

Overture from the South Island Presbytery Opening of Synod 2017

The South Island Presbytery respectfully overtures Synod 2017 as follows:

That Synod 2017 begins with a thanksgiving conference to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.”

Grounds

This is a significant anniversary in the life of churches formed in response to the reformation and one worthy of celebration.

What do we have to give thanks for?

1. A thanksgiving conference can highlight the common core beliefs of the Reformation held by the RCNZ such as, Christ alone, Faith alone, Grace alone, Scripture alone to the Glory of God alone.
2. A thanksgiving conference can emphasise the reformers' conviction on the centrality of the scriptures.
3. A thanksgiving conference can express gratitude for the birth of the reformed confessions.
4. A thanksgiving conference can gratefully recall why the RCNZ began in New Zealand over 60 years ago.
5. A thanksgiving conference can remind the RCNZ that the reformation is not over, but continues today.
6. A thanksgiving conference about the blessings of being a reformed church can set an appropriate positive disposition for the upcoming Synod.

Possible Conference Theme

The Blessing of the Reformation for the RCNZ: Then, Now and in the Future.

Possible Conference Programme

Friday Night

Session 1: Unity in the Gospel - Highlighting RCNZ's History.

Saturday Morning

Session 2: The Blessing of the Reformation: Then

Session 3: The Blessing of the Reformation: Now

Overture 4 Opening of Synod 2017

Saturday Afternoon

Panel with Questions from those in attendance.

Synod meets to check credentials and elect moderamen, etc.

Saturday Evening

Session 4: The Blessing of the Reformation: In the Future (prayer service)

Speakers

The speakers may include a mix of RCNZ and overseas delegates.

Background Material to Developing the Conference Theme

“Are we now, at this time the kind of true and faithful church our migrant fathers looked for in the fifties? Would they have joined the Reformed Churches of New Zealand of 1993 if they had existed in that form in 1953?”

From Trust and Obey. A forty year history of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand 1953 - 1993. Chapter 35 “The Great Commission and the Home Front” by Rev John Goris

“This book is dedicated to those of the first generation of pioneers who came here with forty dollars in their wallets and purses, found enough work for their hands but so little spiritual food for their souls.

In their poverty they sacrificially gave their all to the establishment of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand and gladly did so to the honour and glory of God and the preservation of their Reformed Heritage, not only for themselves, but for their children and their children’s children.”

From Trust and Obey. A forty year history of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand 1953 - 1993. The Dedication

“Why did we establish the Reformed Churches in this land? For the following good reasons, some of which may not have been fully thought out and appreciated at that time, but are all the more meaningful now almost forty years later:

1. For God’s glory.
2. To establish true and faithful churches, as defined by the word of God.
3. To preserve the faith of our Fathers, as summarised in our Reformed Creeds and Confessions.
4. To ensure that we were nurtured, and thus sustained by faithful preaching.
5. To ensure, by the grace of God, that the generations after us, could enjoy and benefit from the sound preaching of God’s Word.”

From Trust and Obey. A forty year history of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand 1953 - 1993. Chapter 40 “Why Did We Establish The Reformed Churches? By D.G. VanderPyl

Respectfully submitted,

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South Island Presbytery