

EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF
**REFORMED
CHURCHES**

De Glind, Amersfoort, 2016

SESSION 1

TUESDAY AFTERNOON 24 MAY, 2016

1. OPENING





The sixth European Conference of Reformed Churches at De Glind, near Amersfoort, in the Netherlands, was opened by Chairman, Rev. Jos Colijn (at 15:00).





Singing: Psalm 100.

Chairman's opening remarks.

We feel blessed to welcome 60 people from 20 countries. Those who are new will have the opportunity to introduce their churches. We call ourselves conservative, and that speaks about what we want to keep. But we need to focus on what we can give to Europe, i.e. biblical answers to actual questions, a living witness to the risen Lord Jesus Christ, our King in heaven. In Europe today, few people believe in a personal God. The number of Muslims is rising. Missionaries are now coming to Europe from such places as Africa and South America to evangelize the 'Old World'. But before we can give, we must first receive, and that brings us to the subject for this conference: the sacraments as means of grace. This takes us back to our roots, our communion with Christ, our identity in him. We can give only as we depend on our triune God. At this conference, we have the encouragement of meeting old friends and new. But we are sent here by churches and we must ask how we can be more effective in communicating with our churches. How can our churches benefit from our meeting? How can we encourage local churches and our youth to connect with one another?

2. VOTING AND ADVISORY DELEGATES REPRESENTING MEMBER CHURCHES

	ABBR.	CHURCH NAME	REPRESENTATIVES
	CRC	Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands <i>Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerken</i>	Rev. Wim Wullschleger (v) Rev. Rik Bikker (v) Rev. William Middelkoop Rev. Han Schenau Rev. Laurens-Alexander den Butter
	EPCI	Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland	Rev. Andrew Lucas (v)
	EPCEW	Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales (also in Sweden)	Rev. David Pfeiffer (v) Rev. Joshua Rieger (v) Rev. Dr Peter Naylor Rev. Dr William Schweitzer Rev. Chris Kavanagh Rev. David Bergmark
	FCS	Free Church of Scotland	Rev. David Miller (v)

	ABBR.	CHURCH NAME	REPRESENTATIVES
	FCSC	Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)	Rev. Donald John Morrison (v)
	RCN	Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated) <i>Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederlands (vrijgemaakt)</i>	Rev. Lucius de Graaff (v) Rev. Roland Schipper (v) Rev. Jos Colijn Rev. Albert Feijen Rev. Jan-Matthijs van Leeuwen Rev. Piet Meijer
	RCS	Reformed Churches of Spain	Rev. Manuel López Franco (v)
	RPCI	Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland	Prof. David McKay (v) Rev. Mark Loughridge (v) Prof. Robert McCollum

3. THE COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONFERENCE:

Members of the organizing committee:

Rev. Jos Colijn, chairman (RCN)

Rev. David Miller (FCS)

Rev. Andrew Lucas (EPCI)

Prof. David McKay (RPCI)

Also serving the conference:

Rev. Lucius de Graaff, treasurer (RCN)

Rev. Dr Peter J. Naylor, recording secretary (EPCEW)

Administration:

Mrs Anja Mijneer and Mrs Joke de Haan (RCN, BBK)

4. OBSERVERS REPRESENTING NON-MEMBER CHURCHES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

	COUNTRY	CHURCH OR ORGANIZATION	NAME
	Albania	Illyricum Movement	Rev. Eduard Demo
	Croatia	Protestanska Reformirana Krcanska Ckrva	Rev. Almir Pehlic
	France	Foy et Vie Reformé	Rev. Eric Kayayan
	Germany	Reformed Theological Seminary in Heidelberg Presbyterian Church of America	Rev. Dr Victor d'Assonville Rev. Stephen Spanjer
	Latvia	Evangelical Reformed Church of Latvia	Rev. Artis Celmins
	Lithuania	Evangelical Reformed Church of Lithuania – AK Evangelical Reformed Church of Lithuania – UL	Dr Jonas Ziauka, Rev. Rimas Mikalauskas

COUNTRY	CHURCH OR ORGANIZATION	NAME
	Netherlands Netherlands Reformed Church	Rev. Peter G. Sinia
	Poland Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, World Witness	Rev. Dariusz Bryćko, Mr Flip Sylwestrowicz
	Romania Presbyterian Church Mangalia, Romania Presbyterian Church of Brazil (mission in Romania)	Rev. Stefan Daniel Rev. Ronaldo Andre Rev. Geison Pimentel
	Russia Evangelical Reformed Church of Russia Presbyterian Churches in Russia	Rev. Valerian Ten Rev. Ernst Toerien Rev. Vladimir Li, Dr Soon Cheol Ahn
	Scotland Associated Presbyterian Churches, Scotland	Rev. Laurence MacKenzie
	Spain Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church	Rev. Mark Witte
	Switzerland & Austria Evangelical Reformed Church Westminster Confession, Austria and Switzerland	Rev. Kurt Vetterli
	Turkey Reformed Church in Turkey	Rev. Fikret Böcek
	Ukraine Evangelical Reformed Seminary in Ukraine Ukrainian Evangelical Reformed Church	Rev. Clay Quarterman Rev. Wasja Pylypenko Rev. Viacheslav Murza Rev. Atilla Pal
	USA Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church Orthodox Presbyterian Church Reformed Church of America	Rev. Lee Shelnett Mr Mark Bube Rev. Johnny Alicia-Baez

5. OPENING DEVOTIONS (STEPHEN SPANJER)

Prayer.

Reading: Romans 2: 5-11.

Remarks: What helps soldiers in the fight? 1. Remember the glorious cause for which you fight; 2. Know that your sacrifice and wounds have significance, a badge of honour, and proof of our part in the battle. We serve a glorious captain, Jesus Christ, and we share in his great victory. (Quote from Henry V, the St Crispin's Day speech on the eve of the battle of Agincourt: 'He which hath no stomach for this fight, let him depart etc.').

Prayer.

Singing: The Church's one foundation (verse 1 and verse 5).

The Chairman thanked Mrs Anja Mijnheer for her work in preparing the material for the conference.

Break

6. PRESENTATIONS

6.1 Rev. Han Schenau: for the ICRC's committee for regional conferences

Greetings from the ICRC 2013 (in Cardiff, Wales) which instituted a committee for regional conferences.

The Chairman asked for the conference's greetings to be conveyed to the ICRC in 2017.

6.2 Rev. Bill Schweitzer: the website www.eucrc.org

Our website is a 'wiki': each one of us can contribute relevant content. Contact Bill Schweitzer or Andrew Haylett.

6.3 Rev. Eric Kayayan

Rev. Kayayan introduced his work in France (Foi et Fie Reformée). They hope to translate some of the works of Herman Dooyeweerd from Dutch into French. Request: for a good translator.

6.4 Rev. Fikret Böcet

Greetings from the Protestant Church in Smyrna (Izmir). We have three Reformed Churches: in Ankara, Antalya and Izmir. We subscribe to the Westminster Standards; and we have the Three Forms of Unity in Turkish.

6.5 Dr Victor d'Assonville

A South African missionary sent to Germany. (Two years ago, I fell ill and could not be in Cardiff. Thank you for your prayers.) Germany is a big mission field. We have a seminary in Heidelberg.

6.6 Dr Dariusz Bryćko, Poland

Church planting in Warsaw, Poland. Filip Sylwestrowicz is studying at Canadian Reformed Seminary in Hamilton, Canada. We feel isolated in Poland. Our aims: to publish Reformed literature and plant a congregation.

6.7 Rev. Ernst Toerien, Siberia, Russia

In Russia, the Reformed churches have been infiltrated by Federal Vision. Need to lay a sound foundation.

6.8 Rev. Almir Pehlic, Croatia

Greetings from Bishop Jasmin Milic. Part of the Reformed Episcopal Church, church planting among the poor who are not wanted in society.

6.9 Rev. Jonas Ziauka, Lithuania

6.10 Rev. Clay Quarterman, Seminary in Kiev, Ukraine

Seminary began in 2000. We also have a Russian language website. We produce a journal.

6.11 Closing (Chairman)

Prayer.

Singing: To God be the glory

17:15

EuCRC 201



6 - De Glind



SESSION 2

TUESDAY EVENING 24 MAY, 2016

7. OPENING

19:00

Singing: 'Jesus shall reign wherever the sun'.

8. PAPER 1. 'THE LORD'S SUPPER AS A MEANS OF GRACE', DR EGBERT BRINK.

Dr Brink presented his paper, arguing that the Holy Supper has many aspects (is multi-faceted) and this should correct our one-sided thinking.



The Chairman thanked Dr Brink for his paper.

Break.

9. PLENARY DISCUSSION

- a) Punishment (1 Cor. 11: 30). Should we be afraid?
- b) Why is it called 'means of grace'? (Passover also as grace, the blood over the door.) The Lord eats with his disciples, he takes the sin of those with whom he eats, and he takes them into his community: this is not earned but received.
- c) Lev. 7: 26-27 commands that we eat no blood. Why do we 'eat blood' in this ceremony?
- d) Is John 6 Eucharistic? The early church fathers based their teaching of the mystical presence of Christ in the Supper on this text. Here Jesus speaks of his flesh. Does that mean more than his body (Calvin referred to this in his discussions with Luther and Zwingli).
- e) Should we celebrate every Sunday? How to combat the danger of ritual formalism? Since the Supper has many facets, vary the focus each time. It is more than a sign; it is a way in which Jesus brings grace into our lives. The grace is in the relationship. We do not look at what the minister is doing (the sign) but to the Lord in heaven.
- f) Should we have communion on Good Friday? We may, but it is not a good idea because we should not think of Good Friday apart from the resurrection. The Lord's Supper is not a funeral.
- g) Preparation for the Lord's Supper? Self-examination is introspective. Preparation should be Christocentric: focus on the greatness of his redemption and on his faithfulness and glory. Humble ourselves before the Lord.
- h) Form of celebration: sitting at a table, walking up to the front, sitting in a circle, as in Africa. Varying the form can help us not to ritualize.
- i) If a person realizes that his relationship with his neighbor is broken, should he not eat and drink?
- j) Acts 27: 35 – was that Lord's Supper? Exegetically difficult.

10. CLOSING DEVOTIONS (REV. FIKRET BÖCET)

Reading: Exod. 17: 1-7.

Remarks: Israel was delivered but they then rebelled. Allegorical interpretation: the rock is Christ, the striking of the rock is the crucifixion, and the water is the Holy Spirit.

Prayer: Mark Bube.

Singing: Psalm 96 (page 8)

Close 21:25

SESSION 3

WEDNESDAY MORNING 25 MAY, 2016

11. OPENING WORSHIP (WASYL PYLYPENKO AND SLAVIK MURZA)

Reading: 1 Cor. 1: 18-31.

Remarks: God chose the foolish, weak things of the world, that no flesh should have the glory.

Prayer.

Singing: 'Holy, holy, holy'.

12. PAPER 2. 'CHILDREN AT THE TABLE: A SUMMARY CRITIQUE OF PAEDO-COMMUNION' REV. DR WILLIAM SCHWEITZER



Dr William Schweitzer presented his paper.

13. GROUP DISCUSSION

14. PLENARY DISCUSSION

14.1 Group 1 (Rev. Clay Quarterman).

Rev. Sinia advocated paedocommunion, on the basis of the covenant membership of infants.

Dr Schweitzer responded: What grace is in the Supper without faith? Scripture speaks clearly that discernment is required (1 Cor. 11).

Rev. Sinia: How is that different from the Baptists' approach to baptism, based on Acts 2, where faith precedes?

Dr Schweitzer: the two passages in question are dissimilar: Acts 2 does not purport to deal with baptism as a subject whereas 1 Cor. 11 does deal with participation in the Lord's Supper.

14.2 Group 2 (Rev. Lucius d Graaff, Rev. Han Schenau)

N. T. Wright is very popular in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. Could Dr Schweitzer say more about his views?

Dr Schweitzer: N. T. Wright has a broad ecumenical agenda, and the Reformed doctrine of Justification is an obstacle to that agenda. To get around that obstacle, N. T. Wright imposes on the text a different context and the problem disappears. Federal vision men love N. T. Wright. Contextual hermeneutic is a dangerous tool: it undermines the whole protestant reformation. We should have a positive attitude towards children. How should we express this in the services? Suffer the children to come. We are not forbidding them; we issue the gospel call. If they respond to the call to believe then they are welcome to the table.

14.3 Group 3 (Rev. Almir Pehlic)

Age of accountability? Why is age so important?

Dr Schweitzer: If we are raising the age to 18 we are creating a problem. If a younger child is able to remember, discern, and examine himself, and he believes, he is welcome. We should be ready to admit young children. What does it mean to belong to a church? (Not just knowing, it is experiencing.) There is a difference in approach between the Continental Reformed and the Presbyterians: the former require knowledge of the Catechism; the latter do not. The table is as open as heaven is.

What about people with Alzheimer's?

Dr Schweitzer: If a person is unable to see in the Lord's Supper anything more than a snack, then they should not come to the table.

Reply to Dr Schweitzer: The case of handicapped people. We should be careful not to confuse the medical and the spiritual. If someone has been a spiritual member, it would not be right to speak about him becoming as an infant again. We must be very careful in the area not to excommunicate; we must not seem to discipline such cases.

14.4 Group 4 (Rev. Chris Kavanagh)

The Eastern Orthodox Church does not require a profession of faith at all. Not all CREC churches (in the USA) embrace Federal Vision. Some churches in Europe are entertaining this without Federal Vision influence; it is spontaneous.

Can something formalized be made available?

Dr Schweitzer: Paedo-communion represents sacramental theology. In Federal Vision, no distinction is made between visible and invisible church. Grace is seen as being apart from conscious faith.

The Chairman thanked Dr Schweitzer.

Singing: 'All creatures of our God and King'.

Prayer.

15. BUSINESS MEETING

Member churches' voting delegates met for a business meeting.

Closed at lunchtime.

Afternoon sightseeing.

Evening singing session with the RCN congregation in Barneveld.

SESSION 4

THURSDAY MORNING 26 MAY, 2016

15. OPENING DEVOTIONS (REV. ERIC KAYAYAN)

Singing: Thine be the glory.

Reading: Isaiah 19: 16-25.

Remarks: Isaiah takes us from a low note of curse and fear to a high point of glory, reconciliation, and peace. It will happen 'in that day'. When is that day, and how is such a change possible? These words were written just before Sennacherib's attack on Jerusalem. Mighty powers were in a struggle, much as we see today in that same area. The Assyrian empire would disappear for ever (battles fought 609 BC Megiddo and 605 BC Carchemish). Is this what Isaiah sees? No. The LORD of hosts alone could achieve such a great change: at Pentecost (Acts 2): they were there from Mesopotamia and Egypt. And we today are included.

Prayer.

16. PAPER 3. 'INFANT BAPTISM AS A MEANS OF GRACE', PROF. ROBERT MCCOLLUM



Prof. McCollum presented his paper.

17. DISCUSSION

17.1 Group 4 (Rev. Chris Kavanagh)

Q. About the congregational promise: What happens when a child leaves that congregation in the ordinary course of events? Can the duty be transferred to the next congregation?

Prof. McCollum: It is already an obligation in Scripture. Practically, I am not sure that

the elders can lay it on the other congregation. That congregation should automatically recognize its responsibility whether it has made vows or not.

Q. If parents are not Christians but have acted out of tradition is infant baptism still a means of grace?

Prof. McCollum: Many ask, 'Was my baptism valid if my parents were not born again?' I usually answer that in God's providence it has happened. We cannot go back into history and peer into the parents' hearts. If they did not honour their promises, there are other gracious factors at work, e.g. elders, or the congregation.

17.2 Group 3 (Rev. Almir Pehlic)

Q. Is Orthodox /Romish baptism valid in a Reformed Church? Yes, since it is Trinitarian, or no, as they are they are not Bible believing churches?

Prof. McCollum: We must assess a church's claim by its official position. The Council of Trent anathematized the Reformed. Anglicans have the Thirty-Nine Articles which are a Reformed statement.

17.3 Group 2 (Rev. David Bergmark)

Q. Is baptism a means of grace for the child at the point of baptism?

Prof. McCollum: It is difficult to answer exegetically apart from Mark 10:14. But a child is not just an object. As in the Lord's Supper, we can say that the Lord was there. I would hate to rule out the mystery. It may be that the Lord regenerates the child at that moment. We may not be able to analyze this and write a paper on it.

Q. In the Netherlands, sometimes young people go to another church and are re-baptized, and then later they come back. How should we deal with them when they have done it? Was it Ignorance, deliberate...?

Prof. McCollum: What they did was wrong. Maybe the congregation or parents were at fault. A lot of teaching is needed. Be gracious, open. But when they return, discipline may require a time of waiting; they made a hasty decision before; so it might be appropriate to review their desire in 6 months. The discipline of waiting tests their resolve.

17.4 Group 1 (Rev. Clay Quarterman)

Q. Is it the case that Infant regeneration is not tied to the time of baptism?

Prof. McCollum: John 3 shows that the Spirit is sovereign, but his coming is not dependent on understanding. It can be the case in people who are mentally disabled, or children that die in infancy.

Q. Are all children who die in infancy saved?

Prof. McCollum: I do not subscribe to that. The Westminster standards say that 'elect' infants dying in infancy are saved. We must hold onto the covenant.

The Chairman thanked Prof. McCollum.

12:07

Reconvene at 15:00

SESSION 5

THURSDAY AFTERNOON, 26 MAY, 2016

18. PRESENTATIONS

18.1 Missions

a) Mr Mark Bube. Greetings from ICRC Missions Committee. The committee constantly looks for ways to work together. Every 4 years (Jan 2017), we send out a survey form to ascertain where we are all working (not online for security reasons). We try to identify one person in each church willing to serve as a contact point.

b) Rev. David Miller. Map projected showing church planting in Europe. It is up to you what you do with this information. Aim: to put this on the website. I need a nominee from each of the member churches, to whom I can send a link for editing. Visit these works. Keep it up-to-date. See the gaps, the need.

c) Rev. Jan-Matthijs van Leeuwen, DVN, RCN. We are working with 69 partner organizations (churches, other bodies, theological institutes) in 39 countries. We define mission as proclaiming the gospel in words and deeds – holistic mission, integrated. We do not differentiate between preaching and diaconal works. It is the responsibility of the church. We always look for local partners. We do not go alone any more. Dutch churches are grouped into regions so that they can co-operate. DVN assists those regional mission boards. Challenges: to involve the members of the church. Many feel less attached to the national church. They don't feel Reformed Liberated anymore, just members of the local church. The distinction between home and foreign mission is much thinner because of immigration.

18.2 Evangelical Reformed Synod of Lithuania

Rev. Rimantas Mikalauskas introduced his church briefly: 10 congregations and 4 prayer groups. He expressed appreciation for the EuCRC.

18.3 Presbyterian Church in Romania

Rev. Ronaldo Andre. We are sent by the Presbyterian Church of Brazil (IPB, Brazil). We have been in Romania for 2 years (previously in Nepal). We feel isolated and it has encouraged us to come to the EuCRC.

18.4 Presentation to the Mrs Anja Mijnheer and Mrs Joke de Haan

The Chairman thanked Mrs Anja Mijnheer and Mrs Joke de Haan for their work undertaken for the conference and presented each with flowers.

Break

19. WORKSHOPS

19.1 The Practice of the Lord's Supper (Rev. Roland Schipper)

Questions considered: What words do we use, formulae? What do you stress? Memorial (Zwingli), Feast of resurrection (Calvinistic)? How to celebrate? Tables, elders taking it to the people etc.

19.2 Fencing the Table (Rev. Chris Kavanagh)

All agreed, some fencing of the table is necessary because the Supper is for disciples only.

19.3 Infant Baptism (Dr Victor d'Assonville)

Three issues: 1. When many come from Rome, Eastern Orthodox, or Baptist backgrounds, how do you deal with them? We must explain the sacraments, perhaps a concise written statement. 2. Immersion or pouring or sprinkling is not central. Listen to Paul, who speaks about weaker brothers. 3. When do we recognize infant baptism in another church? Two views: (a) by three conditions – Trinitarian, by an ordained minister, with water, as agreed by the Reformers? Or (b) more, as Prof. McCollum suggested?

20. ICRC MEMBERSHIP EXPLANATION

Dr Naylor explained the basis of membership of the EuCRC, which is obtained through membership of the ICRC. Information about the ICRC is available online www.icrconline.com. A church may apply for membership of the ICRC if it holds to the Westminster Standards or the Three Forms of Unity. An application must be supported by two churches that are already members and who know you first-hand and can testify that you are in fact faithful to the standards, that they are not just a book on the shelf. The application should be submitted to the Co-ordinating Committee of the ICRC more than one year before the ICRC's conference. The next such conference is in July 2017 in Canada. It is probably too late to organize an application now. But it would be possible to attend the ICRC in 2017 and then during the next four years arrange an application for membership in time for the 2021 conference. Financial commitment is calculated according to a scale, by reference to the number of members and the economy of the country.

A request was made: Could the ICRC send a person to speak to the synod in the Ukraine? This can be referred to the Co-ordinating Committee of the ICRC.

Singing: 'Great is thy faithfulness'.

Prayer.

SESSION 6

THURSDAY EVENING, 26 MAY, 2016

21. OPENING

Singing: 'A mighty fortress is our God'.

22. DISCUSSION OF EUROPE'S REFUGEE CRISIS: 'CRISIS OR CHALLENGE' FOR THE CHURCHES?

Resource mentioned: Thomas Sowell, Migrations and Cultures (USA).

Consensus: The incursion of refugees is a threat but it is also an opportunity. We could not go into Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, and so on, but the Lord is bringing them to us. We have converts in our churches. Society cannot open the flood-gates but we must take the opportunity. They find in Christianity a loving God and loving people.

In Nepal, if you become a Christian they will attack you; but if someone goes abroad, they are admired as a role model. And some of them have returned as Christians and are admired.

Jehovah's Witnesses are a mission field on our doorstep.

The need for help how to work with them was expressed.

Having such in the church brings problems too. Some come to church twice and ask to be baptized. The advice is not to do it straightaway. Be careful; some want to use you.

Prayer (Chairman).

23. SERMON (REV. ATTILA PAL)

Reading: Revelation 14:1-5.

Remarks. Here is comfort ministered in a time of persecution. The church will have the victory. The Lamb is on Mount Zion. He is in the centre. How? 1. The church of God is with the Lamb. 2. It has a celebration with the Lamb. 3. The church of God is blameless. All three are the triumph.

Prayer.

Singing: 'The Church' one foundation.'

The Chairman thanked the leaders of workshops.

24. PRAYER MEETING.

A prayer meeting was held and attended by some of the conference participants.

SESSION 7

FRIDAY MORNING, 27 MAY, 2016

25. OPENING (REV. MANUEL LÓPEZ FRANCO)

Singing: 'We rest on thee, our shield and our defender'.

Reading: 2 Corinthians 4: 1-10.

Remarks. We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the all-surpassing power is of God and not of us. An extraordinary treasure in an ordinary container. Christ is the satisfying treasure for our lives. The Lord chose us to hold his treasure. We are called to preach him, to share him with others. The goal of this passage is that God should receive all the glory. The power to save is his, not ours.

Prayer.

26. BUSINESS MEETING

Voting delegates of the member churches met for their second business meeting.

27. PLENARY SESSION

The Chairman reported to the conference the work of the business meeting. The next place is hopefully in Scotland. But if someone has an idea, let them contact the committee. The Regulations are accepted. The committee has added Rev. Laurens den Butter to the committee. He thanked Anja, Lucius, and Peter for their work. He asked for evaluation and feedback from participants.

Suggestions for future topics were:

Relations of the church with the magistrate.

A paper on an aspect of the Reformation since in 2017 it is 500 years / and Dort is 400 years ago.

Evangelizing secular, eastern orthodox, Muslims.

Practical points:

Could time be made for a full sermon one evening, perhaps a closing sermon on Thursday evening?

The format was thought to be right.

How can we involve younger people at the EuCRC? Could we bring 2 or 3 ministerial students next time? Can we have the full text of lectures?

Noted: we are free to translate papers but a copy of such translations should be sent to the committee for inclusion on the website.

28. CLOSING STATEMENT

Dr Peter Naylor read a draft of the closing statement and received comments and amendments. The final statement would be prepared by the Chairman and Dr Naylor.

29. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

In God's grace we have been blessed at this conference.

30. CLOSING DEVOTIONS (REV. DANIEL STEFAN)

Singing: Psalm 146 (Page 12)

Reading: Isaiah 54: 1-8.

Remarks: Isaiah describes in a dramatic poem the relationship between God and Israel: restoration after a time of desertion. See the contrast: 'Rejoice, barren one!' God takes us through suffering in ministry.

Isaiah announces the restoration of Israel to God. 'Rejoice, barren..' is like Matthew 5, 'Blessed...who mourn'. Paradoxical. In Romans 8:18 present sufferings are no comparable with future glory. We

Prayer: David Pfeiffer

Rev. David Miller thanked the Chairman for his work for the conference.

10:32 The conference was closed.



APPENDIX 1

CLOSING STATEMENT

The sixth meeting of the European Conference of Reformed Churches took place 24-27 May, 2016, at De Glind, near Amersfoort, in the Netherlands. Around 60 ministers and missionaries, representing 28 churches from 22 countries met. Some of these churches were sending representatives to the conference for the first time. It was encouraging to receive brothers from such places as Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Albania, etc. (a complete list is included in the Proceedings), and also to meet missionaries who have come from South Africa, the USA, or Brazil to work in Europe.

The conference focused its attention on the sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Dr Egbert Brink gave a paper on the Lord's Supper as a means of grace, drawing attention to the many theological aspects of the Supper. Dr William Schweitzer presented a paper on the question of children at the Lord's Table, in which he argued strongly against 'infant communion' (partaking of the Supper because they are covenant children), but he also argued that the church should not refuse to receive a young child at the table if that child has made a credible profession of faith. Professor Robert McCollum presented a paper on Infant Baptism, in which he showed the biblical case for infant baptism, and described the immense blessings that arise from it. Each paper was discussed in small groups and in full session.

At this time, Europe is struggling with an immigration crisis. The conference devoted time to a discussion of this, under the heading of 'Crisis or Challenge'. Whilst the difficulties in the situation were acknowledged, the advantages for the preaching of the gospel were welcomed. It has not been possible for Reformed Churches to send missionaries into countries such as Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, and Iran, but God has brought these peoples to us and many Muslims who come are converted and become Christians.

Since 2007, the EuCRC has attempted to foster co-operation in mission and in theological training. The website (www.eucrc.org) is designed to help the churches to tell one another about their mission work. There is an interactive map and member churches are encouraged to add information regularly. Most of the member churches have a lively concern with theological training of ministers. At De Glind, those who are involved in theological training met together to exchange information.

Besides the formal programme, there was time for fellowship and prayer together. The conference feels strongly a responsibility to ensure that the benefits of its work are experienced in the sending churches. We hope that ways can be found to bring the results back to all the congregations of God's people.

APPENDIX 2

CONSTITUTION AND REGULATIONS (ADOPTED 26 MAY 2016)

INTRODUCTION

The European Conference of Reformed Churches (EuCRC) functions as a regional conference of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC).

The purpose of the EuCRC shall be:

1. to express and promote the unity of faith that the European member churches have in Christ;
2. to encourage the fullest ecclesiastical fellowship among the European member churches;
3. to encourage cooperation among the European member churches in the fulfillment of their missionary and other mandates;
4. to study the common problems and issues that confront the European member churches and to seek to make recommendations with respect to these matters;
5. to provide opportunities for non-member churches, organizations and persons to meet.
6. to present a Reformed testimony to Europe

Churches have membership of the EuCRC by virtue of their membership of the ICRC and their location within Europe (note 1). If a member church ceases to be a member of the ICRC, or if it is not represented at three successive Conferences of the EuCRC, its membership of the EuCRC shall lapse.

REGULATIONS

1. Meetings of the Conference

- a. The Conference shall convene every two years.
- b. Each meeting of the Conference shall determine the place of the next Conference.
- c. Each meeting of the Conference shall be prepared for by the Convening Committee, which will determine the time, venue, and programme of the Conference, and communicate this to the member churches and other relevant contacts at least one year beforehand.

2. Convening Committee

- a. Organization of the Conference will be in the hands of a Convening Committee.
- b. The Convening Committee shall have five members. These shall be men serving as ministers or elders of the member churches; the five men shall be from five different member churches.
- c. At each conference two members of the committee shall retire and two new members be elected by the voting members of the member churches
- d. The Convening Committee shall appoint from among its members a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman
- e. The Convening Committee shall appoint a Secretary and a Treasurer
- f. The Convening Committee will report on their work to the member churches at the Conference.

3. Responsibilities of the Chairman

- a. The responsibilities of the chairman at the meetings of Conference meeting will be:
- i. to call the meeting to order at the appointed time and see to it that each session is properly opened and closed;
 - ii. to ensure that the matters on the agenda are dealt with as expeditiously as possible;
 - iii. to put to the meeting every motion that is made and duly seconded, as well as take the vote;
 - iv. to exercise a casting vote when voting is tied;
 - v. to rule on all points of order;
 - vi. to report on each Conference to the Co-ordinating Committee of the ICRC.
- b. The responsibilities of the chairman in between the meetings of the Conference will be:
- i. to convene committee meetings
 - ii. to communicate with the Co-ordinating Committee of the ICRC;
 - iii. to act as a reference point for the other members of the committee.

4. Responsibilities of the Vice-Chairman

- a. The responsibilities of the vice-chairman at the meetings of the Conference will be:
- i. to take the chair when the Chairman desires to express himself on any question before the meeting;
 - ii. to assume the duties and privileges of the Chairman in his absence;
 - iii. to render assistance to the Chairman.
- b. The responsibilities of the vice-chairman in between the meetings of the Conference will be:
- i. to render assistance to the Chairman;
 - ii. to take the responsibilities of the Chairman if needed.

5. Responsibilities of the Secretary

- a. The responsibilities of the Secretary at the meetings of the Conference will be:
- i. to keep an accurate record of all the proceedings of the meeting;
 - ii. to ensure that all documents are properly cared for;
 - iii. to forward the proceedings to the member churches as soon as possible after compilation.
- b. The responsibilities of the Secretary in between the meetings of the Conference will be:
- i. to attend to all correspondence;
 - ii. to receive all reports from committees of the Conference and distribute them to the member Churches;
 - iii. to manage the proceedings of the meetings, arrange and propose the business to be transacted in every session and make recommendations concerning committees;
 - iv. to provide the webmaster with material which should be published on the website.

6. Responsibilities of the Treasurer

- a. The responsibilities of the Treasurer of the Conference will be:
- i. to draw up a budget with the assistance of the Convening Committee for the following Conference;
 - ii. to collect the funds for the Conference, and make appropriate banking arrangements;
 - iii. to reimburse all costs incurred by the Conference and the preparation of the Conference;
 - iv. to record the income and expenditure of the Conference;
 - v. to submit a financial report to the next Conference.

7. Committees

- a. The Conference may appoint a committee to study any matter that is deemed to be of mutual concern to the member churches.
- b. The members of these committees should be as representative as possible.
- c. Committee reports shall be in the hands of the Secretary at least three months prior to the next meeting of the Conference.

8. Participants

- a. The following are to be seated at the meetings of the Conference:
 - i. voting delegates from the member churches (each member church may have a maximum of two voting delegates);
 - ii. advisory delegates from the member churches;
 - iii. observer delegates of churches that have made application for membership in the Conference.
 - iv. visiting delegates of churches, which have not yet applied for membership.
 - v. representatives of organizations or institutions (such as theological seminaries, affiliated mission organizations etc.), which are introduced by one of the member churches.
- b. Plenary sessions of the conference may be audited by members of the churches.

9. Conduction of the Conference

- a. The Convening Committee will be responsible for the opening, daily order and closure of the Conference.
- b. The Convening Committee will seek the involvement of local churches in the neighbourhood of the venue as far as possible and deemed useful for participation in devotion, lectures and Christian fellowship.

10. Agenda Material

- a. The Conference shall place on its agenda:
 - i. correspondence from member Churches;
 - ii. reports from its special committees and Secretary;
 - iii. recommendations from any two member Churches to extend an invitation to another church to send observers to the Conference.
- b. Materials for the agenda should be received by the Secretary four months in advance. Recommendations should also be in the hands of the Secretary three months in advance and be circulated as soon as possible thereafter. Amendments to Committee proposals can be received by the Corresponding Secretary up to the opening session of the next meeting of the Conference. Other agenda material received less than 6 months before the opening of the next meeting of the Conference shall only be considered if the Convening Committee and / or the Conference so decides.
- c. The agenda must be finalized two months before the Conference and a copy be sent to all member Churches and other invitees.
- d. Additional subjects for the agenda introduced by a delegate of a member Church shall be restricted to those matters which are important and urgent and which could not have been placed on the agenda in a regular way. In such cases the meeting of the Conference shall decide whether to place these matters on the agenda.

11. Amendments to the Regulations

- a. These Regulations may be amended by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.
- b. Proposed amendments shall be sent to the Secretary four months prior to the meeting of the Conference.

Note 1.

Europe is defined as the region (not the European Community).

APPENDIX 3

NOTES OF BUSINESS MEETINGS

BUSINESS MEETING 1 WEDNESDAY 25 MAY 2016

Present:

Rev. Jos Colijn (Chairman)	Rev. David Miller
Rev. Andrew Lucas	Rev. David Pfeiffer
Prof. David McKay	Rev. Joshua Rieger
Rev. Lucius de Graaff	Rev. Manuel López Franco
Rev. Roland Schipper	Rev. Wim Wullschleger
Rev. Donald John Morrison	Rev. William Middelkoop
Rev. Mark Loughridge	Rev. Dr Peter J. Naylor

The first business meeting was called to establish the agenda for the second meeting. The following items were listed:

1. The Draft Regulations

Reactions from CRC:

- 1b – convening church: How relate to convening committee? done
- 2d – meaning, compared with 2b? removed 2d
- 3a.vi coordinating committee report to ICRC. 3b.ii coordinating committee: “what is my task (Han Schenau)?” – structural question set
- Budget – appoint treasurer is new? – more explanation? Finance go through BBK. They asked, How long will it take for you to have your own account?
- Announcement to next conference? Agree a year prior notice to the churches? Add this provision? yes

Reactions from RCN:

- Drop credentials

2. Finances

3. New location

4. Membership of the committee

- Who changes this time?

5. How to take information to the churches

Suggestions: The closing statement – for press and for church magazines;
Say Who EuCRC is: get down to the pew level

6. Theological education committee

7. Mission co-operation

8. Website?

BUSINESS MEETING 2

FRIDAY 27 MAY 2016

Present:

Ds Jos Colijn (Chairman)
Rev. Andrew Lucas
Prof. David McKay
Rev. Lucius de Graaff
Rev. Roland Schipper
Rev. Mark Loughridge
Rev. David Miller

Rev. David Pfeiffer
Rev. Joshua Rieger
Rev. Wim Wullschleger
Rev. William Middelkoop
Rev. Dr Peter J. Naylor
Mr Mark Bube (listening)

1. Proceedings of 2014

It was confirmed that the member churches had accepted them.

2. Finances

- a) For the Cardiff Conference 2014, Lucius de Graaff reported that we had paid all bills and had a small surplus of around 5000 Euros. It was the policy to keep a small buffer for the next conference, and to support brothers who cannot afford to come. This time also, all is well. We have sponsored 4 brothers to come at 320 Euros each and the BBK had also supported some. The figures are audited by the BBK's auditor.
- b) It was agreed that there should not be a separate bank account for the EuCRC as it is not a legal entity as such but that we should continue to ask the BBK to hold our funds under a 'bare trust'.

3. Regulations

- a) The reactions to the draft were discussed and resolved.
- b) It was agreed to add Laurens den Butter to the committee. Although it was desirable to have a Spanish representative, it was noted that the Spanish church situation is not yet stable and so this should wait.
- c) It was agreed that Lucius de Graaff continue as treasurer and that Peter Naylor continue as secretary and that both posts be 'outside' the committee.
- d) Rotation of membership would be effective in 2016: then two members of the committee would step down and two new members be elected.

4. Next conference

- a) For 2018, David Miller would investigate whether it could be held in Scotland. David Pfeiffer and Joshua Rieger would consider whether there was an alternative in England as a 'plan B', perhaps in a location such as Stoke on Trent (which is near to Birmingham International Airport – BHX).
- b) For 2020 perhaps Heidelberg could host it.
- c) As to the time of year, the end of April seems best.

5. Press Release

- a) A draft of the Closing Statement was read, amendments suggested, and it was accepted, to be finalized by Jos Colijn and Peter Naylor.

6. Website matters

It was agreed to ask Andrew Haylett to set up a Facebook Page (or something similar on whatever is the next social media site, because Facebook tends to drive traffic to websites).

7. Business meetings

It was agreed to keep business meetings short. The concern is not to appear to operate in secret or to exclude people. We can report to the full conference our meeting and also consider inviting observers to sit in and listen to the meeting.

