the

Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia. The Committee recommended receiving this federation of churches into the fellowship of the ICRC.

Mr. Gadsby of the PCEA expressed their delight in sponsoring this application.

It was moved to accept the RCNZ as member. This proposal was unanimously adopted.

F. Application of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America

The Committee which reviewed this application reported that this Church's standards have been examined and that they were acceptable. The sponsoring Churches for this application were the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Church in the United States, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

It was moved to accept the RPCNA as member. This proposal was unanimously adopted.

G. Application of the United Reformed Churches in North America

The Committee reported that these churches which have left the Christian Reformed Church of North America, subscribe to the Three Forms of Unity. The sponsoring Churches for this application were the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Free Reformed Churches of North America.

It was moved to accept the URCNA as member. This proposal was unanimously adopted.

H. (A) Application of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church

The Committee reported that this Church was recommended for acceptance. A discussion followed in which some concern was expressed. It was proposed to accept this Church as member.

By means of a polled vote, this Church was accepted with 16 Churches in favour and 3 abstentions. The PCEA requested that its abstention be recorded.

I. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed the new delegates as sitting members of the meeting. This meant that the total number of voting delegates at the conference was 33 representing the 20 member Churches who were present.

13. Paper 1: "Reformed Principles of Missions" by Mr. M.T. Bube

At 4:30 pm, after a coffee break, the meeting was reconvened. The delegates sang Ps 108:1,2. Mr. Mark T. Bube presented his paper on the Reformed principles of Missions. (See *Proceedings*, pp. ??.)

14. Closing

At 5:45 pm the Chairman adjourned the meeting for dinner, with the understanding that discussion on Mr. Bube's paper would follow after dinner. Dr. Velema led in prayer.

Session 3

Evening, Thursday
October 16, 1997

15. Opening

The meeting was reconvened with the singing of Ps. 98:1,2 and the reading of Revelation 5:1-10.

16. Introduction: the Presbyterian Church of Australia

Dr. Allan M. Harman introduced the Presbyterian Church of Australia. He pointed out that the present Presbyterian Church of Australia resulted from the formation of the Uniting Church of Australia in 1977 when the majority of the Presbyterian Church entered that church. Since then the process of reformation in the continuing church has been steadily maintained with a particular emphasis on theological education. There has been a considerable movement back to the reformation heritage and further strengthening of this is anticipated.

17. Discussion of Paper 1

Mr. Bube's paper was discussed. The discussion focused on the use of parachurch organizations, the character of a credible profession of faith on the mission field, the place of personal witnessing as opposed to organizational mission, the social aspect of mission work, and the need for mission churches to become self-supporting.

After the discussion the Chairman thanked Mr. Bube for his speech and for answering the questions.

18. Closing

The session closed with Mr. Whytock leading in prayer. The meeting was adjourned to resume at 9:00 am the following morning.

Session 4

Morning, Friday

October 17, 1997

19. Opening

After the singing of Ps. 8:1-5, Dr. Hur read Psalm 148 and presented the following meditation on this Psalm.

Dear brothers:

God's people are a praising people. They have the joy of salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ and they praise the Lord. They are not simply satisfied with their praise, they want all creatures to join them in praising the Lord. This joy and desire is made very clear in Ps. 148.

The Psalmist begins this song with "Hallelujah", that is, "Praise the LORD", and he closes it with the same "Hallelujah". His heart is full of the desire to sing to the Lord. He exhorts all creatures in the heavens to praise the Lord. He summons all the angels, all the beasts, even the sun, the moon and all the stars to praise the Lord. He then turns his attention to the earth, urging all creatures of the earth to praise the Lord. He summons the mountains, all the hills, all the beasts, and the flying birds. He summons kings, princes, and all people.

Finally the Psalmist exhorts God's chosen people, the children of Israel: "praise the Lord!" They are a people near to God. God had shown them a very special mercy, and they had many reasons to praise God.

In this Psalm we hear a mighty chorus of all creation praising the Lord. There is a unity of all creation in this praise. A wonderful harmony of voices is heard. In that mighty choir there is a special group of people. That is God's chosen one, the children of Israel. They are in the centre of the chorus, and they praise the Lord with a most wonderful unity. The Church is the people close to the Lord. They are partakers of the covenant of grace in the Lord Jesus Christ. The people of the Lord know how lovely God the Lord is. And the Church must raise its voice in unity: "Praise the name of the Lord!"

We are gathered together here as representatives of the Church of the Lord in the world. May the name of the Lord be praised in unity not only by our singing, but also by what we do. For we work here for the sake of His Church. Amen.

20. Advisory Committees

Upon proposal of the Executive of the Conference, the following committees were appointed:

Advisory Committee 1: To deal with the Missions Committee Report and to propose nominations for the membership of the Missions Committee; consisting of Mr. Haak (Convener), Mr. Pollema, Mr. Goris, Mr. Van Spronsen, Mr. Miller, and Mr. Bilkes.

Advisory Committee 2: To deal with the Constitutional Committee Report and the communication from the Free Church of Scotland (Item 8-1 of the agenda); consisting of Mr. De Jager (Convener), Mr. Flinn, Dr. Gootjes, Mr. Roger, Mr. Den Butter, and Dr. White.

Advisory Committee 3: To deal with the report of the Interim Committee about Regional Conferences (Item 5) and the Proposals of the RCN(lib.) (Item 8-2); consisting of Mr. Galbraith (convener), Mr. John, Dr. Velema, Mr. Macleod, Mr. Radjah, and Mr. Gangar.

21. Withdrawal of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (cf. Article

The Chairman read a letter from the corresponding secretary of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia informing the Conference of their withdrawal. (see *Proceedings*, p. ??.)

The Reformed Churches of The Netherlands (lib.) and the Free Reformed Churches of South Africa expressed their regret about this withdrawal. A motion was moved and adopted to instruct the Interim Committee to formulate an appropriate response expressing regret about this decision and to report to the Conference at its next meeting.

22. Free Church of Scotland Proposal Re. C.W.I.

Dr. Graham explained a proposal from the FCS that the Conference allow a representative from the Christian Witness to Israel to speak to the Conference to explain the work of the C.W.I. This was approved and would be scheduled by the Executive, with up to 30 minutes allotted for this speech.

23. Alternates for the Interim Committee

The Executive proposed that Mr. Van Spronsen and Mr. Bilkes be appointed as alternate members of the Interim Committee. This was adopted.

24. Correspondence from the OPC

Dr. Ward presented the Report of the Advisory Committee Re. “OPC Resolutions.” This Committee made the following recommendations which were acted on as they were presented:

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1. Regarding the letter of the OPC dated June 24, 1997, about their *relationship with the CRCNA*:

That the Conference receive this letter for information, and record its appreciation to the OPC for submitting it.

Adopted.

2. Regarding the letter of the OPC dated June 24, 1997, about *Restructuring “Ecclesiastical Fellowship”*:

That this letter be received with a view to discussion by the Conference.

Adopted

3. Regarding the letter from the OPC dated June 24, 1997, about proposed policies for inter-church relations together with "Document #5" *Biblical Principles of the Unity of the Church*:

a. that the Conference receive with deep appreciation the letter and “Document #5” submitted by the OPC;

b. that a special paper or papers on “Biblical Principles of the Unity of the Church” be prepared for the ICRC 2001 utilizing the material submitted by the OPC, with contributing speeches from both the Presbyterian tradition and the (Continental) Reformed tradition, the speakers to be decided at a later session of this Conference;

c. that the latter part of the letter concerning policy regarding other Churches be referred to Advisory Committee 3 and that this Committee report to a later session of the Conference.

Adopted.

4. Mr. Peterson proposed:

that the letter of the OPC dated June 24, 1997, about Restructuring “Ecclesiastical Fellowship” be resubmitted to the Advisory Committee for a summary report and that the Conference discuss this letter for a period of no more than one hour later on in the Conference.

Adopted

25. Recess

It was decided to enter into recess until 11:00 AM to allow the Committees to work.

26. Advisory Committee 2: Constitutional Revision

Dr. Gootjes introduced the Committee’s report and indicated that the Committee would be presenting its report with a modification to item 3.4.2, but that otherwise the Advisory Committee supported the report. Mr. Gadsby presented the report as printed elsewhere in the *Proceedings*, pp. ??.

1. Report

A motion to receive the report was adopted.

2. Constitutional Revision

Mr. Gadsby moved:

that the Conference adopt the proposed revision to the Constitution.

The recommended revision was amended and adopted by a vote according to delegations in accordance with the constitutional provisions.

The revised article now reads as follows :

1. Those Churches shall be admitted as members:

- a. which faithfully adhere to the Reformed Faith stated in the confessional documents listed in the Basis, and whose confessional standards agree with the said Reformed Faith;*
- b. which have been sponsored by at least two member Churches.*
- c. furnish*
 - i. their confessional standards*
 - ii. their declaratory acts (if applicable)*
 - iii. their form of subscription*

- d. are not members of the World Council of Churches or any other organization whose aims and practices are deemed by the Conference to be in conflict with the Basis.*
- e. are accepted by a two-thirds majority vote of the delegations of the member Churches, every member Church having one vote;*
- 2. Termination of membership shall be by a two-thirds majority vote of the delegations of the member Churches whenever the Conference is of the opinion that a member Church in its doctrine and/or practice is no longer in agreement with the Basis.*

3. Revision of Regulations

3.1 Art. 5: Participants

After some discussion and minor revision of the wording of the Committee's proposal the Conference adopted the proposed change. In accordance with the constitutional provisions, a vote according to delegations was taken and the proposal to change the Regulations was adopted unanimously by the member Churches present.

The revised article now reads as follows:

- 1. The following may take their seats as participants in meetings of the Conference:*
 - a. Voting delegates of the member Churches.*

Each member Church shall be entitled to send two voting delegates to the meeting.

These delegates shall be known as 'Voting Delegates'.
 - b. Advisory delegates of the member Churches.*

Each member Church may appoint two advisors, but they shall have no vote.

These delegates shall be known as 'Advisors'.
- 2. No others shall sit as participants in the meeting unless and until invited by the Conference to participate.*

These include:

 - a. Observer delegates of Churches that have made application for membership in the Conference.*

These delegates shall be known as 'Observers'.

- b. Visiting delegates of Churches which have not yet applied for membership.*

These delegates shall be known as 'Visitors'.

- 3. The Conference may provide a designated area for official Observers and Visitors, to distinguish them from others who may be present to observe the meeting.*

3.2. Art. 7.1.e: Agenda Material

Discussion of the proposed revision took place.

In accordance with the constitutional provisions, a vote according to delegations was taken and the proposal to change the Regulations was adopted unanimously by the member Churches present.

The revised article now reads as follows:

- 1. The Conference shall place on its agenda*
 - e. recommendations from any two member Churches sponsoring a Church that applies for membership.*

27. Closing

The meeting was adjourned for lunch.

Session 5

Afternoon, Friday
October 17, 1997

28. Introduction: the Reformed Churches in South Africa

Mr. Peterson, as acting Chairman, invited Dr. Vorster to introduce the Reformed Churches in South Africa. Dr. Vorster informed the gathering that the RCSA were instituted in 1859 because their forefathers wanted to resist the Arminian influence in the larger Dutch Reformed denomination in South Africa. In 1862 this denomination started a Christian University with various degree-granting programs. This federation has ecumenical ties with members of the ICRC (FCS and the CRCN). The RCSA withdrew from the REC because of its refusal to exercise discipline and are now looking for a new ecumenical body to join. The RCSA is struggling with interracial issues and the support given by the CRCN in these matters has been much appreciated.

29. Paper 2: "Women in Office - Especially about "Deaconesses" by Dr. S.G. Hur

Dr. Soon Gil Hur presented his paper. (See *Proceedings*, pp. ??.)

30. Discussion of Paper 2

Dr. Hur's paper was discussed. The discussion focused on the developing appreciation within the churches of the position of women in the church, the difficulty of determining the precise task of "deaconesses" in the New Testament church if "deaconesses" indeed existed, and the unofficial teaching by women that is recorded for us in Scripture (e.g Acts 18:26).

31. Introduction: the Independent Presbyterian Church of Mexico

A representative of the IPCM introduced his Church. This denomination was instituted in 1947 as a response to Barthian theology taught in the larger Presbyterian Church. This denomination instituted a Seminary in 1948. It has broken fellowship with the Christian Reformed Church and has withdrawn from the REC. The IPCM is in need of reformed literature and assistance for its seminary. They invite members of the ICRC to come and preach the Gospel in Mexico.

32. Further Discussion of Paper 2

Discussion on the paper of Dr. Hur resumed. Points now brought into discussion include the absence of clear post-apostolic sources for the work of women in the early church, the difficulty of determining whether deacons are officers/office-bearers in the church, the ordination of deacons, the implications of a particular culture for determining the structure of the offices within the church, the use of the Old Testament in the issue of women in office, and the uses of the terms "office" and "service".

Dr. Hur was thanked by the acting Chairman, Mr. Peterson, for his presentation.

33. Closing

The session was closed with Mr. Westerink leading in prayer.

Session 6

Evening, Friday
October 17, 1997

34. Opening

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm. After the singing of Ps. 145:1,2,3, the Chairman read Psalm 99.

35. Introduction: the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Cardiff

Mr. C. Richard Holst informed the Conference that the RPCC seceded from the Presbyterian Church of Wales in 1968 mainly because that denomination had forsaken its confessional standards, the Calvinistic Methodist Confession of Faith of 1823. The present church seceded under the leadership of the Rev. D.J. Hooper whose ministry uncovered the doctrine of the covenant. The confession of the RPCC reflects that theology. There are two congregations of 91 and 30 members respectively and a church school which has existed for 23 years. In 1996 the Church was offered a sister-church relationship with RCN(I), to which we are now in the process of responding.

36. Advisory Committee 1 - Mission

Mr. Haak presented the Advisory Committee's report printed below. Mr. Haak added some extensive explanatory comments.

Advisory Committee 1 - Mission

We recommend to the Conference:

1) to continue Mandates 1 and 4 concerning

- a) up to date information regarding mission aid activities of the member Churches, including the needs, vacancies, and opportunities;*
- b) missionary training, including the training of members of the home Churches and reaching an awareness of the missionary dimension of a Christian Church;*
- c) the theory of mission, methodology, strategy, mission literature, etc.;*

In order to execute this mandate we suggest that the Missions Committee:

- publishes a bi-annual mission newsletter with a feature for book reviews and articles on mission;*
- urges the member Churches to cooperate in providing information;*

- ensures that the member Churches do receive the mission newsletter;
 - uses contemporary communication facilities to collect and publish the required information;
 - uses the facilities of equipped institutions and/or organizations of the member Churches e.g. mission offices, IRTT.
- 2) to continue Mandate 2 on regional missionary conferences in Latin-America, Africa, Asia/South Pacific, and Europe, and to investigate the need for a North American missionary conference;

We suggest that the Missions Committee contact the respective delegates during this Conference to appoint a host church to organize the various 1999 conferences.

- 3) to continue Mandate 3 concerning mission to the Jews and to present a paper at the 2001 Conference with a responsive paper on mission to the Jews, not merely restricted to Jews living in the state of Israel but focusing on Jews wherever they live.

We suggest that the Missions Committee contact the respective delegates during this Conference to appoint a host church to organize the various 1999 conferences.

- 4) As members of the new Missions Committee we propose the following names: Mr. Bube, Prof. Boyd, Mr. Haak, Mr. Goris, a Korean representative, Mr. Miller, and Mr. Van Spronsen.

After some discussion it was decided to receive the Missions Committee report. Mr. Haak also gave some further comments on the Missions Committee report.

Further discussion took place. In line with several suggestions from the floor the Committee agreed to revise their recommendation. The following decisions were made:

1. To instruct the Missions Committee to continue their mandate in the light of the Advisory Committee report (printed above). This mandate reads:

1. *to update information from the member Churches regarding missionary activity in general, and also about missionary training and methodology of mission in particular;*
 2. *to ask the respective member Churches to organize four different mission conferences, two years after each ICRC, one in the West (Curacao, Surinam, Brazil, Peru), one in Africa (South-Africa, Ghana, Republic of Congo), one in the East (Japan, Indonesia, Philippines, Taiwan, India, Papua New Guinea), and one in Europe (including Eastern Europe). The reports of these conferences have to be sent at least one and a half years before the next ICRC to the Missions Committee;*
 3. *to ask the Churches which are working among the Jews to contact one another and to send their report to the Missions Committee at least one and a half years before the next ICRC;*
 4. *to inform the member Churches each and every half year about mission work, stating also their needs and strategies, in a newsletter;*
 5. *to send the report to the Corresponding Secretary at least one year before the next ICRC.*
2. That a paper be presented to the 2001 Conference on work among the Jews, not merely restricted to Jews living in the state of Israel but focusing on Jews wherever they live.
 3. That as members of the Missions Committee the Conference appoint Mr. Goris, (Convener), Mr. Bube, Prof. Boyd, Mr. Haak, Mr. Miller, and Mr. Van Spronsen, Dr. K.S. Lee (see Article 92).

37. Letter to Dr. K. Deddens

Upon recommendation of the Executive, the following proposal was made:

That the Conference instruct the Interim Committee to formulate and send an appropriate letter to Dr. Deddens expressing acceptance of his resignation from the Missions Committee with appreciation for all his diligent work in the service of the ICRC and assuring him of the prayer of the Conference on his behalf.

Adopted (see *Proceedings*, p. ??).

38. Closing

After closing announcements and prayer by Mr. Goris the Chairman adjourned the meeting.

Session 7

Morning, Saturday
October 18, 1997

39. Opening

After the singing of Ps. 133:1,2 the Chairman, Dr. Hur, read Psalm 133 and meditated on this Psalm with the following words.

Dear brothers,

We just sang Ps. 133. This is a joyful song. The Psalmist sings about the good and pleasant work of the coming together of the church of Christ. The Psalms 120 through 134 are called "Pilgrim's songs". The Israelites used to live scattered all over the country. But three times in the year they came up to Jerusalem, to the temple, the dwelling place of the Most High, from every corner of the country.

In the time of David, Israelites were still a political unity, not yet divided into two kingdoms. Political unity is good and nice. But David did not sing about this political unity. He sang of the unity for the service of the Lord as one people. The Israelites were the Old Testament Church. A really good and pleasant thing before God is church unity. Unity in faith is the most beautiful thing in the world. When people are united in the same faith, it will be really good and pleasant. We today here see and enjoy its reality.

What, then, binds us together to dwell in the Church of the Lord? Some people today say: it is love. Love can overcome all differences, even differences of doctrine, and binds everyone. No, brothers, that is no good and pleasant dwelling in unity. Unity made by human love is no real unity at all. David here shows us the true nature of dwelling together in the church of the Lord with two similes. The verses. 2 and 3 read: "it is like the precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion." These expressions "running down" and "falling on"; what do they mean, brothers? It is nothing other than this; coming together and dwelling in unity as the Church of the Lord is the Work of the God of Grace from above. The power of gathering and dwelling together comes from God. We also did not come together here on our own initiative and power. The Lord brought us to this place by His Spirit and power. So we confess in Lord's Day 21: The Son of God gathers, defends and preserves a church. Acknowledging this wonderful grace of God in thankfulness, let us continue to do our work today.

40. Dr. Son Yun Jur

The Executive invited Dr. Son Yun Jur, an OPC missionary and Director of the Missionary Training Institute in Seoul to be seated with the delegates. This was approved by general consent.

41. Paper 3: "Biblical Principles for the Relation between Church and State" by Dr. Robert C. Beckett.

Dr. Beckett presented his paper. (See *Proceedings*, pp. ??.)

42. Discussion of Dr. Beckett's Paper

After a coffee break delegates discussed the paper of Dr. Beckett. The discussion focused on the relationship between church and state in a society governed by an anti-christian government, theocratic government in a New Testament era, national covenants with God, and the practices of the member Churches on how they go about exercising their duty towards the civil government.

After this discussion the Chairman thanked Mr. Beckett for his paper and for his answers to the questions.

43. Introductory Comments About Korean Christians

Mr. Peterson introduced the Rev. Mr. John P. Galbraith to present some information about the Christians of Korea. He noted that when, in 1884, the first missionaries came to Korea the Koreans responded quickly to the gospel. In 1906 the Japanese occupied the land but for some time the church continued to flourish. When the Japanese instituted obligatory shrine worship the Korean Christians who insisted that they would worship only the true God refused to submit to shrine worship. When the Rev. Bruce F. Hunt, an Orthodox Presbyterian missionary, and several Korean Christians were being led in chains to be tried in court the streets were lined with Christians shouting "To the end!" Later during the Communist rule Christian elders and ministers were sought out and executed. Many sent their wives and children to the south and the Kosin church started in extreme poverty. Yet these widows would save a few grains of rice each day as offerings to the Lord. It is clear that the Korean Christians have been blessed richly by our Lord.

The Chairman responded by acknowledging that the Korean Christians are indeed thankful to God for what He has given them and thanked Mr. Galbraith for his words.

This introduction to the recent trials and faith of Korean Christians served well to prepare the delegates for worship in the Korean churches the next day.

44. Closing

Dr. Hur read Psalm 100 and expressed the wish that all the delegates might have a blessed Lord's Day. Mr. De Jager lead the delegates in prayer after which the Chairman adjourned the meeting for the night.

Session 8

Morning, Monday
October 20, 1997

45. Opening

After singing all verses of Ps. 23 and reading Ephesians 3:14-21, Dr. Hur spoke the following words on this passage:

Dear brothers,

Christians are a praying people. Prayer is neither meditation nor monologue. We are praying to the living God who is the creator and ruler of heaven and earth. Even the Lord Jesus Christ lived a life of prayer. Before he began His public ministry, he fasted and prayed for forty days. During his earthly life he often sought a quiet place to pray. He even taught his disciples how to pray. This is how we received the Lord's Prayer. His disciples, too, were men of prayer. According to the Scriptures the New Testament Church was born with prayer. Prayer is an indispensable element of our Christian life.

In the letter to the Ephesians we find the apostle Paul time and again praying for the saints. When we read this letter carefully, we find that he first explains the gracious doctrine of salvation and then waters it with prayer. Paul especially prays for the Ephesian saints to grasp the width, length, height, and depth of the love of Christ and to know this love that surpasses all knowledge. The more saints come to know the love of God, the more they grow in faith. And church growth comes from the knowledge of the love of God. Therefore the apostle Paul earnestly prays for them to grasp the love of Christ. Paul's posture for prayer here is very impressive. He kneelt before God the Father. Jews commonly stood during prayer. Kneeling is unusual. This posture shows an exceptional degree of earnestness.

Brothers, in order to grasp the love of God we need earnest prayer for each other. Do we want our church to grow in the love of God more and more? We need earnest prayer for each other. The history of our church here in Korea has taught us that prayer is an indispensable means for church growth. By praying unceasingly we come to know the love of God more and more, and to love God more and more. So the church grows! You must have heard that most of our churches have prayer meetings early in the morning every day at 5.00 or 5.30 am.

Our theological students do it also, at 6am. We do not wish to boast about this practice of ours. We simply thank God who granted us such a practice in our church life.

Let us earnestly pray to God for each other, for the prosperity of the Church of the Lord, and for the coming of His kingdom. The Lord who lives in the highest Heaven hears our prayer!

46. Welcome to Newly Attending Delegates

The Chairman welcomed Mr. L. Kiemlo Pulamte of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North East India Synod, and Mr. G.N. Oragbe of the Church of Christ in Sudan among the Tiv. He also welcomed the ICRC Treasurer, Mr. H.A. Berends.

47. Introduction: Lanka Reformed Church

Mr. Prabhath de Silva introduced his Church, the Lanka Reformed Church. Sri Lanka has a population of 18 million. The LRC was formed in 1996 because of unbiblical ecumenical trends in the Dutch Reformed Church. The DRC is a member of the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka, which in turn is the official representative of the WCC in Sri Lanka. The DRC is also a member of the REC. The LRC strongly believes that the pulpit ought to be protected and protests against the practice in the DRC and to share the pulpit with Pentecostals and Arminians and also against the liberal theological practices of the main line Presbyterian Church of Lanka. The federation comprises 2 congregations, with 33 communicant members and 13 non-communicant. The LRC uses both the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards as expressions of her faith.

48. Advisory Committee 3: Regional Conferences and proposals RCN(I)

Mr. Galbraith read the report of Advisory Committee 3. He added some clarifying comments. The Committee, in spite of the seemingly low level of interest in regional conferences among member churches, believed that such regional conferences could be helpful and urged the member churches to plan such conferences

The first proposal of the Committee is adopted:

That the Conference suggest to the member churches that they keep in mind the benefit of regional conferences on particular, timely topics and plan such conferences when deemed appropriate.

Some delegates expressed their preference to have the ICRC to take on a coordinating function in the organization of such regional conferences.

However, it was noted that the decision of the previous ICRC was made with the intention of leaving the organization of regional conferences up to the individual member churches. The consensus of the Conference was that the ICRC itself will not take the responsibility to initiate such conferences.

49. Closing

After prayer led by Mr. Fangidaie the meeting was adjourned for lunch.

Session 9

Afternoon, Monday
October 20, 1997

50. Opening

After the lunch recess the meeting was reopened with the singing of Ps. 33:1,2,4,5,6.

51. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed the Rev. Hideaki Suzuki of the Reformed Church in Japan.

52. Greetings from the Christian Reformed Church in Myanmar

The Chairman read an excerpt of a fax received from the Christian Reformed Church in Myanmar (Burma). The words of Rev. Moses Ngunhlei Than which were read are as follows:

I would also be grateful if you could kindly convey the URCM's greetings to the Fourth Assembly of the ICRC which is in progress now. It is our wish that God will bless the Assembly's proceedings and deliberations.

53. Introduction: Taiwan Reformed Presbyterian Church

The Rev. Joseph Chien introduced the Taiwan Reformed Presbyterian Church and also the Reformed Theological Seminary serving these churches.

54. Advisory Committee 3: Regional Conferences

Mr. Galbraith was given the floor to present the remaining proposals of this Advisory Committee.

In relation to Regional Mission Conferences the following decision was made:

1. *That the Conference request the Missions Committee to encourage the member churches to hold regional mission conferences and assist the member churches in holding and coordinating such conferences.*

In relation to the cost of such Regional Mission Conferences the meeting discussed the proposal of the Committee and then the following decision was made:

2. *To defer action on this proposal until a later time in this Conference after the Treasurer's Report has been presented.*

Mr. Galbraith presented the second part of the Committee's report regarding improving the Relationship between Member Churches. After discussion of the proposals under this heading the following decision was made:

1. *The ICRC suggests to the member churches that, for the purpose of assisting one another and furthering the unity of the churches, they adopt the following or similar procedure:*

When a matter arises that would affect the relationship of the ICRC member churches to each other, such as a change being contemplated by a church in its doctrinal basis or ethical practices, the church should:

- a) *inform the inter-church relations committee of the member churches concerning the proposal;*
- b) *ask them for the official position of their church on such a matter, for their advice (and/or that of colleagues) with regard to it, and their help in the study of the matter;*
- c) *keep the churches informed on developments in the matter as it is progressively dealt with by the church.*

After discussion about cooperation in evangelization, missions and diaconal assistance the following decision was made:

2. *The ICRC suggests to the churches that they would do well to seek cooperation in areas such as evangelization, missions and diaconal assistance, and to promote contacts and exchanges between institutions for training for the ministry.*

55. ICRC Treasurer's Report

The Chairman invited Mr. H.A. Berends, Treasurer of the ICRC, to give his report. Various questions are answered by the Treasurer relating to the impact of the seven new member churches on the budget, travel expense calculations, what the formula is for calculating the "per member rate", and whether it would be appropriate to have a budget estimating costs through the next conference. The following decision was made:

That the Conference adopt the Treasurer's report with appreciation for Mr. Berends' work in the service of the ICRC.

56. Closing

After prayer by Dr. White, the meeting was recessed for supper.

Session 10

Evening, Monday
October 20, 1997

57. Opening

After singing Ps. 122:1,2,3, the Chairman re-opened the meeting.

58. Welcome

Mr. Yasunori Ichikawa of the Reformed Church in Japan was welcomed by the Chairman.

59. Paper 4: "The Challenge of the Charismatic Movement to the Reformed Tradition" by Dr. R.B. Gaffin Jr. (A)

Dr. Gaffin presented a synopsis of his paper.

60. Introduction: Church of Christ in Sudan among the Tiv

The Chairman asked the Rev. G.N. Oragbe to introduce his Church. The Church of Christ in the Sudan¹ among the Tiv came into being through the mission work of the Dutch Reformed Church in Nigeria and later the

¹ Not the nation but the region south of the Sahara stretching from the west coast of Africa to its east coast.

Christian Reformed Church and is a reformed church subscribing to the Apostle's Creed and the Heidelberg Catechism. Ministers are required to subscribe to the doctrinal standards and must promise not to teach in public or in private anything contrary to these standards. Federatively the Church operates with a synodical system and discipline is exercised by the elders. Presently the church comprises some 215 local churches with a membership of about 130,000. The CCST is a member of the Reformed Ecumenical Council of Nigeria. The Reformed Theological College of Nigeria belongs to the CCST.

61. Paper 4: "The Challenge of the Charismatic Movement to the Reformed Tradition" by Dr. R.B. Gaffin Jr. (B)

Dr. Gaffin presented his paper on "The Challenge of the Charismatic Movement to the Reformed Tradition." It was decided to discuss this paper in the morning session of the following day.

62. Closing

After prayer by Mr. Den Butter, the meeting recessed for the night.

Session 11

Morning, Tuesday

October 21, 1997

63. Opening

After the singing of Ps. 126 and the reading of Ezekiel 37:15-23, the Chairman meditated on Ezekiel 37:19 with the following words:

Dear brothers, delegates,

We are gathered here together as delegates of various reformed and presbyterian churches in the world. In this assembling the unity of the church of the Lord is beautifully manifested. In the world we see many divisions in the church. Division occurs because of our sins. But it is not always evil. Sometimes it occurs for reformation. But however we view it, division cannot be totally avoided in this earthly life. But it is our duty to heal the rifts and to unite into one church. For this we must do our utmost. And so men try to do it. But the work of union is not a work of men. It is a work of God. When God works within us by his Word and we obey his Word, God himself unites us into one church. Division occurs because of the sin of men and disobedience to God. Therefore, for healing men should return to God and obey his Word.

There was a division in the church of Israel. Because of sin the kingdom of Israel was divided into two: the southern kingdom and northern kingdom. But gracious God was pleased to restore them to one kingdom. We see God working for this in chapter 37. In the first part of this chapter we find the resurrection of dry bones. This actually does not signify the resurrection of individuals, but the reformation of the church, Israel. The vision shows the reformation as a fruit of the Word of God, because Ezekiel there fulfils his prophetic calling in the midst of the valley of dry bones. The Lord gives life to the dry bones by his Holy Spirit through the official ministry of his servants.

Further, the prophet observes that the resuscitated people return to the land of their fathers, and in the land the union of Judah and Ephraim takes place, that is, the southern and northern kingdoms. There he unifies his church by the ministry of his prophet, and the union takes place according to his faithfulness to his covenant. Union was again restored by God.

For the union of the churches God the Lord first leads his church through reformation. When the reformation is completed, true unity is achieved. God brings his people together by the way of church reformation. Without returning to God there is no possibility of the unity of the people of God. And the unity of God's people is achieved only by God's blessing. Therefore, the Lord says in verse 19: "They will become one in my hand." Let us thank the Lord, because he brought us here together in unity. Let us also pray that the Lord may work by his Word for reformation within many other churches and bring us into this unity. Amen.

In his opening prayer Dr. Hur thanked the Lord for giving us this unity.

64. Introduction: Reformed Church in Japan

Prof. Ichikawa introduced his church, the Reformed Church in Japan, beginning with a statement of gratitude to God for his mercy since the earthquake three years ago. Most of the churches whose buildings were damaged have been able to be rebuilt. Toward the Second World War there came about a Reformed identity in the Christian church of Japan. Freedom of religion was secured after WWII and the RCJ was founded. In the period that followed the RCJ grew. The RCJ is a member of the REC, but is concerned about the direction it is taking. They request our prayer for wisdom in this matter. Another issue being dealt with is that of women in office which is being studied. "We wish you the Lord's blessing in your meeting," he said.

65. Discussion of Paper 4

Dr. Gaffin's paper was discussed. Points touched on in the discussion included the doubts of those who question the presence of the Spirit within

themselves, the impact of Pentecost on the mission of the church, the working of the Holy Spirit in children, the "already" and the "not yet" of salvation, revivalism, the freedom of the Spirit today in his work, the baptism with the Holy Spirit of which John the Baptist speaks, and the views of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones.

Dr. Hur noted that the charismatic movement is very tempting to churches in Korea which tend to be occupied with growth and expressed his and the Conference's appreciation for the paper.

66. Regional Mission Conferences - Funding

After a break for coffee and, having approved the financial report, the Chairman now called for a vote on the earlier motion regarding the funding for regional mission conferences. The meeting decided:

That the Conference include in its budget an amount of US \$8,000 per year for assistance when necessary, enabling the members to share one another's burdens, and that it be administered by the Missions Committee.

67. Introduction: Christian Witness to Israel

The Rev. John Ross gave a presentation on the Reformed Churches and Jewish mission. He pointed out that mission among the Jews traditionally has had strong support from Reformation churches both among the Presbyterian and continental Reformed church leaders. The Reformed confessions require that the church be a missionary church. This then should be no less true of missions among the Jews. In line with confessional teaching men like Samuel Rutherford, John Owen, and Cotton Mather prayed for the work of mission among the Jews. But this traditional concern should not be understood in terms of modern eschatological categories; there is a difference between the restoration of Israel to their own nation and the conversion of the Jews as a people. The Scottish churches were influenced by the interest of men like Andrew Bonar and R.M. McCheyne. It was the moral obligation of mission rather than a preoccupation with eschatology that moved the Scottish churches to initiate this work. Regardless of our eschatology, we may not ignore this area of mission work. If we do, then we are saying either that the gospel is unworthy of the Jews or that the Jews are unworthy of the gospel. The former is an insult to our Lord, the latter prejudicial to the Jews. Although there are many questions Reformed Christians will want to explore we cannot leave this issue on the back burner. We cannot hold a moratorium until all the questions are resolved. The church has slept for too long. It is time for a Reformed witness to the Jewish people.

68. Approval of Minutes

After some amendments were made, the Minutes of Sessions 1-6 were adopted by the Conference.

69. Closing

After prayer by Mr. M. Flinn, the meeting was recessed for lunch.

Session 12

Afternoon, Tuesday
October 21, 1997

70. Opening

After the singing of Ps 100, the Chairman reopened the meeting and made several announcements about the agenda for Wednesday, October 22.

71. Introduction: Reformed Presbyterian Church North East India Synod

The Rev. L. Kiemlo Pulamte was invited by the Chairman to introduce his Church to the Conference. He indicated that the RPCNEIS began in 1979 and now comprises 7 congregations spanning some 2000 km of region and forming two presbyteries. There are two missionary churches, where the missionaries visit from house to house. The doctrine of the church is based on the Westminster Confession of Faith. The RPCNEIS has a school in Manipul. Mr. Pulamte requested the prayers of the delegates for the work of the RPCNEIS done among widows and orphans.

72. Restructuring Ecclesiastical Fellowship (cf. articles 24, 83)

Discussion revealed that several church delegations appreciated the model for ecclesiastical fellowship which the OPC has been developing. However, there was hesitation about an attempt to build a consensus toward a uniform policy and regulation for ecclesiastical fellowship. After a lengthy discussion and upon motion of Mr. Galbraith the following decision was made:

That this report be sent back to the Committee to report again later on in the Conference.

73. Institute for Reformed Theological Training

Upon a motion by the RCN(I) the following decision was made:

That the Conference give Mr. Haak an opportunity to speak on behalf of the Institute of Reformed Theological Training in a later session of the Conference.

74. Closing

After closing prayer by Mr. Goris, the meeting was recessed for supper.

Session 13

Evening, Tuesday
October 21, 1997

75. Opening

After the singing of "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" the Chairman read Ephesians 6 and reopened the meeting.

76. Introduction: Institute of Reformed Theological Training

The Chairman invited the Rev. C.J. Haak to introduce the IRTT. This institute was set up in 1989 and renamed in 1993 after restructuring. When the Indonesian government made it difficult for church workers to enter Indonesia it was thought feasible to set up an institute for instruction in The Netherlands and have indigenous people study there. Initially the Institute went under the name "Missionary Training Institute" and was later renamed "Institute for Reformed Theological Training".

The Institute is open to the involvement of other member churches of the ICRC. The Institute has recently changed its approach, giving the students problems to solve among themselves. Instead of giving them prepackaged Reformed answers, they are given the Reformed "tools" which enable them to solve their own problems. This will allow the students to practice reformed theology in their own context. The idea is also to invite churches in other countries to participate in the teaching of a course on the field, e.g. in the Philippines.

77. Paper 5: "The Ministry of the Word amongst Asian Religious People" by the Rev. David John

The Rev. David John presented his paper entitled “The Ministry of the World amongst Asian Religious People (Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and Zoroastrians).”

79. Closing

After prayer by Mr. van Veen the meeting was recessed until Thursday morning at 9:00.

Session 14

Morning, Thursday

October 23, 1997

80. Opening

After the singing of "O God, our help in ages past" and the reading of Revelation 2:1-7, the Chairman meditated on the Scripture reading with the following words:

Dear brothers,

In our text we see a true church which is in crisis. The church in Ephesus had the marks of the true church. This church was very sound in doctrine. From the beginning it had excellent preachers. The apostle Paul had established this church during his second missionary journey. On his third missionary journey he stayed there for about three years and laboured night and day with tears (Acts 20:19). Later on Timothy preached there, and the Apostle John had preached there too. No less than two apostles, Paul and John, had preached in Ephesus. Moreover, Timothy and Apollos had been preachers there. Thus this church was flourishing. The congregation could distinguish between apostolic and false teaching. Thus they rejected false apostles and their teaching.

Further, they faithfully exercised discipline. There had been Nicolaitans in their midst. These people were the libertines of the first century. They encouraged people to compromise with the world. They denied a clear distinction between the world and the church. They tried to secularize the church of the Lord. They hated their doctrine and deeds. But the Ephesian saints did not approve of them. The church in Ephesus maintained the marks of the true church: sound doctrine and faithful discipline. What a wonderful church it was!

However, the Lord, who is the head of the church, finds fault with the church of Ephesus. The Lord says: "you have forsaken your first love." This true church had forsaken its first love. What is this first love? It is the love of God revealed in Christ Jesus, which the Holy Spirit kindles in the hearts of saints. When the Ephesians first came to believe in

Jesus Christ by the preaching of the gospel, they burned with zeal to do anything for Christ's sake. Most of that first generation had passed away. A new, younger generation had arisen, and they maintained the pure doctrine and faithful discipline. But they forgot that burning love, that great enthusiasm and devotion. We would call the practice of such a church "dead orthodoxy". The Lord warned this church about dead orthodoxy and urged it to repent. Otherwise the Lord would come and remove its lampstand.

Brothers, delegates, we too are warned today. By God's grace we have maintained the marks of the true church. I trust that the churches which our delegates serve will maintain the pure preaching of the gospel and a faithful discipline in church life. This is beautiful. However, such a faithful church is always in danger of losing its first love.

How could such a faithful church forsake its first love, we may wonder. Yet the history of the Church tells us that this is a sad reality. We must be on the lookout for cold orthodoxy. Should we forsake our first love, sound doctrine and faithful discipline cannot save us. Slowly but surely the spiritual flame will go out and the Lord will remove the lampstand.

We must be sound in biblical doctrines. We must protest against, reject, and fight against false doctrines. We must keep our Christian lives in purity. At the same time, we must also preserve that first love. If there is a burning heart for God, there will also be burning hearts for the communion of saints and the fellowship among the churches. Keeping the first love is the most important thing in our Christian life. In 1 Corinthians 13 we read: "If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing." A church which forsakes its first love and a Christian who forsakes his first love is actually dead. Therefore, let us continually pray for the preservation of pure doctrines and faithful discipline, steeped in that first love. Let us always pray that we may preserve that first love in our Christian life and church life.

81. Introduction: Missionary Training Institute

The Chairman asked Dr. Young J. Son to introduce the Missionary Training Institute to the Conference. The MTI has trained some 600 missionaries who are working in some 60 countries of the world. Dr. Young J. Son emphatically appealed to the delegates to consider coming to lecture at the MTI or to have their churches send men to assist in cross-cultural training. The *lingua franca* is English, so lecturers should manage easily. He recalled the challenge of J.G. Vos who said: "You Koreans only come to get; but why don't the Koreans start giving to the world?" Dr. Son questioned whether he had anything to give. But, while Koreans had some

500 missionaries in the world 30 years ago when Vos made his comment, now there are some 30,000 missionaries.

82. Discussion of Paper 5.

Mr. John's paper was discussed. Points touched on in the discussion include whether the form of Hinduism in India is tolerant or exclusivist, how to evangelize Hindus, how to face the Buddhist-Shintos of Japan where people are philosophically accepting despair and young people are being brainwashed by cultic forms of Buddhism, Hinduism in China as a changing religion, and the need to hold to the gospel without compromising and to meet other religions head on.

The Chairman thanked Mr. John for his paper and for answering the questions.

83. Restructuring Ecclesiastical Fellowship (cf. articles 24 and 72)

After a brief recess for coffee and the singing of "The Lord's My Shepherd", the Advisory Committee proposed that thirty minutes be given for a discussion on the proposals of the OPC. During the discussion several delegates reacted favourably to the proposal of the OPC concerning the structures of ecclesiastical fellowship.

Mr. Ward then resubmitted the Committee's proposal which was adopted as follows:

- 1) We acknowledge that the spiritual unity given to us in Jesus Christ should be manifested visibly whenever and wherever possible.*
- 2) We consider that as members of the ICRC we must aim to assist and encourage and stimulate each other to bear witness in the world to the Lord Jesus Christ by word and deed.*
- 3) We believe that as the member churches bear this witness in word and deed the framing of rules to express developing relationships will come to appropriate expression by the churches involved.*
- 4) We commend the letter of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to the member churches for their attention in ways which seem appropriate in each case.*
- 5) We urge the member churches to be mindful of the diversity of circumstances in the churches and to seek to further relationships with due humility.*

- 6) *We affirm that it is vital that the churches do not lose sight of their absolute dependence upon the Lord of the church: "not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit" says the Lord.*

84. Letter to the FRCA

The Interim Committee presented a draft letter to be sent to the Free Reformed Churches of Australia. This letter was adopted as printed in the *Proceedings*, p. ??.

85. Interim Committee 1997-2001

After some discussion on the task of the Interim Committee in preparation for the ICRC of 2001, the following proposal was adopted:

That the Interim Committee for 1997-2001 be empowered and directed to:

- 1. oversee the practical arrangements for the 2001 meeting; including time and place; consulting with the host church as necessary;*
- 2. formulate and circulate prior to the meeting a draft agenda with main items of each day's business for approval by the meeting;*
- 3. appoint the ICRC auditor in consultation with the Treasurer;*
- 4. appoint advisory committees as deemed necessary in the light on the upcoming business;*
- 5. seek a host church for the ICRC 2005;*
- 6. arrange to distribute all papers to all delegates and observers and make them available to visitors and the press;*
- 7. select topics for papers, speakers and the number of papers which have not been designated by the conference; the paper on "work among the Jews" [Minutes, Article 36] will focus primarily on the biblical/theological issues involved;*
- 8. propose a way or ways of making the conference papers more useful to the member churches and others.*

86. Closing

After prayer by Mr. Gangar the meeting was recessed for lunch.

Session 15

87. Opening

The afternoon session was opened with the singing of “O Worship the King”.

88. Arrangements for ICRC 2001

a) Hosting Church

In fulfilment of Point 5 of the mandate of the Interim Committee (art. 85), the following motion was made and adopted:

That one of the South African churches be asked to host the ICRC for 2005.

b) Policy Proposal for Papers

The following proposal regarding Conference papers was discussed and adopted:

1. *A typed copy of the paper is to be submitted at least six months before the Conference in order that it might be circulated in good time to member churches.*
2. *A copy of the paper on 3 ½” computer disc in common format, clearly marked as to format, is to be submitted with the paper to facilitate printing of the paper.*
3. *Authors are permitted to make appropriate adjustments to the text prior to publication in the Proceedings*
4. *Each paper is preferably to begin with a synopsis of not more than 250 words and be concluded with numbered propositions or conclusions for discussion by the conference.*
5. *The author will be given not more than 30 minutes to give an overview of his paper with a view to maximizing the time available for interaction and discussion.*

c) Proposal for Topics and Speakers

A proposal was made in fulfilment of the decision under Article 24.

It was pointed out that the decision under “b” above takes care of the procedure for approving the speeches.

Suggestions and names were submitted to the Interim Committee for speakers at the next Conference. Among the topics suggested were: Preaching or Reformed Hermeneutics, the Church Growth Movement,

Ecumenicity and Missions, Polygamy in Relation to Baptism and the Lord's Table, the Task of the Church in a Secular Society, and the Challenges of this Age, the Regulative Principle.

89. Budget for 1998 - 2001

Mr. Berends presented the budget (see *Proceedings*, p. ??) and the following decision was made:

To adopt the proposed budget as presented and to give the treasurer the following mandate:

- a) to assess the membership annually according to the established method;*
- b) to collect the funds in equal installments;*
- c) to re-imburse all costs incurred by the Conference;*
- d) to provide the Missions Committee with the budgeted amount as required;*
- e) to submit a financial report to the next Conference; and*
- f) to draw up a budget with the assistance of the Interim Committee for the following Conference.*

90. Press Release

Mr. Gadsby presented the Press Release which was adopted with some amendments (see *Proceedings*, page ??.)

91. Expression of Appreciation

Rev. Smit spoke on behalf of his delegation and also the other delegates expressing appreciation for the leadership of the Chairman and the other officers as well as the host church for all they have done.

92. Mission Committee Appointment

Upon a motion by the Committee the following decision was made:

That Rev. S.C. Lee be appointed in the place of Dr. K.S. Lee to serve on the Mission Committee.

93. Minutes

After some discussion on the minutes the following decision was made:

That the minutes of sessions 7-15 be adopted as issued and amended.

With a view to the minutes of session 16 the following decision was made:

The Executive Committee will approve the minutes of the closing session of the Conference.

94. Closing

After prayer led by Mr. Morrison the meeting was recessed.

Session 16

Evening, Thursday
October 23, 1997

95. Opening

The Chairman invited those present to sing "How Great Thou Art" and led in prayer.

96. Closing Remarks

Dr. Hur addressed the meeting with some closing remarks. He noted that the delegates had worked very hard during the meeting days, no less than 12 hours per day. Attention was drawn to the fact that the ICRC is built on a firm foundation, Christ, who blesses his church in an age of apostasy. This has been seen in the increase of membership of the ICRC, moreover, with the Fourth Assembly the Conference has truly become world-wide. The Chairman expressed the prayer that God might use the Conference for the reformation of the church as she is being attacked by mysticism and pentecostalism. He noted that many topics of varying natures had been discussed by the Conference, and expressed the hope that these discussion may also serve the membership of the member churches.

Dr. Hur then thanked the Seo-Moon church, the staff, the Shalom choir and the kitchen staff for all that they had done. The consistory of the Seo-Moon church and the kitchen staff were presented with tokens of appreciation. Pastor Park of the Seo-Moon Church responded briefly.

Dr. Hur also thanked those who kept the building clean, to the members of the executive committee, the treasurer, Mr. Berends, and the computer technician, Mr. Janssen.

97. Appreciation

On behalf of the Conference, the vice-chairman, Mr. J.J. Peterson, spoke the following words of gratitude:

Mr. Chairman:

It is my responsibility and joyful privilege to express on behalf of the conference our thanks to you and to the Presbyterian Church of Korea/Kosin

Thank you for the arrangements that have been made to make us feel at home in Korea. From being met at the airport and at the bus at the Lotte Hotel, being welcomed here at Seo-Moon on our arrival; for the inspiring worship service with which we began; for the most helpful staff that has met our every need - for the marvelous facilities that are here in this building. You have set a high standard for hosting the conference.

Special thanks for introducing us to the food of Korea - for the many long hours that our sisters spent in preparing the food, and in setting it on the tables in an attractive way and in serving us with a smile - many will go home with extra pounds to shed because we ate so well.

We give thanks to God for the Seo-Moon Congregation and Pastor Park, the consistory, and the staff here. We experienced the fellowship of the saints in a wonderful way - our brothers and sisters in the Lord here in Korea - we have felt at home - a foretaste of the fellowship which we will experience in full, in glory, when we will be with our Lord and with the saints from every nation and tribe and language and people - we have had a taste of that here - and we say: 'Thank you Lord for your covenant people here in Korea; thank you for the privilege of meeting them and worshipping with them and working with them in the cause of your kingdom.'

Thank you for the tour of yesterday - especially to share with you the new facilities of the theological seminary as they are being constructed. What a marvelous place it will be to prepare for the proclamation of the gospel of grace.

And finally, thanks to you, brother Hur, for your leadership of the meetings. You have adjusted to a western-style of meeting. You have helped us finish the agenda, and you have done it with a warmth and a smile that has shown us your love for the Lord and for his church and for his people.

This has been a wonderful conference. We will not forget Korea and we will not forget the Kosin Church.

And we all say thank you.

98. Closing Devotion

Dr. Hur read John 17:1a,13-19. After this the delegates sang "When Zion's captives GOD brought back" in three parts. Dr. Hur then meditated on the Scripture passage with the following words:

Dear brothers and sisters,

The time for this Assembly to close has now come. In closing this meeting I would like to give attention to our Lord's highpriestly prayer. He offered this prayer when his death on the cross was close. His heart was filled with tender love for his disciples and his people for whom he came into the world. Thus he offered this prayer for them.

We also pray. However, there is a difference between our prayer and his prayer. Our prayer may not always be in harmony with the will of God in its motive and contents, and it may not always be heard. But Christ's prayer was always in harmony with God's will. His prayer is always heard. And so he once prayed: "Father, I thank you that you have heard me, I know that you always hear me." (John 11:41,42).

Verse 15 indicates that the Lord prayed to the Father to protect his people from the evil one. From verse 19 we know that he prayed not only for his disciples but also "for those who will believe in me through their message." The Lord was in fact praying for his whole church, the church of the present and the future. And his prayer is always heard. He is the living Lord, an eternal highpriest. Even now he prays in heaven for his church on earth. His prayer continues, and continues to be heard. He prayed for us too: "Protect them from the evil one." This prayer is heard, we are kept from the evil one.

Dear brothers, we pray to God the Father. But we always need our Lord's prayer and his intercession. Why do we need his prayer and intercession? Because we are living in the world. The world is always hostile to the church. The Lord knew this, and said in verse 13: "the world has hated them." The world hates Christians, the church of the Lord. The word "world" here does not indicate the material world, but the sphere of unbelief. The world which is under the control of the evil one hates the church, the people of God. That's how it was in the past. That's how it still is. And that's how it will be in the future too.

Why does the world hate the church? It hates the church because she is not of the world and the people of God are no friends of the world. Christ says in verse 14: "I have given them your word and the world has hated them." The Lord gave His words to the church. That is why the world hates God's people. For the word of God has power unto a new creation. It brings people to a new birth. God's people are new creatures, a new race. They are distinguished from the world. Were they friends with the world before, they are now no longer of the world, nor its friends. They are citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Hence the world hates God's people. Hence it hates the church.

Brothers, the world hates God's people. It still hates the church. The world hates the church, because the church loves the word that brings forth a new birth and gave a new hope. Note that "world" does not only indicate the world of the evil one, but also the world of the apostate and unfaithful church which has left the word of God. The apostate church and its groups also hate the faithful church. Hence the people of God live as aliens in the world.

Brothers, how can we, then, live a victorious life in this world? We are weak and powerless men. How can we live a victorious life? We have our Lord, the head and king of the church in heaven. He knows our weakness, our difficulties, and our struggles. When he was on earth, he too suffered the hatred of the world. He once said: "the world hates you; you know that it hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18). He knows that the world hates his church on earth. However, he did not pray that his people might be taken out of the world. We hear him saying: "my prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one (17:15)."

Why did he pray in this way? Didn't he love his church? Christ did love his church. He did not pray that his people might be taken out of the world because they must be in the world to witness and serve for the upbuilding of his church. Jesus Christ himself came into this hostile world that he might serve the will of God the Father. He came into the world to shine as a light in the darkness. Our Lord Jesus Christ wants his people to stay in the world in order to shine as a light in this dark world and to witness of the way of salvation according to his word.

Brothers, you may experience many difficulties. You may be persecuted in order to live and work faithfully for the sake of the church in your country. Let us not lose courage. The Lord Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Our Lord, our intercessor is praying to the Father for us, his church. He does not pray that you might be taken out of the world, for your task is in the world. You are placed as a light in this world, as witnesses in the many countries of this world, in Asia, Europe, Africa, North and South America, Australasia. Our Lord is pleased to use the service of men for the sake of the upbuilding of his church in this world.

Our Lord has not finished praying. He still prays, prays that his people, his church, might be kept from the evil one. In Christ's intercessory prayer we have a firm ground for our confidence, courage, and comfort. Trusting him let us go out into the fields of our ministry, and after fruitful work let us gather together again in the United States of America in 2001 where our Fifth Conference, Deo Volento, will be held. Amen.

Dr. Hur led in prayer. The delegates sang "A Mighty Fortress is our God" standing, and the Chairman blessed the brothers.