

Synodical Interim Committee

The Synodical Interim Committee is made up of the members of the moderamen of the previous synod. In this last inter-synodical period (2008-2011) they were Rev. Bruce Hoyt (moderator), Rev. Peter Kloosterman (vice-moderator), Elder Pieter van der Wel (first clerk) and Rev. Michael Willemse (second clerk).

We have sought to follow the synodical rules for our committee (see Office Bearers Handbook, p. 2-19) and in keeping with the RCNZ's understanding of our church order and church government have sought to keep our role to a minimum.

General Correspondence

The following matters were dealt with in various letters received and despatched.

- During 2012 and early in 2013 there have been a number of letters from and to the Pastoral Care Committee (PCC) as well as correspondence with the churches of the Wellington Presbytery about the work of the PCC.
- In 2013 the Synodical Archives were moved from Palmerston North to Hastings and since the death of our brother Roy Nugteren, Leen Vandenberg has been acting archivist. The current storage facility is adequate but we may have to look at a better (custom built) facility for the long term future.
- In response to an inquiry about the "*Calculation and Application of Quota* for the Emeritus Fund for the years ending 2012, 2013 and 2014" the Emeritus Fund sought inter-synodical approval to continue their current practice and this was given. The Emeritus Fund will follow up on this matter in their report to synod.
- During the inter-synodical period the Interchurch Relations Committee requested and was given approval to use excess funds that had been allocated to other purposes in the IRC budget for the committee to travel to Australia in November 2013 to meet with the Deputies of the Christian Reformed Churches (CRCA), the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) and the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia (PRCA).
- The IRC also sought and was given approval from the SIC to send a fraternal delegate to the 2014 Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKv) so that our churches could in person express our concerns about the direction these churches are taking, especially with regard to hermeneutics.
- Some churches sought advice about the need for the RCNZ to have a formal, written position statement against gay marriage. The SIC advised that there are various policies included in the legislation that make this unnecessary. This advice was circulated to the churches in a letter dated 15th July 2013.

Moreover, as a result of another inquiry in this regard, it was also pointed out that the RCNZ has an official position on **marriage** [WCF ch.24, our form for Marriage, CO Art. 65, Church Visitation Questionnaire Q 27a and the *Statement on Divorce and Remarriage* (OBH 5-37)] which, the SIC believes, makes it unnecessary to formulate a formal written position statement against gay marriage.

Synodical Decisions

In addition to advice given in the correspondence referred to above the SIC was asked for advice with regard to:

- The inclusion of the creeds in the hymnbook and their placement.

The SIC advised the *Psalm & Hymn Selection Committee* and the *Committee to Update Forms and Confessions* that in view of synodical decisions with regard to the publication of the new hymnbook, on the grounds given, it was not inappropriate to publish the confessions and the forms in a separate book.

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- The *Psalm & Hymn Selection Committee* and the *Committee to Update Forms and Confessions* also sought advice about the interpretation of Acts 2011 Art.124.8 which reads as follows:

"That the Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed, Question and Answer 1 of the Heidelberg Catechism, and the two versions of the Lord's Prayer, be printed on the inside covers of Sing to the Lord"

The committees considered that it would be appropriate and desirable to include the Athanasian Creed with the other documents referred to in Art. 124.8. However, this would make it necessary to print these, together with the Athanasian Creed, several pages into the beginning of the hymnal.

Concern was expressed that in making the proposal

- a. To include the Athanasian Creed
- b. Not to print these liturgical aids on the inside covers, but several pages into the beginning of the hymnal;

the committees have arbitrarily ignored or overridden Synod's decisions, and that this action undermines the principle of the authority of Synodical decisions.

After careful consideration the SIC advised that in taking this course of action (items a. and b. above) the committees have not substituted their own opinions for synodical decisions, but acted appropriately given the practical considerations that faced them in carrying out their mandate. Synod had not considered the possibility that only two of our three creeds might appear in *Sing to the Lord* or what this might imply about the status of the Athanasian Creed. In addressing this, we believe that the committees have honoured the intent of the Synodical decisions.

- The inclusion of the cost of the folders for the new OBH in Synod's decision to reprint:

The SIC advised the Stated Clerk that in view of the synodical decisions in this matter the cost of the folders could be included in the overall cost of reprinting the OBH so that these will be supplied to the churches at no extra cost.

Changes to committees

- The position of Synodical Archivist has been vacant since brother Roy Nugteren passed away on 8 June 2013. Inquiries were made with the Hastings session if they were able to put someone forward from the Hastings congregation but so far no name has been put forward. In the interim Leen Vandenberg is looking after the archives.
- Due to the departure of Rev. Andrew Nugteren to CRC Toowoomba in April 2013 a vacancy arose on the Emeritus Fund. Rev. Michael Willemse took his place.
- Early in 2014 Mr. John Holtslag indicated to the SIC that he wanted to resign as editor of the denominational yearbook. He proposed that Miss Kathryn Kleinjan (from Silverstream) take over this task after the completion of the 2014 Yearbook. The report of the National Publications Committee will recommend accordingly.
- Mrs. Alice Saathof has taken over from Mr. Leen Amersfoort as treasurer of the RTC and Student Assistance Committee.

Advice given and correspondence on other minor matters has not been included.

Recommendation

That Synod endorse the actions and advice of the SIC.

Submitted by Synodical Interim Committee

Rev. Bruce Hoyt (convenor)

Rev. Peter Kloosterman

Elder Pieter van der Wel (reporter)

Rev. Michael Willemse

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