

The Synod of Eastern Australia



To meet at the
Cardiff Church Facilities
Hunter/Barrington Congregation
Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia

7th -10th May 2007

Standing Committee Reports And Including Correspondence

“Oh, give thanks to the Lord for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.”

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TIMETABLE FOR SYNOD 2007

	Monday 7 May	Tuesday 8 May	Wednesday 9 May	Thursday 10 May
9.00am M/Tea 10.30am		<p align="center">SESSION 3</p> Devotions. Administration Report Law and Advisory Committee Report.	<p align="center">SESSION 6</p> Devotions. Training of Ministry Presbytery Reports. Finance 8:14 Foundation. General Treasurer	<p align="center">SESSION 9</p> Devotions Superannuation Trust Corporations. Reports of Examiners of Records. Appt: Moderator-elect for next Synod. Appt of Committees. Causes (if any). Next Synod time/place Closure of Synod
12.30pm		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
2.00pm A/Tea 3.30pm	<p align="center">SYNOD TO COMMENCE AT 4.00PM</p> <p align="center">SESSION 1</p> Constitution of Synod. Retiring Moderator's Sermon. Presbytery Rolls. Welcomes (New members, guests, associations as required). Thanks to Retiring Moderator for his sermon.	<p align="center">SESSION 4</p> Church and Nation Youth & Fellowship (Banner) Order of the Day 4.00pm: Visiting Delegates from Other Churches Inter-Church Relations	<p align="center">SESSION 7</p> Free time for fellowship (Opportunity for Presbyteries and Committees to meet if necessary).	
6.00pm	Evening Meal	Evening Meal	Evening Meal	
7.00pm 8.30pm	<p align="center">SESSION 2</p> Election of Moderator for 2006/2007. Administration business as required. Moderator's address. Thanks to Moderator. Close	<p align="center">SESSION 5</p> Missions Report Close	<p align="center">SESSION 8</p> Missions Evening Close	

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Members: Clerk (Convener), Moderator, Moderator-elect, Convener of Law and Advisory Committee, Convener of Inter Church Relations Committee.

Ministerial Movements in 2006

- 1) The Rev M.G. Smith was inducted to the Geelong charge on 16th June 2006 and his name entered on the roll of Southern Presbytery.
- 2) The resignation of the Rev W.P. Gadsby from the Manning charge and from the PCEA was accepted by Central Presbytery with regret on 13th March 2007, in order that he might accept a call to the Christian Reformed Church of Canberra, where he was inducted on 25th March. Peter was ordained 18th August 1977 and so had given nearly 30 years notable service, including as Synod Clerk 1982-92. He left the PCEA as a minister in good standing.

Timetable

The timetable proposed for this Synod has been slightly changed. With delegates travelling on the Monday anyway, it was thought helpful to commence at 4.00pm with the retiring moderator's address, to be followed by the evening meal, then to have the incoming moderator's address to conclude the Monday evening. The closing time of the evening sessions has been brought forward by 30 minutes. Conclusion of synod has been set for 12.30pm Thursday 10th May.

Correspondence

<u>Item</u>	<u>Received</u>	<u>Sender</u>	<u>Subject</u>
1.	04.03.07	The Clerk, Southern Presbytery	Overture re Status of Ministers
2.	04.03.07	The Clerk, Southern Presbytery	Overture re Minister's Retirement
3.	04.03.07	The Clerk, Southern Presbytery	Overture re Mr David Kerridge
4.	04.03.07	The Clerk, Southern Presbytery	Overture re Hamilton Charge

Congregational Statistics: See the chart appended to this report.

Expressions of Sympathy: The Clerk is unaware of the home-call of any previous members of Synod during 2006.

Committees: The current Committees are:

Administration and Inter-Church Relations

Law and Advisory

Clerk (Convener Administration, Law & Advisory {since 4:12:2006 when W.P. Gadsby resigned as Convener and from the committee.}), Moderator, Moderator-elect, Clerk, G.D. Ball (Convener of Inter-Church Relations).

Church and Nation (including Publications and Psalmody and Website)

Youth and Fellowship

D.K. Muldoon (Convener), R.W. Murray (Banner), W.P. Gadsby (Website), T.W. Yoa, I. Hamilton, T. Reeve. Responsibility for the Website was taken over temporarily by Rev M.G. Smith in January 2007 with the anticipated resignation of Rev W.P.Gadsby.

Finance and 8: 14 Foundation

A.H. Steel (Convener), D.J. Ramsay, J.B.Louden, D.E. Kerr, J. Audet.

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Superannuation

R.S. Ward (Convener), D.J. Ramsay, J.B. Loudon, J Audet.

Missions

D.P. Smith (Convener), T.I. Leggott, D.K. Muldoon, I. Conley, J. Greensill, F.N. Robinson.

Training of Ministry

R.S. Ward (Convener), S.R. Tamata, D. Manly, D. Hamilton.

(Rev W.J.W. Hanna had been nominated as convener, but declined membership of the committee. Rev R.S. Ward was temporarily appointed convener by the committee.)

Consideration is being given to the structure of committees, examining the course taken by the Free Church of Scotland among others, and the intent is to present a proposal for modification in line with present needs.

Proposed Deliverances

1. That the timetable for Synod as proposed by the Administration Committee be approved.
2. That Synod express its sympathy for all those connected with this church who have been bereaved since the last annual meeting of Synod.
3. That Correspondence Items 1 and 2 be received and considered with the Administration Committee business.
4. That Correspondence Item 3 be received and dealt with under Training of Ministry Committee business.
5. That Correspondence Item 4 be received and considered with the report from Southern Presbytery.
6. That Presbyteries and Committees be permitted to meet when Synod is not in session.
7. That proposals for changes to the Committee Structure be in the hands of the Clerk by midday on Wednesday.
8. That the following examiners of records be appointed: -

Northern Presbytery
Central Presbytery
Southern Presbytery

Rev. J.A. McCallum and Narre Warren elder.
Rev. M.G Smith and Hastings elder.
Rev. D. P Smith and St George elder.

Appendix to Administration Committee Report

PCEA Statistics December 2006		Number of elders, deacons, Sunday School classes, baptisms & preaching points										Community by age (0-3 for NP & CP included with 19-64) Total attendance if everyone present who worships on the Lord's Day at least once a month plus the household, but not including visitors passing through.					Average Lord's Day attendance of different persons last part of year							
Reported Communicant membership Ministers are usually included in Presbytery figures although actual practice appears inconsistent.		Number of Elders		Number of Deacons		SS classes		Baptisms		PP														
Congregation		1990	2006	1990	2006	2006	2006	Ad	In	0-3	4-11							12-18	19-64	65+	Total			
		86	96	01	05	+	-	06																
Brisbane		41	44	44	37	-	-	37				7	3	28	4	42	38							
Armidade		21	43	31	19	-	2	17				14	6	13	2	45	41							
Northern Rivers		80	65	58	54	3	4	53				10	1	34	37	82	60							
Hastings River		74	48	41	37	2	2	37				2	2	31	26	61	45							
Presbytery		6	3	4	4	-	-	4								4								
Total Northern P		222	203	178	151	5	8	148	16	14	17	8	12	106	69	224	184							
Manning River		95	72	67	54	3	1	56	4	5	6	4	2	1	-	3	44	87	64					
Hunter/Barrington		62	56	52	56	-	3	53	4	2	4	4	3	-	-	5	34	15	58	54				
St Georges, Sydney		98	61	53	56	4	2	58	4	4	3	0	4	-	2	1	61	19	93	95				
Hawkesbury/Nepean		44	32	28	30	-	11	19	2	2	4	0	0	-	-	2	15	2	21	18				
Sydney South		00	13	7	9	-	-	9	3	0	2	1				8	8	8	16	14				
Presbytery		7	3	4	4	-	-	4											4					
Total Central P		306	237	211	209	7	17	199	17	13	19	9	9	1	2	11	148	88	279	245				
<i>The figures from Sydney South are estimates as the minister was overseas and no Interim-Moderator had been appointed.</i>																								
Knox-Glen Huntly		24	21	21	25	12	2	35	2	2	2	1	6	2	8	2	16	28	11	48	13	116	95	
Narre Warren		00	18	23	30	4	4	30	0	1	0	2	2	1	2	1	4	8	3	31	16	62	50	
Geelong		30	48	56	45	2	1	46	2	4	1	2	0	-	-	2	6	6	5	16	19	48	44	
Hamilton		30	9	8	7	-	-	7	2	0	0	0	0	-	-	1	0	0	0	1	6	7	8	
Ulverstone		19	26	28	31	-	2	29	2	1	1	3	3	-	-	2	7	2	28	12	28	51	40	
Presbytery		4	4	5	3	-	-	3															3	
Total Southern P		107	126	141	141	18	9	150	8	8	4	8	11	3	10	6	24	49	21	124	66	287	237	
PCEA TOTAL		635	566	530	501	30	34	497	41	35	40	25	32	5	13	23	24	105	49	378	223	790	666	
+ Nuer Outreach															25	1		50	50	150		250	200	

It is hoped that data is more accurate than previously as it appears that in the past average attendance was defined by some rather broadly. Total deaths of members reported were 10 compared to 14 in 2005. Data on those under 4 years was not collected (but was available for Southern Presbytery), nor was weekday youth outreach data but Manning has 3 groups totalling 36 people all but about 10 not yet involved in worship on the Lord's Day. Several congregations use telephone hook-ups for household/distant members.

LAW & ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Clerk (Convener pro tem), G.D.Ball (Convener ICR), Moderator, Moderator Elect

Mr Gadsby was Convener of the Committee but resigned on 4/12/2006 after indicating that he intended to accept a call to the Christian Reformed Church of Canberra. It was agreed in Committee that Mr Leggott act as Convener until Synod 2007.

The Committee had three items remitted to it by last Synod, and two references were made by Southern Presbytery:

1. Proposed legislation re Admission of Ministers and Probationers from other Presbyterian & Reformed Churches (Minute 06.36).

The Committee recognises that this proposed legislation was drafted before we had established mutual eligibility with the Free Church of Scotland (2005) and the Reformed Churches of New Zealand (2006). Similar legislation with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is anticipated. We have established a mechanism for admission of ministers from other well-regarded churches which respects Presbyterian procedures, and the rights and privileges of men who may wish to return to these churches. This mutual eligibility could be further negotiated with other churches in coming years. The FCS has separate legislation for Churches of Presbyterian and Reformed character not having mutual eligibility, and for non Presbyterian and Reformed churches. We have one form of legislation (Act of Synod 1983; Handbook 4.51-4.53), and it would appear adequate for the time being, since it ensures Synod involvement in the admission of ministers from churches with whom we do not have mutual eligibility.

2. Proposed legislation re Adherence to the Confession of Faith and Prescribed Questions and Formula of Subscription (Minute 06.58)

Submissions were received from Mr G.A.Neil (elder Hawkesbury-Nepean) and Mr Ian Hamilton (elder Ulverstone), and are included in Appendix 1. The Hunter-Barrington Session advised by letter dated 30/12/2006 that they supported "the revision of the language of the current Formula with a view to clarifying and modernising the language contained therein." The Hawkesbury-Nepean Session advised by letter on 2/11/2006 that they "saw no need, and have no desire to change the existing Questions and Formula, and adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith."

The Proposed Act has been carefully examined and considered along with the submissions, and with some amendments as detailed is recommended as a helpful step forward for the reasons stated in the overture. This Act does not undermine the doctrines of our faith, but simply brings together in convenient form those clarifications/declarations that have been made or assumed by us at various times. This should ensure a more informed and careful adherence to our position.

Amendments

(a) At declaration 2 delete after 'way' and insert: "so as to set forth its teaching more fully or in plainer terms while retaining the sense, but always in loyalty to Holy Scripture, and then only after following with care the 'Act anent the method of passing Acts of Assembly of general concern to the Church, and for preventing innovations' of 1697 (commonly called the Barrier Act).

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Reason: The existing wording might seem a little vague with the possibility of creating the idea of departing from the Confession's teaching. It is also helpful to make plain the procedural step to limit the possibility of inappropriate action in the future.

(b) At Declaration 3 reword opening sentence to read: "Synod recognises that at several points in her Confession of Faith diversity of interpretation or scruples as to meaning have arisen."

Reason: The existing wording might suggest inherent difficulty in the Confession when the real concern is generally issues of interpretation. The proposed change frees the Confession of a possible pejorative imputation.

(c) In (3) (B) (i) to clarify the reasoning insert the word 'parent' before 'Church of Scotland'

(d) At 3 (B) (ii) reword: Worship. It has been the practice of the Church during most of her history, reflecting her reverence for the Word of God and the suitability of the Psalms for the gathered worship of the people of God, to confine the songs used in the praise portion of public worship to the 150 songs of the Psalter without musical accompaniment, and this practice is reaffirmed by this Act. Acceptance of exclusive psalmody as the only proper application of the regulative principle of worship is not required by the Synod, although there have always been individuals who have taken this position. It is noted that while the Westminster Assembly envisaged the use of the Psalter, many of its members, and the Church of Scotland Assembly of 1647 itself, did not in principle limit lawful public praise to it (see Act of the Church of Scotland Assembly, Session 25, 28 August 1647, the day after approval of the Confession, which shows the intention to supplement the Psalter with other Scripture songs).

Reason: Clarity and helpfulness for those who take the stricter view.

(e) At 3 (B) (iii) delete the ambiguous "or a deceased husband's brother".

(f) In Declaration (4) there is a typing error in the last sentence (here should be hear)

The Committee considers that the freshly stated Questions and Formula should be used rather than making limited modification to the existing ones. Question 4 and point 4 in the Formula as given in the original overture are not really necessary as the issue is covered in just these terms in the body of the Act (3) (A) (iv), so have been deleted.

The wording as amended by the adjustments above is attached as Appendix 2.

3. Proposed legislation re Members at a Distance

Guidelines for retaining or removing members who leave the district have been drawn up in an endeavour to address the issue in a manner consistent with our Presbyterian polity. Doubtless these are not exhaustive but should be helpful for most cases. They should also meet the concerns of those, including the Hunter/Barrington, who do not support the concept of Associate Membership.

4. References from Presbyteries

Southern Presbytery referred a proposal for a mandatory retirement age to the Committee. Southern Presbytery also raised the question of the membership status of ministers, forwarding a report prepared at the request of the Presbytery by Rev M. Gavin Smith. It is understood both matters will come before Synod 2008 by way of overture. The Committee has no reason to object to the constitutionality of either proposal.

Proposed Deliverances:

1. That the report arising from Minute 06.36 be noted.
2. That the Overture Concerning Adherence to the Confession of Faith and the Prescribed Questions and Formula as amended and printed as Appendix 2 to the Report be sent down to Presbyteries for their consideration and approval, yes or no, with comments if desired; returns, with voting stated, to reach the Synod Clerk by 31 December 2007.
3. Synod enact as follows:

Guidelines For Retaining/ Removing Members Who Leave the District.

- a. The norm is that a communicant member should be a member of the congregation where he regularly worships.
- b. Those who live at a distance may continue to support their congregation and/or seek to be recognised as a preaching station if there are sufficient numbers.
- c. If communicant members move either because of missionary service with the church or removal for a period not over one year to another location outside the bounds they should be retained on the communion roll but marked "non-active" They are not entitled to vote during their absence, but are transferred to the active list upon their return.
- d. Other communicant members known to be leaving the district for a year or more should be advised to apply for a certificate to entitle them to join the membership of their new congregation so that their names may be removed from the Roll of the congregation they leave. Those who have been absent for a year should, where the address is known, be advised to apply for such a certificate and informed that failing such application their names will be removed from the Roll. It is not appropriate to retain on the Roll the names of members who have removed from the congregation or who become members of another congregation.
- e. Members unable to attend simply by reason of age or infirmity should not be marked as "non-active", but rather held in honour, with the situation of such recognised appropriately when deliberating on calls.

Appendix 1

Submissions Regarding Proposed Legislation Concerning Adherence to the Confession of Faith and Prescribed Questions and Formula of Subscription.

1) From GA Neil:

This submission respectfully requests that the "Act anent questions and Formula 1952 be not repealed nor altered for the following reasons:

a) The four premises of the Act briefly and clearly state the background of the formulation and necessity of such basis of unity within the PCEA. There was no need for example, even to insert the "unnecessary words at the end of question numbered nine to be put to probationers" which are -"Are you willing to subscribe to those things?"

b) The three Declarations in the 1952 Act likewise are brief because office-bearers would accept the whole teachings of the 33 Chapters of the Confession, because it is a chain-like (concatenated) document, the sentences of which summarise what is believed Holy Scripture teaches.

For example: Declaration 1 simply states "while the Church firmly maintains the Scriptural principles... she disclaims intolerant or persecuting principles"... or "profess any principles inconsistent with liberty of conscience."... The Scripture teachings relating to this whole Declaration not only refer to Chapter 23 (Civil Magistrate), Chapter 20 (Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience), Chapter 25 (The Church), Chapter 31 (Synods and Councils.); but also some essential Scriptural teachings from Chapter 1(Holy Scripture), Chapter 5 (Providence), Chapter 19 (The Law of God), Chapter 22 (Lawful Oaths and Vows), Chapter 24 (Marriage and Divorce), Chapter 30 Church Censures).

In Declaration 2 relating to religious worship, the teaching of the Second Commandment is expressed requiring "the receiving, observing and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in His word." Short Cat.50. This excludes the use of instrumental music, and from the praise portion thereof, of all composition other than the Psalms of the Word of God. This has been the Scriptural understanding of worship in our denomination.

Declaration 3 relates to the "time and occasions for the Questions and Formula to be asked and subscribed by all office-bearers.

This submission also raises objections to the Draft Act as proposed in the Overture.

a) The six premises are unnecessary when compared with the 1952 Act. The fourth premise is misleading, as its Scriptural basis and historical background are not changing with nationality or "in ethnically diverse culture." Basically, the existing Questions and Formula reflect the triumph of Truth over the past centuries of error and persecution.

b) In relation to the Declarations:

1) The first is unnecessary.

2) This is rejected on the ground that the Confession is not an historical document, relating to times. A careful study shows it to be wholly a document of 33 Chapters summarising what we believe the Scriptures teach on these aspects of Scripture Truth. For this reason office-bearers have no licence to "amend" the Confession.

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3) a) Church-State Issues: As office-bearers must study and continue to study the Scriptures and these Subordinate Standards of the PCEA so does our enlightenment increase. The relation between Church and State - the Establishment Principle - is embraced in seven Chapters (more in some, less in others). We believe from Scripture that:

i) There has always been an ecclesiastical authority distinct from a civil authority.

ii) It is the duty of the civil authority to assist and maintain the Church within the limits of its power, as set down in the Word of God.

As the 27 August, 1647 Act approving the Confession is printed with the volume of all the Westminster Standards, some of the proposed Declarations are unnecessary.

b) Other Matters: These four matters ought not be qualified by declarations of Synod. Number iv (Anti-Christ) in the Confession Ch 25 Art. 6 refers to that antichrist, that particular antichrist that sets himself up as the head of the Church, vicar of Christ. Chapters 23 and 29 should also be linked with this reference to "that antichrist". 4) and 5): These Declarations are also unnecessarily prescriptive.

c) In relation to the Questions and the Formula, these alterations do not enhance the existing ones.

G.A.Neil, Hawkesbury Nepean

2) From Ian Hamilton:

In accordance with Synod 2006 minute 05.58 I wish to make the following submission in response to the Overture from Southern Presbytery in relation to Adherence to the Confession of Faith and the Prescribed Questions and Formula of Subscription.

1) In relation to the Overture's proposed Declaration (A) (ii) Ch 31.2 "In the case of churches not organised or constituted in government, ministers may meet synodically without commission from their churches...."

I propose that it reads as follows "In the case of churches not organised or constituted in government, ministers **and elders** may meet synodically without commission from their churches"

Reason: I am not aware of a sufficiently strong argument to exclude elders in this scenario.

2) In relation to the Overture's proposed Declaration (B) (i) The nature of the creation days. I propose that this section be omitted from the proposed Declaration.

Reason: Having read both the proposed Declaration and Mr David W. Hall's two articles titled "*Westminster View of Creation Days: A choice between Non-Ambiguity or Historical Revisionism* " and his later revision "*What was the View of the Westminster Assembly Divines on Creation Days?* " and unless an adequate refutation of Mr Hall's articles is forthcoming, I prefer that the matter of the interpretation of the creation days be left as Mr Hall has concluded.

I trust the Committee will take the above into consideration in its deliberations prior to Synod 2007.

Yours in Christ, Ian Hamilton, Elder - Ulverstone PCEA.

PS: For information - Mr Hall's articles were appended to my proposed amendment to ICR Committee 2006 Deliverance (a) 2.

Appendix 2

DRAFT ACT CONCERNING ADHERENCE TO THE CONFESSION OF FAITH AND THE PRESCRIBED QUESTIONS & FORMULA OF SUBSCRIPTION

(Repealing Act anent Questions and Formula of Synod 1952 except insofar as it is incorporated herein.)

WHEREAS the Church of Scotland prescribed a Formula of adherence to the Confession of Faith for preachers and ministers on 13 April 1694 and, in view of the threat of Episcopacy, strengthened that subscription on 22 May 1711, and specified questions to be publicly answered; and whereas in regard to elders the Church required verbal assent to specified questions from about 1700, and in 1711 required written subscription to the less detailed 1694 Formula as well;

AND WHEREAS a common Formula for all office-bearers, essentially that of 1711 but with the necessary modifications in consequence of the Disruption of 1843, was adopted by the Free Church of Scotland in 1846 with some adjustment to the Questions;

AND WHEREAS the Synod of Eastern Australia, approved an Act Anent Questions and Formula in 1952 which set forth the questions and formula to be used in the Courts of the Church, which questions and formula were those approved by the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland in 1846, subject to the necessary modifications to relate them to this Church;

AND WHEREAS it is desirable that this Church, without resiling from the principles it has ever held, should now state its questions and formula in a manner relevant to its identity as an Australian church in an increasingly ethnically diverse culture;

AND WHEREAS it is important for the questions to be clearly focussed for the office-bearer as well as for the better edification of congregations in whose presence vows are made;

AND WHEREAS it is also deemed desirable to remove misunderstandings of the position adopted by this Church, and thus to draw together in succinct form declarations previously made as well as clarification on matters that have been disputed or scrupled in the past, in order also that we might pass to the coming generation the lessons and experience of the past so that a rerun of controversies might be avoided for the future;

The Synod of Eastern Australia, with the consent of (a majority of) presbyteries enacts as follows:-

DECLARATIONS

(1) In consistency with the Act of 1647 of the Assembly of the Church of Scotland approving the Confession of Faith, the Synod declares that the Church adheres to the Confession of Faith as most agreeable to the word of God, and approves it as to the truth of the matter, adhering to all its doctrines both major and minor. In making this declaration the Synod acknowledges that the Confession of Faith is not on a level with the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures. The Synod does not claim that the statements of doctrine in the Confession are necessarily formulated in the best manner or with citation of the most suitable illustrative Scripture texts, or that they are exhaustive statements of the doctrines expressed, or that mere allusions or incidental remarks are binding. Still, the Church adheres to all the teachings intentionally conveyed by the Confession of Faith because she believes them to be derived from the Holy Scriptures and agreeable with them.

(2) While the Holy Scriptures are the perpetual and universal rule of faith, a Confession is adapted to particular circumstances, such as the condition of society, the errors of the age, and the usage of language. Accordingly, the Church reserves the right to amend the Confession from time to time in an orderly way, so as to set forth its teaching more fully or in plainer terms while retaining the sense, but always in loyalty to Holy Scripture, and then only after following with care the 'Act anent the method of passing Acts of Assembly of general concern to the Church, and for preventing innovations' of 1697 (commonly called the Barrier Act).

(3) Synod recognises that at several points in her Confession of Faith diversity of interpretation or scruples as to meaning have arisen. Thus Synod declares as follows:

(A) Church-State Issues

In line with the terms of the approval of the Confession of Faith by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on 27 August 1647 (Session 23), and the principles of the Claim Declaration and Protest of those who formed the Free Church of Scotland in 1843, *inter alia*, the Church understands the Confession consistently with the statements set forth hereunder:

(i) Ch 23.3. The words 'to take order' are understood to be equivalent to 'to see to it', and the last sentence is read as limited to circumstances where the church is disorganised or corrupt, with the civil magistrate's power being limited to calling synods, being present at them, and insisting that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God.' [*vide* Act approving the Confession of Faith, Church of Scotland 27 August 1647]

(ii) Ch. 31.2. 'In the case of churches not organised or constituted in government, ministers may meet synodically without commission from their churches, and civil rulers may lawfully call a synod of ministers and other fit persons to consult and advise about matters of religion. In cases where the church is organised, a synod of ministers and elders delegated from their churches may meet as often as is necessary for the good of the church by exercising the inherent right to do so given by Christ, even if the civil authorities withhold or deny their consent.' [*vide* Act approving the Confession of Faith, Church of Scotland, 27 August 1647]

(iii) Church and State are distinct and separate institutions; both are accountable to the Lord Jesus Christ who has received all authority in heaven and earth from the Father; the mutually helpful relationship between Church and State does not imply subordination of one to the other in its own sphere; and, in particular, the civil authorities have no jurisdiction or authoritative control in the spiritual affairs of Christ's Church. In maintaining these Scriptural principles, and the ideal of a united Christian Church in a Christian nation, the Church does not regard the involvement of the State in matters concerning religion as *ipso facto* contrary to liberty of conscience. Rather, she rejects intolerance or persecution as methods of advancing the kingdom of God, and recognises the individual's liberty of conscience and the right of private judgement. [*cf.* Act of the Free Church of Scotland Assembly, 1846; *cf.* Act of Synod 2 April, 1952 (in reference to 20.4 & 23.3)]

(B) Other Matters

(i) *The nature of the creation days.* The Synod acknowledges that long before the foundation of this Church in 1846 there had been a diversity of view-points in the parent Church of Scotland on the precise nature of the 'six days' of creation, referred to in 4.1, among those who honestly subscribed the doctrines of the Confession of Faith. The Church therefore has recognised liberty of opinion on the subject provided that this liberty is held in a manner consistent with adherence to the other doctrines of the Confession.

(ii) *Worship*. It has been the practice of the Church during most of her history, reflecting her reverence for the Word of God and the suitability of the Psalms for the gathered worship of the people of God, to confine the songs used in the praise portion of public worship to the 150 songs of the Psalter without musical accompaniment, and this practice is reaffirmed by this Act. Acceptance of exclusive psalmody as the only proper application of the regulative principle of worship is not required by the Synod, although there have always been individuals who have taken this position. It is noted that while the Westminster Assembly envisaged the use of the Psalter, many of its members, and the Church of Scotland Assembly of 1647 itself, did not in principle limit lawful public praise to it (see Act of the Church of Scotland Assembly, Session 25, 28 August 1647, the day after approval of the Confession, which shows the intention to supplement the Psalter with other Scripture songs).

(iii) *Marriage with a deceased wife's sister*. The Synod notes that the Church has not enforced the last sentence of 24.4 in a manner so as to exercise church discipline on a man simply because he marries a deceased wife's sister, or on a woman simply because she marries a deceased husband's brother.

(iv) *Antichrist*. The Synod declares that it does not consider Ch 25.6 of the Confession to expound in a binding way the doctrine of antichrist and the man of sin, as found in Holy Scripture, beyond the affirmation that the Pope is not the church's head, and that the general spirit and distinctive features of the papal system are opposed to Christ, and represent a serious departure from Christian truth and practice, a departure which was predicted in Scripture itself. [Note the illustrative texts appended to the Confession and also the Synod Procurator's memo in Synod Reports 1977, 18-20.]

(4) The Synod affirms that it requires office-bearers to teach the doctrines of the Confession of Faith with Biblical balance. In the words of the Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1720, emphasis must be given to 'The great and fundamental truths, such as the Being and Providence of God, the Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, the necessary doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity in the unity of the Godhead; more particularly the eternal deity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the satisfaction to divine justice made by him who is our only propitiation, regeneration by efficacious grace, free justification through our blessed surety the Lord Jesus Christ, received by faith alone, and the necessity of a holy life, in order to the obtaining of everlasting happiness.' The Synod regards the giving of a central place to the person and work of Christ, and pressing the obligation to repent and believe the Gospel upon all who hear it as vital to the healthy life and mission of the Church.

(5) Synod expects and requires that, should at any time a question arise as to an office-bearer's understanding of any teachings of the Word of God that may seem to conflict with his subscription to the teaching of the Confession, he will not act or teach independently but bring such a matter before the relevant church Court for clarification or resolution, including by final appeal to the Word of God. Should he have cause in conscience to disagree with a lawful decision of the Church, he may clear his conscience by formal protest but remains obligated to submit to his brothers in Church assembly and to promote the unity of the Church.

(6) The questions set out in this Act are, according to their respective designation, the questions which the Courts of this Church shall put when ordaining elders and deacons, licensing probationers and when ordaining and inducting ministers, and the said Courts are enjoined to see that the Formula of this Church, which for convenience is set out immediately following the said questions, is subscribed by all probationers of the Church before receiving licence to preach the Gospel and by all office-bearers at the time of their admission.

QUESTIONS

(To be satisfactorily answered by probationers before receiving licence, and by Office-bearers at the time of their admission.)

- (1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and life?
- (2) Do you sincerely believe and declare the Confession of Faith approved by the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia and explained in the Act of Synod 2007 to be the confession of your faith; and do you acknowledge the doctrine contained it to be the true doctrine to which you will constantly adhere?
- (3) Do you sincerely acknowledge the Biblical character of the worship authorised by the Confession of Faith, which worship is illustrated in the Directory for Public Worship of 1645 and in Acts of Synod from time to time?
- (4) Do you sincerely believe and declare that the form of church government warranted in Scripture is presbyterian, that is, rule by elders, equal in ruling power, and organised in congregational, regional and national assemblies with power to administer the affairs of the church, but always in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and as they shall be accountable to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Church's only King and Head?
- (5) Do you promise in God's strength, to live a holy and exemplary life; to promote the purity, peace, unity and progress of this Church; and to follow no divisive course from the doctrine, worship, discipline and government of this Church, but rather to faithfully assert, maintain and defend the same, rejecting whatever is contrary to or inconsistent with it; and to submit yourself to the decisions of your brothers in the various courts of this Church.

Deacons

- (6) Do you promise to perform faithfully all the duties of the office to which you have been called, including practising faithful stewardship yourself and encouraging it in others; cultivating the ministry of mercy in the congregation, and generally handling the Lord's money in a manner that is efficient and above reproach?

Elders

- (6) Do you promise to perform faithfully all the duties of the office to which you have been called including encouraging the spiritual growth of the church members, seeking to bring other to know Christ, visiting the sick of mind or body, and attending on the meetings associated with your office?

Licentiatees or others certified to preach

- (6) Do you promise to seek diligently to become an able expositor of the Word of God, an understanding and helpful pastoral visitor, a faithful minister of God?

Ministers

- (6) Do you solemnly affirm that you have not used any unlawful or improper means for obtaining this call directly, or indirectly through the hands of others at your request; and are zealous for the honour of God, love to Jesus Christ, and the desire of saving souls, your great motives and chief inducements to enter upon the work of the holy ministry, and not worldly plans and interests?
- (7) Do you accept the call of this congregation [Or: the appointment to this charge] and promise, by God's grace, to perform faithfully, diligently and cheerfully all the duties of your office, including bringing to your congregation the fruits of careful and earnest study of the Word of God as well as understanding and faithful pastoral care; seeking to win the lost to Christ; and taking part in the meetings associated with your office in a positive and constructive way; while also paying due regard to your personal devotional life and walk with the Lord, as also the care of your family?

FORMULA OF SUBSCRIPTION

(To be subscribed by Probationers before receiving Licence, and by all Office-bearers at the time of their admission.)

I do hereby declare, that

- (1) I believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and life, and
- (2) I sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith of 1647, and explained by the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia in the Act of Synod 2007, to be the truths of God; and I do sincerely believe and declare the same to be the confession of my faith.
- (3) I also sincerely acknowledge the Biblical character of the worship authorised by the Confession of Faith, which worship is illustrated in the Directory for Public Worship and in Acts of Synod from time to time.
- (4) I further sincerely believe and declare that the form of church government warranted in Scripture is presbyterian, that is, rule by elders, equal in ruling power, and organised in congregational, regional and national assemblies with power to administer the affairs of the church, but always in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and as they shall be accountable to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Church's only King and Head.
- (5) I also promise, in God's strength, to live a holy and exemplary life; to promote the purity, peace, unity and progress of this Church; and to follow no divisive course from the doctrine, worship, discipline and government of this Church, but rather to faithfully assert, maintain and defend the same, rejecting whatever is contrary to or inconsistent with it; and to submit myself to the decisions of my brothers in the various courts of this Church.
- (6) I further promise to fulfil faithfully all the duties of my office.

Subscribed at Name

Date: Signature

CHURCH AND NATION, YOUTH AND FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

Members: D. K. Muldoon (convener), R.W. Murray (Banner), W.P. Gadsby (Website),
I. Hamilton, T. Reeve, T.W Yoa.

This committee did not meet during the year because of logistical difficulties. All communication was by email.

Church and Nation

We continue to pray with assurance that Jesus Christ rules over all nations, including our own. We have seen a further decline in moral standards, especially with regard to the unborn child, but thankfully in some areas our political leaders are resisting pressure from the ungodly and anti-Christian forces in our society. We can give thanks for committed Christians within the parliaments of our land, and pray for them to be faithful in their calling. The Committee did not make any written submissions to the government.

With the church magazine now available on the website, we pray that the teaching of the Bible on moral issues will be read by a wider audience. Some church websites offer social comment on a regular basis. Our community is starved of truth and morality in the popular press. We need to think about active participation in the local press at least, even if our comments are met with ridicule.

We also need to consider the effectiveness of our communication of the Gospel to our neighbours. Our society has changed and continues to change. We can go on lamenting this change and withdrawing from society, or we can engage with the people around us and communicate the Gospel in ways that they understand. The message is of course the same and always will be, but we are now in a setting more familiar to foreign missionaries than church pastors. We are faced with the challenges of a Biblically illiterate society.

Therefore my beloved brethren be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour in the Lord is not in vain (1Cor 15:58).

The Presbyterian Banner (from the editor)

Most of you would have followed with keen interest the proposed changes in the production of *The Presbyterian Banner*, and the transition from a printed magazine to a combination of printed and web production.

As far as I'm aware, the transition has been warmly received – and many have decided to change from the printed copy to the web issue. Of the 280 copies previously produced, we now produce approximately 110. Five Congregations continue to receive Bulk orders [6], there are 25 individual subscribers, and 11 receive free copies. After consulting with editors of other magazines who received free copies by mail, most chose to access the magazine on the web – and were happy for me to do the same with theirs! After consulting with the Missions Convener, and the Inter Church Relations Convener, most of the copies for which they were responsible are now web based or sent as a pdf file. I took the liberty to write to Theological Colleges stating that, since it was now available on the web, we would cease the free copies, and instead charge them a \$15 subscription! To date, only Moore Theological College and Westminster Theological Seminary want to subscribe!

With the reduction of numbers, the magazine has lost the benefit of reduced postage rates [75 being the minimum number required for registered periodicals - and we only have 42]. Thus, while numbers dropped by two thirds, postage only dropped by just under one half. Our cost of production now stands at \$100 for about 110 copies; and postage runs at about \$60 per

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month. The expected cost for printing and postage for 2007 is about \$1,760. A Financial Statement for 2006 is printed below. However it has to be borne in mind that some subscriptions for the following year come in early and form part of the previous year's figure! Thus a credit balance of \$958.49 at the end of 2006 includes subscriptions for 2007. This means in turn that the surplus of \$958.49 is not as healthy as it might look! However, when all the subscriptions are finally in we hope to have something like \$2,252 for the year, and should end with a credit balance of something like \$500.

There are many people to thank. The previous Editor, and his wife, for their service over many years; the Rev. Peter Gadsby for his patience and helpfulness in teaching the mysteries of websites, and uploading material; Mr. John McPhee for looking after the finances; the morning Bible Study in Maclean for packaging; my wife, Roberta, for sorting and addressing, and Susan Scott for production – not to mention all those faithful contributors like George Ball and others who made the job of editing much easier. And we also thank our faithful readers for their encouragement and support.

TPB Budget 2006

RECEIPTS

Balance 31/12/2005 cf	\$1,742.70
Subscriptions	\$4,108.42
Interest	\$ 14.41
Total	<u>\$5,865.53</u>

PAYMENTS

Printing	\$3,481.52
Postage/Labels	\$1,395.02
Stationery	\$30.00
Online Banking Fee	.50
Balance, 31/12/2006	<u>\$ 958.49</u>

Churchwide Family Camp (from the camp coordinator)

The biennial PCEA Family Camp was held at Naamaroo Conference Centre, at camp site in Lane Cove, Sydney in January 2007. Seventy campers from the scattered congregations of the PCEA: from Ulverstone, Tasmania; Knox and Glen Huntly in Melbourne; the Sydney congregations of St Georges and Hawkesbury- Nepean; Hunter-Barrington; Wauchope; Grafton and Brisbane attended. It was pleasing that many young families were able to come and enjoy the camp (next time we hope to more actively encourage the long distance travellers with a subsidy, especially those who live overseas in Tasmania!)

The venue within Lane Cove National Park was quiet and pleasant. The cabins were set in bushland on the side of a sandstone ridge. The dining room has a lovely veranda and outlook to a creek flat enclosed by bush. There is a sizeable swimming pool which was much enjoyed by the families during the free time in the afternoons. The site proved to be a good venue in hot weather.

The number of ministers attending was less than usual, but they ably led in devotions together with some of the elders. Readings were based on the camp theme: **The pre-eminence and uniqueness of Christ – “Far above all”** (Ephesians 1:21). The main teaching of the camp was led by Rev. of St Georges, Sydney. He gave a series of four morning addresses on “the Cross.” The talks were based on Hebrews 12:2. *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Rev. Tut Wan Yoa spoke about the work of God amongst Sudanese people in his home country of Sudan, in refugee camps, and in Melbourne. He told of the many difficulties experienced by his people. There is a great need for prayer and for pastors to work amongst these people. On the final night the ministers answered questions which had been asked by the campers. This proved to be an edifying time and hopefully satisfied the campers.

Other Camps

Southern Presbytery held their annual camp in August with a good number attending. The Brisbane congregation also held their annual camp at Mt Tamborine with 19 attending. Rev Les Percy spoke from the book of Hebrews and also shared about the work of MERF. The Manning congregation held a youth camp at Pappinbarra in October with over 50 attending, many for the first time. Members of the Exodus group on the Hunter led the studies and other activities. Youth from Sydney and Newcastle attended as well many from the Manning. Most of the children came from a non-church background.

Memory Work

A total of 110 certificates were presented by Sunday Schools in 2006, as notified to the convener (a decrease of 7 on last year). Two congregations requested certificates while three issued their own certificates. We thank those who are so faithfully teaching the children in our congregations. We encourage them to continue in the strength of the Lord in this strategic ministry.

Essays

Seven children submitted essays according to the questions set out by the committee. These children we rewarded for their effort with a \$25 prize. We trust they will also be rewarded by their increased knowledge of the Lord and his Kingdom. We urge others to put pen to paper and send in essays this year. Concern was expressed about word length suggested for these essays.

Birthday Roll

Mrs Margaret Kinder graciously continued to send out cards to our children on their birthdays- a total of 180 .The number is up by c.5% despite 16 children reaching the age of 12, and 8 leaving.

Search Work

Mrs Irene Steel continued preparing questions for publication in the Church magazine and then to mark the work sent to her. We thank her for this ministry and urge more children to participate. Six children completed the whole course of Search Work in 2006. Others started but did not complete the program. It was encouraging for Mrs Steel to hear from two new families; one mother had only just discovered this Bible study material for children. We need to make parents aware of this study material and the prizes that are awarded. Whilst children have many activities to attend to, let us not neglect attention to the Word of God.

Set work for youth in 2007

Metrical Psalms

Infants (< 7 yrs)	Psalm 23/121 Psalm 67/100
Junior (8-12 yrs)	Psalm 25:1-10 Psalm 130
Senior (13-17yrs)	Psalm 113 Psalm 139

Scripture memory

Junior	Isaiah 55:6-13
Senior	Isaiah 53 1John 4:7-19

Psalm Tunes

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<u>Junior</u>	
Gabriel	(CM)
Leuchars	(66 66)
Louisville	(SM)
Tiverton	(CM)
<u>Senior</u>	
Ayrshire	(CM)
Blaenwern	(87 87D)
Brother James' Air	(CM)
Croft's 136th	(66 66 88)

Catechism

Section 1	1-10	Section 5	63-68
Section 2	11-22	Section 6	89-107
Section 3	23-38	Section 7	1-107 Word Perfect
Section 4	39-62		

Essays

Infants (<7) (100 words)

Q. Who was Jezebel and what did she do to make the Lord angry (I Kings 16:29-33)?

Junior (8-12) (400 words)

Q. Where was John when he had a vision? Why was he there? Describe what he saw in this vision (Revelation 1).

Senior (13-17) (1000 words)

Q. Jesus told John to write a message to seven churches in Asia (Revelation 2, 3). Outline the structure of these messages, giving an example of each of the seven elements in this structure.

Run for Glory

This youth magazine continues to appear in *The Presbyterian Banner* but without a separate editor so there will be no separate report.

Youth Outreach

A number of congregations conducted Holiday Bible Clubs during 2006. At Narre Warren 50 young people attended a HBC. Knox has a fortnightly youth meeting, sometimes combined with Narre Warren. Around nine young people, mostly Sudanese attend. Glen Huntly has a youth club after school midweek for younger children with their parents.

The Manning continues to run two youth clubs for over fifty children, mostly from non-church families. At Newcastle a school holiday Kids Club's was well attended by local children, and children of the congregation. A small number of local children continued to attend the monthly Kids Club. At Mt Druitt 10-14 young people attend a Friday afternoon youth club.

Youth and Fellowship Budget

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>
Brisbane family camp	400	400
Melbourne family camp	400	400
Search work prizes	100	100
Birthday cards	270	264
PCEA family camp (2007)	332(+)	800

Proposed Deliverances

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1. Synod thanks Mrs Margaret Kinder for sending birthday greetings to children in the PCEA, and Mrs Irene Steel for setting and assessing Search Work questions.
2. Synod thanks all Sunday School teachers and youth leaders for their dedicated work in teaching young people the Word of God.
3. Synod thanks Mr Tom Reeve for coordinating the PCEA biennial Family Camp.
4. Synod thanks Rev Ray Murray, editor in chief, and Mrs Susan Scott, assistant for producing *The Presbyterian Banner* each month and making it available on the internet. We thank all who have provided Ray with material for this publication.
5. Synod thanks Rev Peter Gadsby for managing the website <www.pcea.org.au>.
6. That Synod appoint Rev Gavin Smith to manage the church website.

INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Members: G.D.Ball (Convener), Moderator, Clerk, Moderator Elect.

A. CHURCHES WITH WHOM WE ARE IN FRATERNAL RELATIONS.

1. FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

The Free Church of Scotland have noted our Mutual Eligibility Act (Free Church of Scotland) 2005. They have no problems with it. From their point of view they have no desire to change their existing Fraternal Relations Act 1952 with ourselves. Gavin Smith was processed under the 2005 Act and inducted to Geelong on 16th June 2006.

Earlier this year the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) paid 140,000 pounds (approx A\$350,000), being costs of the failed legal action, to the Free Church. The matter of Free Church properties held by the Continuing Church has not been resolved. The Free Church as a Church has undertaken not to sue for recovery but in some cases local trustees have the responsibility and the Assembly does not have jurisdiction. It would be encouraging to see a resolution.

2. REFORMED CHURCHES OF NEW ZEALAND.

It is worth noting that under the Mutual Eligibility Act (Reformed Churches of New Zealand) 2006 the Brisbane congregation invited Mr. Andrew Nugteren, a licentiate of the RCNZ, to preach with a view to a Call. Mr. Nugteren subsequently indicated that he did not wish the congregation to proceed with a Call, citing the number of vacancies in New Zealand as one reason.

3. REFORMED CHURCHES OF THE NETHERLANDS (LIBERATED)

We expect to welcome two delegates from the RCN (L) at our Synod meetings, Mr. Jan Bronsema and Mrs. Ria Nederveen-van Veelen.

4. REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

Communication and correspondence with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Australia has been largely through the Southern Presbytery.

An invitation was received to send a delegate to their annual meeting of Presbytery in Geelong during April. Rev. Gavin Smith has agreed to represent us. We expect to welcome Rev. Andrew Stewart at our Synod meetings.

5. REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND

The Clerk of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, Rev. Edward McCollum, informed us in a letter dated 20th July 2006 of the decision of their Synod, "to enter into a formal relationship with the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia."

B. CHURCHES WITH WHOM WE HAVE CONTACT.

6. CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA

Though we have had communication with the Reformed Churches of Australia over the years, nothing formal has ever been agreed. Dr. Henk DeWaard, Principal of the Reformed Theological College, describes our relationship as having, “a courteous and cooperative relationship, but there are no formal relationships of obligations that are binding on each other.” Where PCEA and CRCA churches coexist there is opportunity to express mutual helpful relationships.

7. FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA

The Clerk of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, Rev. PKA DeBoer, informed us in a letter dated 24th July 2006 of the decision of their Synod.

“To thank the PCEA for the discussions which our deputies could have with their deputies, but to regretfully inform them of our decision to discontinue contact with them.

Ground:

After more than a decade of discussions with the PCEA, no progress has been made in our discussions with them.

This decision was adopted.”

Our former Convener has replied to the FRCA indicating our regret at this decision and in particular the reasons given. He stated, “We regarded your Deputies opinion that divergence on the matters of fencing the Lord’s table, and access to the pulpit were of secondary importance, to be a significant and progressive step.” He further noted that the discussions have been considerably more than a decade – in fact more than two decades!

8. REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

We note with pleasure that Rev. Dr. R.S.Ward has received an official invitation to address the RPCNA Synod which is planned to meet from 25th until 29th June 2007 in Geneva College, Beaver Falls, Pa. He will also be speaking at the Westminster Conference organised by the RPCNA. from 29 – 30th June.

9. THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

We have known each other as churches for many years, and there has been much communication but nothing formal has ever been agreed. During the year we have had communication with Rev. Jack Peterson, administrator of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations. I indicated our desire and intention that at this Synod we will formally propose entering into fraternal relations with the OPC.

As a result the Committee on Ecumenicity have agreed to recommend entering into corresponding relations with the PCEA. “The administrator was instructed to write to the PCEA that we are eager to promote brotherly relations with like-minded churches, and that we are recommending to the 2007 General Assembly to enter corresponding relations with the PCEA.”

This is a pleasing development. The OPC General Assembly meets in Sioux Centre, Iowa, 13 – 20th June, and we hope that Dr. Ward will be able to represent the PCEA.

10. UNITED REFORMED CHURCHES IN NORTH AMERICA

An invitation has been received from the United Reformed Churches in North America to send a delegate to their Synod, which is planned to meet from 9th until the 13th July 2007 at Palos Heights, Illinois. As Dr. Ward is unable to stretch his visit in the USA to include this Synod, we propose to send greetings.

11. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES

The next conference is to be hosted (DV) by the Reformed Churches of New Zealand in 2009. An interim planning committee plans to meet 12-13th June 2007, near Chicago, to prepare an agenda and requests suggestions on topics, speakers, etc. The ICRC has a website (www.icrconline.com) with all the information re: member churches as well as the proceedings of the Conference in Pretoria in 2005.

PROPOSED DELIVERANCES:

1. That Synod record its appreciation to Rev. Peter Gadsby who convened this committee from 1982 until 2006.
2. That the Clerk convey Synod's fraternal greetings to the Free Church of Scotland.
3. That the Clerk convey Synod's fraternal greetings to the Reformed Churches of New Zealand
4. That the Clerk convey Synod's fraternal greetings to the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (Liberated).
5. That Synod encourage the Southern Presbytery and its congregations to maintain and develop contacts with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Australia.
6. That Synod notes with satisfaction that the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland have reciprocated fraternal relations with us and instruct the Clerk to convey fraternal greetings to the RPCI.
7. That Synod notes with regret the decision of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia to terminate contact with us.
8. That Synod notes with pleasure that Rev. Dr. Rowland Ward has received an invitation to address the 2007 Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA).
9. That Synod appoint Rev. Dr. Ward as our representative to speak at the RPCNA Synod and the OPC Assembly and that Synod meet the balance of Rev. Ward's travelling expenses after any payments he receives.
10. That the Clerk convey the greetings of Synod to the United Reformed Churches of North America (URCNA).
11. That the Clerk convey the greetings of Synod to the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia (CRCA)

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12. The Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (PCEA) recognises in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (USA) a church whose doctrines and contendings are similar to it's own with adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith a major requirement for office bearers. The Synod notes the long and cordial relationship which has been shared by both as members of the RES and now as members of the ICRC. The Synod desires to establish a relationship with the OPC in terms of our Fraternal Relations Act (1993) in the hope that we may be able to deepen and further strengthen the bond of fellowship between us. Accordingly the Synod seek recognition by the OPC of the PCEA as a Church in Corresponding Relations.

The Synod of the PCEA understands and is satisfied that OPC Presbyteries may issue calls to ministers of the PCEA, and likewise affirm the right of the PCEA Presbyteries to process calls to OPC ministers. In neither case does this mutual eligibility impinge on the right and responsibility of the relevant OPC or PCEA Presbytery to require full and satisfactory Presbyterian certificates of character and attainment before admission. This may include clearance under any relevant child protection legislation, and assurance that any incoming minister is familiar with the history, doctrine, and practice of the church so that he is able to subscribe to the formula of subscription intelligently and heartily and participate harmoniously and constructively in the life of the church. Where an OPC minister is called by a PCEA congregation such a meeting with the Presbytery may take place after a call is issued and before it is accepted in order that the called minister may assess more closely whether he should accept the call, and know, should he accept it, that he would be admitted.

This Act may be cited as the Mutual Eligibility Act (Orthodox Presbyterian Church) 2007.

MISSIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Members: D.P. Smith (Convener), I Conley, J Greensill, D Muldoon, N Robinson , T Leggott

Contents of Report:

1. Mission Field Reports
2. Malcolm McSwann Mission Relief Fund
3. Prayer Calender
4. Finance Aspects
5. Proposed Deliverances

Mission Field Reports

AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS MINISTRIES – Rev Trevor Leggott reports:

In November this year I “clocked up” ten years with AIM, first as Administrator, then more lately as General Director. Those ten years have been ones of major change in terms of field ministry, mission structure and personnel. The Mission stands today, in many respects, at the beginning of a new era. The Lord spoke through the prophet Isaiah when Israel was called to obedience, and to trust in God for His salvation and blessing. Israel was assured that the Lord would provide through His Servant, and they were called to look to the future with hope and expectation: *“Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes.”* (Isaiah 54:2).

For some time we have struggled to overcome a real shortage of resources, both in finance and personnel. There was a very trying time working through the shutting down of Mission Publications, and in 2005 we had seven of our most senior missionaries all retire in the one year. We continue on in the belief that the Lord has his hand on AIM and has a work yet to be done for His glory amongst the Indigenous people of Australia. I have often reported the simple truism that if a Sovereign God has called us to a task, then he will provide the resources necessary for us to accomplish that task. We need to be prayerfully seeking the leading of the Spirit of God and taking the opportunities that He provides.

There is a real and growing sense of oneness of purpose within our Council and amongst our Missionaries and TEAM Partners. It is very humbling when making pastoral visits to visit our field personnel to see how they minister faithfully in sometimes extremely difficult and stressful situations, and to see the fruit of their labours in the transforming lives of those they minister with.

In the last couple of months we have been really pleased to have new Council members come on board. Pierre Thielemans and Len Smith both come with much to offer from their experience and background. I remain deeply thankful to God too for Brent Dawson and his role on the office team as Administrator and Treasurer.

With Cliff (Letcher) settled in as Field Director the major focus of work in the Northern Territory is beginning to develop around the model of a number of regional training ministries, with the primary role of missionaries taking the ministry to the people with whom they work. Our college facility in Darwin has been leased out and is now providing a good source of income to assist with these ministries, updating our property and attending to much needed maintenance.

We are seeing gifted, well-equipped and supported new missionaries take up appointments, with the prospect of more in the near future. Our recruiting of short-term personnel,

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particularly “retirees”, has also provided much needed encouragement and support for our Indigenous leaders and local fellowships.

Mission Awareness Tours, now being facilitated by Rob and Jenny Alley, with the help of Brent Dawson, have proved vital in connecting people with the needs and opportunities for ministry and help, with a number of full time and short term workers getting involved as a direct result.

The more settled work in Queensland under the banner of the AIM Church Council continues with much blessing to the various church communities. It has been wonderful to see these various churches taking up the challenges and looking after their own affairs, with good leadership and growth, both in number and spiritual maturity. Stan Werner has maintained his much appreciated Bible teaching ministry on a regular rotational basis.

Our greatest need is still for quality Bible teaching missionaries and much time is spent seeking recruits. I thank God particularly for the zealous efforts of Merv Topp in Victoria, and for the help that Richard and Sue Davies have been through SMBC in Sydney.

With our existing work settling down well I can focus more on developing the overall ministry of AIM and looking at other areas of need. Toward the end of 2006 and on into 2007 I am seeking to reconnect AIM with many of the older mission and denominational ministries that have been in NSW and North Queensland. There is an urgent need to build networks of encouragement and support, and to respond to the call to provide Bible teaching ministry, particularly to train leadership for the future.

Contacts with the Korean churches are developing really well, with growing interest, support and involvement. Over the Christmas break we had two Korean girls gain short term experience at Townsville and Tennant Creek, perhaps with a view to taking up TEAM partner appointments in the future.

There are some exciting new opportunities that I am investigating that could bring together the need for appropriate cross-cultural and English language training for Korean missionaries, together with the need for training and equipping leaders for the Indigenous church. I can't pretend to know the way ahead but I know that God does.

I would ask for your continued prayerful interest in the ministry of AIM as we go on into the future seeking to “lengthen our cords and strengthen our stakes” as we seek together to build a place for the dwelling of God amongst the Indigenous people of Australia.

The Convener adds:

As per last year, I draw your attention to Synod 2005. Synod that year confirmed, with none opposing, to “the secondment of the Rev. Trevor Leggott to serve as General Director of Australian Indigenous Ministries for a further three years from 1/1/06.” In other words, the PCEA has pledged to fully support this work until 31/12/08. Consequently, it is a timely reminder for all delegates of synod to regularly encourage members of their congregations to support this ministry in prayer and as they are able, financially.

CHRISTIAN WITNESS TO ISRAEL – Rev Paul Morris reports:

New Missionary - KayChan Park: It has been a great blessing to have KayChan and his wife join our team. He is a very able man, humble and willing to learn. It has been hard work for the whole family to come here and we thank God for the mature way they have handled situations and for His blessing upon all details.

KayChan has made an effective start at informing the Korean churches here of his ministry, which is also becoming more widely known back in Korea. Many Koreans go to Israel to study and a Korean missionary to the Jews is very interesting to them. For example, a friend of his has started teaching Jewish mission at a major seminary in Seoul due to his friendship with KayChan.

KayChan has met many Israelis at our regular book table outreach in Bondi and at the end of 2006 was in Byron Bay for a ten-day outreach to Israelis there, working with a Scripture Union beach mission. We have applied to the immigration department for permanent residency for the Park family. The Australia Council has approved a plan for the Park family to move to Bondi in early 2007 to have a more effective ministry among the many Israelis there and to Israeli backpackers. This is now being urgently pursued.

Outreach: The Friday book table witness in Bondi Junction has gone on regularly and unhindered. This is manned by KayChan and myself with occasional assistance from volunteers.

Workplace witness in the Central Business District (CBD) of Sydney: Some meetings have taken place with a Christian Fellowship in one city law firm. A firm arrangement has now developed with Ecom, a workplace ministry to all, whereby I will develop a ministry to Jews within their structure. An introductory five week course of teaching, commencing in February 2007, will be followed by a monthly meeting for Christians who know Jews at work to come and talk, pray etc. Ecom will allow me the use of their office and facilities in the city as required. May the Lord bless this new venture.

The Friday night Haderek Bible Study continues with a few regulars and the occasional colourful character who comes in off the street. I am unsure if this study will continue through to the end of 2007.

A regular book table witness has commenced in Melbourne led by George Ball, along with three volunteers. I have supplied all the equipment and literature to them. It is being done in the name of a local church rather than CWI due to the tensions over religious vilification legislation in Victoria. Obtaining permission has been a struggle. May the Lord continue to give us freedom. There are plans for some door-to-door witness.

There is a great need for a missionary in Melbourne and there are churches ready to support. The recent move to Melbourne by a prominent Jewish Christian, who is supportive of CWI, to lecture in a Bible College there is highly significant

JEF Day: This has been organised by a committee of four, three Jewish believers plus myself. It is not a CWI event. It aims to encourage Jewish Christians. We altered our strategy to one major event a year and four fellowship evenings in the hope this would increase attendance. It has helped, but the demand is not great. The major event focused on the Jewish believer and the Law and was very much appreciated. We encourage people to bring unbelievers to the social evenings and one Israeli came at Chanukah.

In 07 we plan something similar. The first will be at Pesach.

IJEF: The annual conference for 2006 was cancelled but I continued my work as editor of the IJEF e-journal, the IJEF Chavurah. Despite my hopes for three editions in 2006 only one was produced. There are just too many things to do, but I persevere with this as I care deeply about its goals. My concern is to encourage and strengthen Jewish believers in their role as Jewish believers in the churches.

Office Work: Gary Griffin is our new worker to handle the office administrative work.

Deputation: Tours have been made to churches in Perth and Brisbane. The Perth visit was very much one of consolidation of existing support. However, we had a first meeting for Jewish believers and about ten attended. A local minister has volunteered to lead future meetings of this JEF group. In Brisbane seven new churches were visited who were all very keen to support an organisation which got on with witness rather than Middle East politics. Plans for 2007 include a visit to Melbourne in May, Tasmania in September and a focus on churches in Sydney.

Annual Edersheim Lecture: Our first one was in May 2006 (given in Melbourne and Sydney). Rev Dr Paul Barnett of Moore College spoke on Tensions between Jew and Gentile in Empire and Church in the first three centuries and then left his subject to urge the importance of Jewish mission and the church taking this seriously as a primary responsibility. Fifty attended in Sydney and forty in Melbourne. This is one means by which we hope to build a stronger foundation of understanding of Jewish mission and it could not have got off to a better start, for which we thank the Lord.

In 2007 it is planned to repeat this but with a different lecture and speaker in Melbourne to the one in Sydney. In Melbourne Steve Woorwinde of the Reformed Theological College is to speak on How Jewish is Israel in the New Testament? In Sydney we hope the subject will be Israel's place in covenant theology - then and now.

Church Denominations and Mission to Jews: We are currently supported by one denomination here in Australia, yourselves. Other bodies known to me with a reformed theology are the Christian Reformed, Reformed Presbyterian, Presbyterian Reformed, Congregational, Sydney Anglican, Presbyterian Church of Australia (PCA). My concern is to persuade such bodies of the theological arguments for reformed churches being denominationally committed to Jewish mission

One outcome of the above lecture was a discussion with Paul Barnett as to how Jewish evangelism could be engaged in by Sydney Anglicans. I am now in discussion with the director of the evangelism department of the Sydney Diocese to consider how we might help them develop a departmental branch for Jewish witness. There is no doubt that a ministry within Sydney Anglicanism would be much better received and supported by their churches than one from outside. We are prayerfully planning to raise the matter for discussion and decision at the 2007 Synod.

This has stimulated similar interest within the Presbyterian Church of Australia and I was asked to contribute to an edition of their magazine devoted to Jewish mission. We are working towards a proposition at their bi-annual national assembly in September 2007 which would commit them to support Jewish mission as a denomination, and hopefully that would mean CWI. Your earnest prayers are requested.

Chinese Churches Involvement: The visit of Jonathan and May Foo was a great stimulus to developing the interest in Jewish evangelism among Chinese churches here. They are strong and growing, especially as more and more Christians of Chinese background move to Australia. We received a warm reception from church leaders and members in the churches in Melbourne and Sydney where Jonathan spoke.

Finances: Our income is not keeping up with expenditure, and although our capital resources cushion this it is not a situation we want to sustain. Our plans for the Park family to move into rented accommodation in Bondi will considerably increase our expenditure. In November 2006 we wrote to all our supporters to ask them to prayerfully consider the situation.

CWI Australia - Looking Ahead: Council here have given serious consideration to future developments for the work. We believe that, in the future, the work will best be led by an Australian and we are prayerfully seeking a suitable person, whom I will train as necessary. May the Lord establish the thoughts of our hearts according to His will.

PRESBYTERIAN FREE CHURCH OF FIJI – the Convener reports:

We note with sadness the death of Nanise Tapua – the wife of our late missionary in Fiji, Leoni Tapua - on the 25th of December 2006. However, Nanise was a woman who exhibited great faith in her Saviour and so we can rejoice that she has passed from this world into the presence of her beloved Lord.

Nanise's health varied throughout the year, as it did in 2005. She was a diabetic and at times her blood sugar levels were very high. I noted in the last synod report that Nanise had only recently undergone the amputation of a toe due to this condition. The diabetes was generally under control in the latter part of year, but Nanise also had very high blood pressure. Even with prescribed medication, her blood pressure continued to remain too high. Notwithstanding this, her death was unexpected, sudden and a real shock to her family. I'm sure it was also a shock to the small congregation of the Presbyterian Free Church of Fiji (PFCF), and equally so, for us here in Australia. Nanise was buried on the 29th of December by a local Methodist minister, who is related to the family.

Nanise leaves behind six children and a number of grandchildren. I have been in touch with family members a number of times since Nanise's death and they seem to be coping fairly well. It was Micah's 19th birthday on the 14th March, and it will be these sorts of occasions where Nanise's absence will be especially felt. So please continue to uphold the family in prayer before the throne of grace in the days and months ahead.

The PRC work in Lautoka, which the committee hoped would link up with the PFCF to provide fellowship and encouragement, has really come to nothing. Contact was made around June 2005, but unfortunately since that meeting there has not been any further development.

Eliki has faithfully been coming to the Tapua home in Waila each Lord's Day to conduct worship. He is well into his eighties. Pray that the Lord will sustain him so that the work will continue and that the people of the PFCF will be built up in their faith, their love and their devotion to God. Occasionally, Eliki has been unable to conduct worship due to family circumstances and also weather induced conditions. As Eliki has no phone, he cannot let others know he will not be there. Despite such circumstances, we give thanks to the Lord that the groups focus upon Christ continues to be strong.

DUMISANI THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE – Dr Alistair I. Wilson, Principal, DTI reports:

Introduction: Dumisani Theological Institute exists to provide theological education and training for the church in South Africa, with a particular focus on the isiXhosa-speaking churches of the Eastern Cape. Dumisani operates under the direction of a Board of Governors, representing the interests of the following churches: the Free Church in Southern Africa, the Free Church of Scotland, the Gereformeerde Kerk Oos Londen, and The Gereformeerde Kerk iMonti. The doctrinal position of Dumisani Theological Institute and Bible School is that reflected in *The Belgic Confession*, *The Canons of Dort* and *The Heidelberg Catechism*; and *The Westminster Confession of Faith* and its *Catechisms*

The Institute began in 1979 as the Dimbaza Reformed Bible School. The main emphasis then was lay training and the provision of basic literature in English and Xhosa. In 1985 the work moved to King William's Town. In 1991 Diploma classes were started for men studying for the ministry and in 1997 the link with Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (now North-West University) was forged. Provision of high-quality theological courses at various levels is now the central focus of the Institute.

In 2006, there were more than 60 students studying on campus and more than 100 studying by correspondence.

Present Circumstances: Present Staff: *Academic Staff:* There are currently three full-time academic staff members serving with Dumisani: Rev Dr Alistair I. Wilson (Principal); Rev Norman Reid (Lecturer) and Ds (Mat)Thys Lourens (Lecturer). Our staff members are all well qualified (1 PhD, 2 Masters) and have considerable experience of pastoral ministry and/or higher education. Dr Wilson is Scottish (Free Church of Scotland) and Mr Reid is Irish (Evangelical Presbyterian Church). Mr Lourens is South African (Afrikaans-speaking; Gereformeerde Kerk). All our full-time academic staff members are funded by the Free Church of Scotland. We also currently have two well-qualified part-time academic staff members: (Ds Dirk Pansegrouw, Dominie [Pastor] of the Gereformeerde Kerk Oos Londen, and Mrs Jenny Wilson).

Administrative Staff: There are four full-time administrative staff members: Miss Hombakazi Tshandu (Reception and Administration); Miss Phinda Qusheka (Reception and Administration); Miss Nomaphelo Kwikwi (Library) and Mr Eric Saul (Printing). None of these staff members holds any tertiary qualification, although some have partially completed some training courses. None of the present staff are qualified or very experienced in financial or office management which means that a large proportion of the administrative responsibility still rests on the Principal and the other academic staff.

Present Activities: We are involved in a wide range of activities for a small academic team: teaching academic courses; marking correspondence courses; publishing literature; providing Sunday School training and syllabuses; setting and marking Sunday School exams; printing; as well as wider academic and church-based ministry.

Present Courses: As of 2007, we offer the unaccredited Basic Ministry Studies course and the Bachelor of Theology degree in association with North-West University.

Present Students: Approximately 60 students have registered for full-time or part-time courses in 2007. All are amaXhosa. Some 18 (5 full time; 13 part time) are studying the BMS course. The remaining 42 (20 full time, 22 part time) are studying the BTh/AMS course. Most full

time students have applied for registration with North-West University. There are some very high-calibre students among our new intake.

Present Buildings: We possess three buildings in Leopold Street, King William's Town.

No 15 provides a suitable administrative block. This building was once used by the black political leader, Steve Biko. It has recently been designated as a National Heritage Site and the Steve Biko Foundation has indicated its interest in being given first refusal if the building is sold.

No 12 provides adequate teaching space for our current numbers, plus some student common room space and a facility which can be used for other events, such as Sunday School Workshops.

No 18 holds our Library. It provides reasonable space for our present stock plus some space for students to study.

In general, our buildings provide us with a very adequate resource, although some limitations have become evident with regard to space, availability of rooms for private interview, telephone and technology connections, security, etc.

Present Library Facilities: We currently have approximately 7500-8000 volumes. Library stock is listed on computer but is not security tagged. We still lose a significant number of high-value books from the Library each year due to lack of electronic tags.

Present Technological Facilities: Each staff member has a PC (around 4 to 5 years old now) with reasonable capacity. Each academic staff member has 24 hour access to the Internet via a high-speed connection. (This is not available in the Library building.) There is a single laser printer in the administrative office. There is a single phone/fax line (which means that only one staff member at a time can use an external line). The Library building has neither a phone line nor internet access, which is quite a disadvantage. Computer provision for students has been limited to some older machines with diverse (and often incompatible) software packages. This has been addressed recently (see below).

Recent Developments: General: Dumisani Theological Institute's application to the Department of Education for registration as a provider of higher education was rejected by the Minister for Education in December 2005 and the subsequent appeal was also rejected in March 2006. This means that we are not permitted to offer our own courses leading to a qualification. We are prohibited from re-applying for registration until January 2009. Although Dumisani had clearly indicated to students that its courses had only conditional accreditation and that the application for registration was in process, this decision was a great disappointment and caused a great deal of distress for our students who had hoped that they would receive fully recognised qualifications at the end of their studies. Some students discontinued their studies with us because of this matter, but we are very encouraged that most remained very loyal and have continued their studies with us.

Staff: *Academic Staff:* In July 2006, the then Principal of Dumisani Theological Institute, Rev Ronald C. Christie, stepped down from that position and he was succeeded by the present Principal, Dr Alistair I. Wilson. At the end of 2006, Rev. Douglas Campbell, who had provided some part-time teaching at Dumisani, returned to the UK permanently. We also expect that Ds Thys Lourens will complete his service with Dumisani at the end of 2007.

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Activities: Most activities have continued as usual, although there has been considerable thought concerning how we can best use our limited resources in our primary activity of teaching theological courses. Involvement of academic staff in wider academic and church activities is encouraged.

Courses: The decision of the Minister for Education meant that we had to change our course provision significantly. Our previous "Certificate" course has been renamed as "Basic Ministry Studies" and clearly advertised as non-accredited. We encourage all more advanced students to register for the North-West University BTh Degree and we have found the staff of the Theological Faculty of North-West University to be highly supportive in this difficult time.

Library Facilities: The Library stock has been increased considerably over the last 18 months due to purchasing (enabled by some specific gifts) and some significant donations of books. We continue to train the students in effective use of Library facilities and encourage their use in assignments.

Technological Facilities: Thanks to recent donations from the UK, we have purchased 5 new PCs for student use and we have loaded Windows XP operating software. We have made use of open source application software as we do not have the finances for the standard MS Office suite. This is still, however, a relatively small provision for 60 students.

Future Plans: Staff: In order to function more effectively as a higher education institution, Dumisani Theological Institute has an urgent need of well qualified staff.

Academic staff: We need several new full-time academic staff members urgently (by the end of 2007), preferably qualified to Masters level or beyond. Ideally, we would wish that our academic staff would include at least one South African academic and at least one black academic. It will also be important to develop distinct posts of Vice-Principal and Registrar in due course.

Administrative staff: Dumisani urgently needs an experienced and qualified Office Manager who can manage the Institute's financial and administrative matters so that academic staff can be freed from all routine administration with the exception of specifically academic administrative duties related to their teaching. This person would also be able to provide on-site training for our existing administrative staff members. Steps are being taken to secure sufficient funding to employ such a person. Our Library Assistant is being supported through a Diploma in Library and Information Science at the University of Fort Hare, partially funded thanks to a donation from Scotland.

Courses: North-West University have indicated that if Dumisani can assure them that sufficient academic staff are in place and they are not overloaded, then they can see no reason why we would not be given permission to offer the BA Honours degree, which would be a significant addition to our provision and would meet a need which has been expressed on numerous occasions by former students.

Library Facilities: Our target is to provide a well-stocked Library of approaching 12 000 volumes, including sufficient copies of standard textbooks for BMS and degree students so that students are not obliged to buy their own textbooks. There should also be sufficient recent books at a more advanced level to support more advanced students (e.g., senior BTh students and honours' students) and staff scholarship and research. There are some areas which will require particular development, such as Pastoral Theology and we also wish to have more African and South African literature represented. We will aim to provide ample storage and presentation space for books in an environment which helps to preserve the books, along with

ample reading, study and writing space for students. The Library stock will continue to be increased as new books are purchased at a sustainable rate. We will reflect on the possible need for re-cataloguing our library stock and also for computer systems which can provide the highest degree of security possible.

Conclusion: The Board of Governors, Principal, staff and students of Dumisani Theological Institute warmly thank the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia for its support over past years. We are very grateful for the prayerful interest and financial donations of the Missions Committee, of particular congregations and of individuals within the church.

The Convener adds: We have no new news in respect of the Free Church of South Africa (FCSA). Rev Douglas Campbell's visit to Australia to speak with our congregations was cut short on the 24th of June at the news of the death of his wife's father. Rev Campbell's family flew back to Scotland and he has since decided to remain in the UK. The committee expects that a new contact to supply news of the work and particular items for prayer will soon be established.

Dr Alistair Wilson has expressed a willingness to visit the PCEA congregations to speak first hand about the work of DTI. The suggested timing is for May 2008 and I will be contacting other Christian organisations who may also appreciate the opportunity to have Dr Wilson speak to them while he is here. It is planned that the proposed visit will coincide with Synod 2008 in order to allow Dr Wilson to speak to delegates about the work and needs of DTI.

INDIA – Dr Dennis Muldoon reports:

The nation of India is experiencing rapid economic growth. The middle class is expanding and getting richer. It was amazing to be able to order a 'Domino Pizza' and have it delivered to the door (some doors are hard to find in India!). But two pizzas cost a weeks salary for my neighbour who lectured at a seminary. Life in the villages, where over 75% of the population still lives, remains much the same despite this economic boom. Many people are still poor, unable to have more than one meal a day. They can only dream of eating a Domino pizza.

In the midst of these contrasts the church of Jesus Christ continues to grow. Many faithful witnesses continue to preach the gospel and teach the people. Rajneesh Singh, a recent graduate of the PTS (Presbyterian Theological Seminary) went to the village of Patri near Haridwar to preach in 2003. Today 75 people meet for worship and catechism classes. He has purchased a small plot of land to build a Reformed Presbyterian church.

In Allahabad, a Christian family in the village of Mehewa had recently suffered a death in their extended family- a young boy from 'some blood disease'. They told us with joy that just before he died he cut the red Hindu band from his arm and professed faith in Jesus. With great faith the illiterate mother told us how the thief on the cross turned to Jesus and went to paradise. She believed that her son was with Jesus in paradise.

Presbyterian Theological Seminary: The principal, Dr Mohan Chacko, was thankful to the PCEA for allowing me to come and lecture in this Reformed college in North India. I taught a class of 20 BTh students for eight weeks in early 2007. My colleagues included men from the PCA (USA), Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (liberated), PCA (Australia) as well as Indian nationals. One lecturer plans to come to Melbourne to do higher studies.

The PTS plays a strategic role in the growth and development of the Reformed churches in India. Most Reformed churches, including the FCCI, have a seat on the board of PTS. The

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Reformed Church of NE India is a new but rapidly growing church. Many students come from this church. The vice-principal is a member of the Synod of RPCNEI. This is the church to which the PCEA sent relief funds in 2005.

Free Church of Central India (FCCI): Due to financial constraints I was unable to visit this church with which the PCEA has an ongoing relationship. During the year Rev David John has been troubled by the civil authorities. He was called to come to the police station at night but wisely did not go till the next day- corruption flourishes in the darkness. He was later detained for three and a half hours and told to stop preaching or charges (false) would be made against him. Still the work goes on, including the Reading Room at the Church in Jabalpur. It would have been good to have visited this brother to encourage him. Student for the ministry, Mr Samit Mishra, spoke to me of the situation at Jabalpur. He is from Premnagar Free Church in Jabalpur and will return to minister in the FCCI upon completion of his BTh this year. He is an excellent student whom I had the privilege of teaching. Rev David John will be retiring soon.

I learned of increased persecution of Christians in Central India- the state of Madhya Pradesh. Some worship services are disrupted by violent Hindu mobs. Worshippers are beaten with sticks as they run from the meetings. In one case the mob stripped all the women and made them walk naked down the street. According to press reports, the state government (BJP) recently ordered a day for worship of the sun ('suraj puja') in all public schools.

Despite this opposition, the gospel is being heard and many are being saved. Mr Vijay Das works with Grace Ministries and the Free Church at Chhapara. He conducted a rally attended by over 100 new Christians from nine villages around Chhapara. With other members of the church he conducts regular worship meetings in some of these villages.

Lakhnadon: Christian Hospital: The Medical Superintendent, Dr Adarsh Benn, has sent his usual comprehensive report. It includes many statistics but also some human interest stories. They had over 24,000 outpatients, 2,600 inpatients and completed 250 major surgeries in 2006. They still need a resident surgeon. They conducted two eye camps helping 25 people with eye surgery and a further 733 patients.

The LCH X-ray machine broke down and a new one had to be purchased. Thankfully the work of the hospital was not interrupted by this equipment failure. The dental department was closed for a while but was reopened by a surgeon who is able to do cosmetic dental work.

They had a number of visitors at LCH during the year, some to do surgery, some to minister, and some to evaluate their funding. Despite considerable funding from PCEA (\$20,000pa) it was not deemed necessary by the Missions Committee for a representative to visit for evaluation or for encouragement.

Mission School: The school continues to expand with 11 classrooms and over 400 students. All year ten students passed their board exams. According to a report from Rev Shyambabu, funds sent by the PCEA were used to install a water supply system for the school and to expand their library.

Chhapara: Community Health and Development Project: The nine staff in this project work in 23 villages around Chhapara. They promote awareness of health, including HIV/AIDS and immunisation. They organise self-help groups for the purposes of social and economic development. Many villagers have established kitchen gardens and are accessing government funding and training.

The project struggles for funding and is plagued by court cases. The report states 'We are standing at the crossroads and forced to decide about Chhapara'. They plan to develop a medical health centre at Chhapara as a project of LCH.

Mission School: This school continues as a renowned educational institution in the district. Students have achieved well in exams and in extra curricular activities. Mr Michael John Kumar continues to give excellent Christian leadership. They have added new classrooms and provide scholarships to needy students using funds given by the PCEA.

Allahabad: Dr Dickson conducted courses in agriculture and animal husbandry for poor farmers at the Allahabad Agricultural Institute (University) during the year. He travelled to different places in India teaching poultry production and rural development. During the year he shifted residence to Delhi and started a new ministry which includes helping urban slum dwellers. Over half a million people live in the slums of Delhi. I was able to visit a number of families Dr Dickson was helping in a slum called Madanpur Kadar.

Siliguri: Dr Tigi Verghis ministers to the rural poor in North India. He has established relationships with a number of churches to give training to poor farmers. I visited one rural church with Tigi where he had helped the pastor establish a kitchen garden. He had also introduced a small machine to make rice threshing much easier and was excited that the people appreciated this. Tigi is often invited to give training on rural development in church meetings. I was excited to learn that there are Reformed churches in the Siliguri and Darjeeling districts. There were a number of students from these districts at the PTS in Dehra Dun.

SOUTH AMERICA – Mr Ian Conley reports:

PERU

Colegio San Andres: The sad loss of two students in a motor vehicle accident while on a visit to Scotland during the northern summer has overshadowed the school year. Circumstances came together with the ill health of the nominated visit leader, Mr Marc Scarlet, that the principal Mr Donald Macaulay headed the group to Scotland while the Rev Tim Donachie remained in Lima. This left the two senior missionaries in strategic positions when the deaths occurred. Mr Macaulay handled the events in Scotland while the Rev Donachie broke the tragic news to the parents and handled things in Lima. Both the students, Reuben Gonzalez and Gianmarco Peschiera, had a testimony to Christ and their passing had a very thought provoking effect on the school. It remains to be seen if there is any legal action following the accident. The advice to date is that there was no negligence by either the school or staff so in the normal course of events any legal action would be unlikely to succeed.

Enrolments at the end of 2006 were 485. The ideal would be 500 plus, but 485 is sufficient to maintain financial viability.

The school facilities remain cramped and there is a desire to move to a larger site. Discussions have taken place for the possible purchases of the now almost inner city site but to date these have fallen through as have the possible sites for the school to purchase.

The possibilities for short-term volunteer assistance in teaching English remain. These are self-funded opportunities that need a commitment of at least 3 – 6 months. The last Australian volunteer (to San Andres) was Mrs Margaret Hockett who on her third trip as a volunteer was medically evacuated in 1992 at 70 years of age.

Moyobamba: The Moyobamba work continues to expand with a base congregation of five hundred with three hundred regular attendees. There are daughter churches in outlying centres such as San Juan, Puerto Maldonado, Los Algarrabos, Metoyacu, Los Naranjos, Arequipa, and Taraporto. Included in daughter church planting and outreach work is a Quechua language work. The church has several assistant pastors and home missionaries in Moyobamba and surrounding centres. The church also supports two theological students and has strategy plans for expansion and outreach to other areas going out some years. The church has an active outreach program amongst young people, ladies and in two of the local prisons.

The Annie Soper School was established by the Moyobamba church and enrolments in 2007 are targeted to be 300. The facilities are being improved and one project for 2006 was the construction of an assembly hall. Significant extra funding is required in 2007 before this can be completed. A team from Greyfriars in Scotland came and provided some short term assistance in the construction as well as delivering some monetary gifts from Scotland for the school.

There were echoes in 2006 from a previous time as some visiting priests from Toledo in Spain pressured Roman Catholic parents to withdraw their children from Annie Soper. This appears not to have had any adverse effect at this stage, February 2007, but the school term does not start until March.

The school principal, Mr Elio Gonzales, left at the end of 2006 and Rev David MacPherson will be acting principal for the commencement of 2007. This arrangement will continue until a new principal is appointed, a process that may take some time.

Two volunteers have been accepted to help in Annie Soper in English teaching during 2007 and the present arrangements are they will stay for the whole year. Suitable volunteers are welcome as they are native speakers of English and often bring other skills and experience with them. There is also considerable benefit to the volunteer and the home church.

Lima Evangelical Seminary: The Rev Donnie continues in the leadership post of Rector of the Seminary. This Seminary remains the leading institution for theological training in Perú and as such is of strategic importance.

COLOMBIA

Bible Seminary Medellin: Dr Manuel Reaño continues to head up the Seminary as Principal. His schedule as leader of the Seminary is hectic. In addition to the Seminary Dr Reaño has a heart for training preachers and has developed a network of short term preaching schools in Colombia. Colombia is more stable of late but safety issues remain.

Malcolm Mc Swann Mission Relief Fund (MMMRF)

There were no extra disbursements from this fund in 2006.

Prayer Calendar

The Convener has been compiling and distributing the prayer calendar and the information seems well received by our congregations.

Finance Aspects

Following are the items reflected in the missions' budget for 2007, which is tabled at the end of this report.

1. MMMRF funding for Rev Trevor Leggott: Mr Leggott furnished the Committee with a report indicating that 22% of his work time was spent on the relief of need amongst indigenous Australians during 2006. This is reflected in the budget for 2007, with 22% of his support coming from the MMMRF.
2. India:
 - a. The Chhapara Mission School: The Committee recommend that the Chhapara Mission School receive \$2,000, as per last year, from the MMMRF: \$1,000 for a scholarship and \$1,000 to assist in furniture, fittings and needed resources.
 - b. The Lakhnadon Mission School also continues to need funds for classrooms and resources. Accordingly, the Committee recommend that the Lakhnadon Mission School receive \$1,500 from the MMMRF to help provide these much needed resources.
 - c. The Committee recommend continuing the support of the important medical work in India. Lakhnadon Christian Hospital: \$10,000, Chhapara Christian Health Centre: \$10,000 from the MMMRF.
 - d. The Committee also recommends that Dr P. Dickson receive support of \$2500 from the MMMRF.
3. CWI: The Committee continues to be greatly encouraged by the work of Paul Morris and KayChan Park. Currently, the PCEA is the only church supporting CWI here in Australia. Accordingly, the Missions committee recommend that CWI Australia again receive a grant of \$5,000 from Missions General Funds.
4. South America:
 - a. The Committee recommend continuing the provision of funds (\$6,500 from the MMMRF) to provide scholarships for needy students at Colegio San Andres, Lima, Peru.
 - b. The Committee also recommend that the Annie Soper School in Moyobamba receive \$2,200 which will provide scholarships for two needy children.
5. Dumisani Theological Institute: The Committee recommend that \$1,000 be granted from Missions General Funds to support the vital role of reformed teaching by the Institute.
6. Reformation Translation Fellowship Australia: The Committee recommend that \$1,000 be provided from Missions General Funds to support the RTFA project of publishing twenty evangelistic booklets for use in evangelism, discipleship and campus ministry among students in China's universities.

Proposed Deliverances

1. That Synod express its continued prayerful support and interest in the work of Rev Trevor Leggott in his ministry with Australian Indigenous Ministries.
2. That Synod delegates regularly direct their congregations attention to the prayerful and financial support needed for Rev. Trevor Leggott in his ministry with Australian Indigenous Ministries
3. That Synod encourage congregational members to consider volunteering to help as native English speakers in either San Andres or the Annie Soper School.
4. That Synod adopt the budget for 2007 and express general agreement with the estimates for 2008.

Annex A to Missions Report 2007: **Reformation Translation Fellowship - Australia**

You may not be aware of a reformed work that exists in China. It is called Reformation Translation Fellowship (RTF). The RTF headquarters is in Taiwan and currently there are three support organisations, one each in the UK, USA and here in Australia. The following gives you a brief introduction to the history and work of the RTF.

RTF was established in South China in 1949 by Reformed Presbyterian missionaries and pastors just before the establishment of the People's Republic of China. The two men instrumental in this development were Samuel Boyle, an American missionary who had been ministering in Canton and Charles Chao, who had assisted Johannes G. Vos in theological education in Manchuria. As a former journalist and an observer of current events, Dr. Boyle saw the lack of theological foundations in the Chinese church and the ongoing threat of Protestant liberalism, which had swept through most theological schools and denominations in China since the early 1920s. It was at this time that he began to translate Graham Machen's *Christianity and Liberalism* into Chinese. It was published in 1951 and a reprint has been published in 2002.

Later Dr. Boyle and Charles Chao started to publish a Reformed periodical entitled *Faith and Life*. This aimed to feed the needs of Chinese pastors throughout China. During the past 53 years RTF has sought to translate the great works of Protestant and Reformed theological literature into Chinese. Some theological works originally written in Chinese have also been published. The aim has been to provide the resources needed to strengthen the doctrinal foundation of the Christian Church in China. As the house Churches in China have grown in recent decades the need for biblical and reformed teaching has grown with them and RTF seeks to meet this need. To date over 60 titles have been published and these are being distributed widely in China.

In 2003 an Australian Committee was established to raise prayer and financial support for the work of RTF. Currently this committee is sponsoring the publication of a series of twenty evangelistic booklets for use in evangelism, discipleship and campus ministry among students in China's universities. Some of these titles being translated into Chinese are *Immortality* by Lorraine Boettner; *The Way of Life* by Charles Hodge; *Karl Marx or Jesus Christ?* by V. Raymond Edman; *Why I Believe in God* by Cornelius Van Til; *God, Man and Religion* by J. G. Vos; *Words to Winners of Souls* by Horatius Bonar; *Coming to Faith in Christ* by John Benton; and *Who is in Control* by A. W. Pink.

TRAINING OF MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Members: Dr R.S.Ward (Convener pro tem), S.R.Tamata, D. Hamilton, D.Manly

Dr Hanna was named as a member and Convener of the Committee at Synod 2006 in his absence, but advised the Synod Clerk 15/1/07 that he did not wish to be involved in any Synod Committees and certainly did not want to take on the Convenership of Training of Ministry. Accordingly it was agreed in the Committee that Dr Ward should act as Convener until Synod 2007.

Ministry Manpower

It is sometimes suggested that we are at a critical manpower stage.

Figures compare as follows

Date	Inducted	Average Age	Average years PCEA service	Missionaries	Ministers retired
31.12.1976	13	44.7	9.4	0	2
31.12.1981	9	51.3	14.0	1(SRT)	1
31.12.1986	13	48.6	15.7	0	2
31.12.1991	10	51.0	12.4	0	3
31.12.1996	7	56.3	18.5	1(TIL)	4
31.12.2001	11	57.4	16.1	1	4
31.12.2006	*11	59.1	16.8	1	7

* includes T.W.Yoa

It can be seen from this list that we are not low in number of ministers but they are getting older and the average length of service has grown more slowly because of new entrants being of older years. Mr Tripovich is 77, two other ministers are over 65 and another is very close to it. If we allow for the two vacancies (Brisbane & Ulverstone) we could reasonably expect a further four within the next five years. Some way toward covering these vacancies can and has occurred through the use of supply from retired men, as well as elders, although we seem to be rather short of such men compared to earlier days. Ideally young men from our own ranks will be called to the ministry but there will be some years in preparation. Therefore for the present we must look beyond our own borders for assistance.

Sources of Help

Southern Presbytery has had very valued assistance of recent time from two Americans - Rev Dr Dwight Zeller on 2 occasions, each of three months, and Mr Robert Godfrey, student, also for 3 months. The possibility of men from Scotland should be kept in mind also. There may well be help from this source. If we move beyond this source we need special care to ensure new entrants understand absolutely unambiguously where we stand or we will run the risk of losing our way as a church. Hence in part the proposal to modernise the form and language of the subscriptions to our Confession.

The Convener has been invited to speak at the fourth annual 'Westminster Confession into the 21st Century: An International Conference on the Work of the Westminster Assembly' hosted by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America at the close of its Synod at the end of June 2007 in Pittsburg. After consulting the Convener of ICR Committee Dr Ward has arranged to take in the OPC General Assembly in Iowa in the middle of the month followed by the RP Synod and the Conference. In this way he can renew contacts and develop new ones which may assist securing help to maintain and expand our work. He would be happy to do what he can to assist those looking for short-term help or permanent assistance.

A Student From Our Own Midst

Mr David Kerridge (b.19.7.1970) has been studying privately at Sydney Missionary & Bible College since 2002, and has latterly been a member of St Georges, although as a young man he was a member of Grafton and Hunter/Barrington. He gave 5 weeks supply on the Hunter in 2006, 4 weeks in Ulverstone at the end of the year, 2 weeks in Dr Ward's congregation in January 2007, and 4 weeks at Mt Druitt in February. The reaction of the people in each case was very encouraging, both as regards the conduct of the services and positive way in which he relates to others. A careful and thorough interview has been conducted with Mr Kerridge, and details of his spiritual history and CV secured. His fiancée, whom he met in Bible College and plans to marry in December 2007, is Amanda Phillips of the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Canberra.

Mr Kerridge has a BA from Sydney University majoring in English language and Celtic studies. This was begun in 1990, deferred 1991 and completed 1997/98. He was employed by the ANZ Bank 1994-2003. He completed the MDiv (ACT) in 2006 at his own expense and has increasingly felt the call to the ministry as he has progressed and as he has preached. He has the academic pre-requisites for ministry in our churches subject to extra work in Australian Church History (which is sparsely covered at SMBC), polity and distinctive principles.

Mr Kerridge has been given supply work in Ulverstone pending further consideration of his progress. There is every reason to believe he will prove a very suitable minister but we wish to hasten slowly, the more particularly to ensure as much as possible his acceptance and usefulness in the PCEA as a whole. Mr Kerridge is expected to be present at Synod and members are encouraged to talk with him, and the Synod to meet with him (in closed session).

Mr Kerridge applied to Southern Presbytery as he will be within its bounds from mid March. The presbytery decided to hold over his application for further consideration at its meeting in May when the St George's Session report should be to hand, as well as assessment from further supply at Ulverstone. However, the Presbytery have overtured Synod to give them authority to admit Mr Kerridge as a student on probation at such time as they see fit following the rising of this Synod on the understanding that licensing will not take place before the Training of Ministry Committee is satisfied with his proficiency in the supplementary studies required. The Presbytery does not envisage that licensing will take place before the close of 2007 or early 2008.

We also ask the Synod to authorise the Committee to pay for Mr Kerridge's attendance at Synod (\$152) and to cover a grant for books of \$750 in line with Act 16, Synod 1983 as amended (p.28 of 1999 Decision Book).

Proposed Deliverances

1. Synod note the application of Mr David Kerridge currently before the Southern Presbytery, assure him of their prayerful interest, authorise the Southern Presbytery to admit him as a student on probation at such time following the rising of Synod as the Presbytery shall see fit, and to arrange instruction and examination in Australian Church history, polity and distinctive principles, authorise the reimbursement from Committee funds of the cost of his attending Synod 2006, and grant him a book allowance of \$750 once accepted as a student, subject to him subscribing the Student Bond.
2. Synod now spend a time in prayer relevant to the work of the Committee.

NORTHERN PRESBYTERY REPORT

Armidale: The membership of the congregation was reduced by two in 2006 – one deceased, and one by Disjunction Certificate. A Korean family also returned home who had worshipped regularly with us throughout the year. However, a wonderful highlight of the year was the conversion of one who had attended the Congregation over many years. This was a tremendous encouragement to the entire congregation. Three additional deacons were elected in March 2006, but there remains a need for more elders.

The congregation was also encouraged by the regular attendance of two first year Sudanese UNE students and a Sri Lankan PHD student and his family. Rev Tut Wan Yoa was the guest speaker at a BBQ luncheon in May. Following his visit, two Sudanese families have been attending, adding to the Sunday school numbers. The Church also hosted a Tear Australia presentation which was well attended.

About 41 people attend Sunday Worship, three up on 2005. The Sunday afternoon Bible study is now held after the worship service. Four Sunday school classes operated during school terms. Mission meetings were also held, coinciding with our monthly fellowship lunch. The meetings at the Amity Nursing Home (formally Hilton) at 3:00 pm on the Lord's Day have continued, but with fewer numbers. The Ladies Bible studies continued on Wednesday mornings. Attendance at the weekly Prayer meeting has almost doubled. The play group has brought some outsiders into contact with the Church throughout the year. A "Kids Club," which proved to be very popular, was run fortnightly for the last three terms of school with one or two children coming from un-churched homes. The youth group provided for high school and UNE students also drew a few people who were not attending any church.

The Congregation praises God for His blessing, care and love throughout the year, and yearns for revival so that He may be glorified, and people may know personally His wonderful grace in salvation.

Brisbane: The congregation remains in good heart despite the continued disappointments in finding a new minister. During the vacancy only one service is being held each Lord's Day. Bible studies are being conducted by the elders. The number of members has continued unchanged from 2004.

The level of weekly offerings remains good. During the vacancy the congregation has continued to accumulate some funds which it may be able to use to translate and settle a new minister when one is found. Once again we would note the outstanding contribution being made by the small group in Rockhampton.

The Sunday School continues each week. We are appreciative of those who share the teaching responsibilities. The Annual Family Camp at Mount Tamborine attracted a smaller group than in some recent years. Those who attended were appreciative of the talks given by the Rev. Les Percy of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland. The "Playtime" Mothers' and Children's group is continuing to function and is attracting a number of local mothers.

Hastings River: The routine activity and witness of the congregation of Christ's church in the Hastings district continues, with various evidences of divine blessing. Some who have been away from our congregation for a number of years have returned and continue to attend. We have a small number of young people in the Wauchope congregation now and it is encouraging to see signs of the Lord's grace in their young lives. Two of our older young people took membership in our congregation recently encouraging us all.

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Public worship is conducted at Wauchope twice every Lord's day with reasonable attendance. A Service at Kindee is conducted every second Lord's day, with attendance varying from five to eleven. A Mid-week meeting is held at Wauchope each Wednesday evening but attendance is disappointing. A good number from Wauchope attended the family camp in Sydney in January this year and brought back good reports of it.

There is a growing number of older brethren restricted to their home or care facilities and these need our prayerful support, visitation and encouragement. Audio tapes of services are provided for these brethren and any who want to hear them. We pray that the Lord will revive us in these days of increasing darkness and unbelief and that as he has blessed us in the past, he will bless us still.

Northern Rivers: 2006 has been a year of steady work. We're deeply thankful to God for his care for us, his blessing upon us in our fellowship, meeting our needs, and the opportunities He gives us to serve him. We're especially thankful for a significant increase in the number attending regularly the Grafton Service.

Three services have been held each Lord's Day. These are reasonably well attended, giving a combined morning attendance of 50 – 60, and an evening attendance of about 20. Two weekly Bible Studies have been held in Maclean with a combined attendance of 15 – 20. The Telephone service has been maintained from Grafton and Maclean each Lord's Day. During the year membership decreased by 1, and the total Church Community stands at about 82. A new initiative during the year has been a Web Site. It's still in it's embryonic stage, containing the Church magazine – Links – as a PDF file, and some sermons. A more sophisticated format has been prepared, and is awaiting completion and uploading.

The Sunday School has continued in Grafton and Maclean throughout the year – with 2 students in Grafton, and up to 10 in Maclean. Two other teachers have now been appointed to cater for the different classes. We pray that others might be gathered in. The children have done well with their memory work, and a number have a good knowledge of the Psalms they have had to learn.

The givings in the Congregation have increased slightly, now averaging \$802 per week. No major projects were undertaken during the year. The Bethesda Units are all occupied and there is a waiting list.

CENTRAL PRESBYTERY REPORT

St Georges: There has only been an increase of one in the communicant membership for the year ended 31st December (three losses and 4 gains). All four gains were by confession of faith, including two teenage children from one family.

Whilst twelve children in our Sabbath School Classes were awarded 35 certificates for memorization of scripture, metrical psalms, catechisms and singing of psalm tunes, more diligent attention could be given to this important part of congregational life.

Attendance at services are similar as last reported viz approximately 9.00 am and 7.00 pm on the Lord's Day and 30 at the weekly prayer meeting. Between 10 and 20 attend a weekly Bible class and psalmody practice.

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We continue to have visitors attending worship services on most Lord's Days. During November notices were posted to 35 hotels in the CBD providing details of our services. Tourists often ask them for directions to a Presbyterian church in the city. The congregation continues to be good spirits generally, but our prayer is that more would seek spiritual growth by attending all the public means of grace provided.

Sydney South (Bexley North): Some nine adults and three children regularly attend worship. One member was added by profession of faith. Bible study is held fortnightly in homes. Sunday school is conducted for the three young people. Church luncheons are held regularly for fellowship and outreach.

Hawkesbury Nepean (Mt Druitt): Regular services continue at 11am and 6pm each Lord's Day. Attendance is about 14 adults and 4 children each Lord's Day. Weekly Bible Study is held in homes, with good attendance. Outreach includes a 'club' each Friday after school for primary school children with 10-14 attending. Four children attended a Lighthouse club camp conducted by the Manning PCEA in October. Scripture is taught in three Public schools each week. Services are held each fortnight in Kurrajong nursing home and another nursing home is visited each week for ministry. Two new families have started attending.

Manning: Mr Neil Robinson commenced his work as a pastoral worker in April 2006. In March 2007 Rev Peter Gadsby was farewelled by the congregation. After almost 16 years serving the Manning Congregation, Peter accepted a call from the Reformed Church of Australia in Canberra. Peter and Lindy worked very hard in this congregation; the people were greatly blessed by his preaching. In October 2006, Mr. Ron Jones and Mr. Keith Barlin were elected to the office of deacon. Three new members joined the Congregation. By answering affirmatively the four prescribed questions they were then admitted as new members.

A Men's Breakfast was held twice this year; speakers were Mr. Alex Garton and Mr Ian Conley; both meetings were well attended and greatly appreciated. A group studied Christianity Explored over a 10 week period. Various Bible Study groups met and were well attended. The Pastoral Worker and his wife have been very busy leading the Bible study in Tinonee, making home visits, and organizing the long weekend Pappinbarra camp. The Friendship Group has been active during the year; places of interest visited included Red Head, Tuncurry, Foster, Laurieton, North Haven, and Upper Lansdowne. Many visits are planned for 2007.

A MISSION DAY was organized by the Ladies Mission Society in October. Various organizations participated, and many people attended. The Congregational Picnic was held in December 2006 at Harrington; many children from various clubs, guests, and Church members had an enjoyable day.

Hunter Barrington: Sunday Worship Services were conducted weekly at Raymond Terrace (am) and Cardiff (am & pm). Services were conducted fortnightly at Anna Bay and Barrington.

Weekly live telephone broadcasts of Worship services to the sick and/or aged have been appreciated by recipients.

A 'Question and Answer' discussion was held on the third Sunday of each month (excluding Communion months) following the Worship Service. The 'Question and Answer' discussions

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provided an opportunity for folk to seek further clarification and instruction on matters of faith and practice.

These discussions have contributed to the edification of the folk and the fostering of harmonious Christian relationships.

Prayer Meetings were conducted each week by Rev Tamata. The meetings were held on alternate weeks at Raymond Terrace and in the Newcastle area. A comparative study of Islam and Christianity has proven interesting and helpful.

Bible Studies: Mrs Tamata conducted a Ladies Bible study each week. The meetings were held on alternate weeks at Raymond Terrace and at Cardiff. We are again grateful to our Lord for the non Christians who attended the Ladies Bible studies at Raymond Terrace during 2006.

Mr Dunne faithfully conducted an adult Bible study on Sunday mornings at Cardiff prior to Worship. The early chapters of the book of Genesis were the focus. Mr Dunne has now retired from such active and regular teaching. Rev Tamata continued a weekly Bible study for our Korean folk.

Sunday Schools were conducted at Raymond Terrace and Cardiff on Sunday mornings. Psalm tunes, the Shorter Catechism and the Scriptures were taught faithfully each week.

A Kids Club has been conducted on individual days during school holidays and regularly on the first Saturday afternoon of each month. The school holiday Kids Clubs have been well attended by local children, and children of the congregation. A small number of local children continued to attend the monthly Kids Club. It is planned to conduct the Kids Club on a weekly basis during Term 1, 2007.

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY REPORT

Mr David Kerridge: At its meeting on 27/2/07 the Southern Presbytery had before it the application of Mr David Kerridge, BA, MDiv dated 12/2/07 to be recognised as a student for the ministry. The Presbytery was encouraged by this application which was backed by positive reports from various centres where he had given supply – Hunter, Ulverstone and Knox. Presbytery resolved to leave the application on the table pending receipt of information from St George’s Session and plan to take up the application in May when the experience of his further supply at Ulverstone will be available. It is anticipated that Mr Kerridge will give extended supply at Ulverstone where he had been warmly received when supplying in December. The Training of Ministry report is favourable and the Presbytery is asking Synod 2007 for authority to admit Mr Kerridge as a student at such time as it sees fit.

Knox Glen Huntly: The work had progressed in 2006 with average attendance at Knox around 55 and two Sunday school classes. At GH over 40 attended each week and some 200 at the Nuer service. These services are usually taken by Rev Tut Yoa. The Glen Huntly work will be impacted by Ian & Alina McKenzie’s return to Scotland at the end of January 2007. There is a Ladies Bible Study at Knox and a midweek prayer/study meeting at Knox. In the latter part of the year a Christian training course was instituted at Knox on Friday evening for Sudanese folk, but in 2007 has been combined with the prayer meeting and held on Thursday evening. It is attended by a good cross-section of the people. At Glen Huntly there is a Wednesday after-school kids’ club and a Friday evening bible study. A Lord’s Day service is

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held in the Nuer language is held in rented premises at Dandenong, and English elements are gradually being introduced.

At present Mr Yoa is not inducted as we do not have financial viability secured. Although we have some reserves they are being depleted (by \$7500 in 2006 and perhaps \$20,000 in 2007) and will not last beyond 2008 if we continue to have liability for rent of an extra manse and the Dandenong building totalling \$19,240pa. However, there is definite progress. On 27/2/07 the Presbytery recognised Glen Huntly-Dandenong as a work in development with a view to eventual recognition as a distinct pastoral charge. It continues under the Knox Session and Deacons' Court meantime. The intention is to do what was done with Narre Warren 18 years ago, although the capital cost will be far beyond the \$416,500 expended there 18 years ago or the \$371,500 at Knox 21 years ago. A central location, perhaps close to Monash University would be excellent. The provisional name is *All Nations PCEA* since it will aim to minister to those of all backgrounds. Presbytery expressed its prayerful support of this endeavour.

Narre Warren: Mr Ball reported to Presbytery that all activities had been maintained during the year. He was particularly encouraged by not having to draw on stipend relief in 2006. The manse fund from which a manse allowance was paid, had shown a good increase in capital value during the year. The desire for additional elders had not yet been fulfilled, but fresh moves were afoot. Mr Simpson noted that a fortnightly prayer meeting/bible study had commenced in Pakenham, some 15 minutes to the east, in February 2007. A recent happy occasion had been a gathering of elders/ministers at the Ball home to acknowledge God's goodness in George attaining 25 years of ministry.

Geelong: Mr Smith had been inducted at a glad occasion on 16/6/2006. It was early days in the new pastorate and there was consolidation to do, but matters were steady. Extensive renovations had been carried out on the manse prior to Mr Smith's arrival.

Hamilton: The Hamilton Congregation had been wound up by Presbytery on 27/2/07 following meetings with the folk remaining on 18/1/07. While we will continue to provide pastoral care as practical, and the folk have been encouraged to support the new minister of St Andrew's PCV, David Schulz who has been most supportive.

Ulverstone: Dr Ward reported that he had conducted the AGM of the Congregation on Wednesday 7/2/07, and found the congregation in a satisfactory state. Quite a burden had fallen on local elder Ian Hamilton in 2006, but there had been helpful supply which had continued since December with Rev George Ball in January and John Zylstra in February. Mr David Kerridge is to give extended supply from the middle of March. We anticipate good progress in 2007 although offerings will need to increase. The manse had been sold during the year and the proceeds judiciously invested so that the fund has increased in a very positive way, as has the Max Hutton Bequest.

FINANCE & 8:14 FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

Incorporating General Treasurer's Report

Committee members: AH Steel (Convener), J Audet, DE Kerr, JB Louden, DJ Ramsay

FINANCE

Business attended to by the committee included:

1. Ministers' Minimum Stipend/Benefits: Current Level and Basis of Review of Minimum Stipend – Synod 2006 resolved the adjustment of Minimum Stipend (Excluding Manse, Car and Telephone) for 2006/2007 be made on 1st January and 1st July in line with the movement in the Average Weekly Earnings, Australia (Full-time adult ordinary time earnings) as published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. In the event of a negative movement in any six monthly review period, no adjustment be made. No change is recommended by the Committee.

2. Synod Commissioners' motor vehicle reimbursement costs: A review of Motor Vehicle Running Costs where private/church vehicles are used to travel to/from Synod was conducted vide Synod 2003 resolution (Minutes 03.32.6) and a request for a review was also received from a member of Synod.

In reviewing the matter, the Committee considered the Principle on which reimbursement should be made and the Basis used for determining the amount of reimbursement.

Principle - It was felt that Synod be not required to reimburse the full Capital, Fixed and Running costs, however, all Running costs ought to be reimbursed for church owned vehicles with the option for Commissions who use privately owned vehicles to claim for Fixed costs as well, if they so desire. It was also felt that using the congregation owned vehicle to drive to Synod could be considered as part of "working the charge" as provided for under Ministers Travelling Expenses (Handbook 3.16.d).

Basis – The Committee learnt that the NSW NRMA now conduct an annual Vehicle Operating Costs Survey which provides similar information to their former publication that ceased in 2003 which we were using as the basis for our reimbursement rates at the time. This survey includes figures for Capital, Fixed and Running costs. Because of the significant movement in fuel prices, reimbursement for fuel cost should be calculated at the pump price at the time of Synod each year. Daily average prices for each State are available on the internet.

Recommendations –

- i. The principle of reimbursement be Running (operating) Costs only, for church owned vehicles. For privately owned vehicles, Running Costs with an option to include Fixed Costs, if commissioners so desire.
- ii. The NRMA annual Vehicle Operating Costs Survey figures be used as the basis for reimbursement. These figures to be adjusted on the last business day before Synod convenes, taking into account the average unleaded fuel pump price in the State where Synod is meeting.

3. Church Extension and Supply

Stipend Relief – Presbyteries have sought Stipend Relief for 2007/2008, all on a strictly needs basis, on behalf of Deacons' Courts as follows:

\$ 20,000 – Armidale (up to 50% of Minimum Stipend)

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\$ 19,500 - Hawkesbury-Nepean
\$ 5,000 - Narre Warren

\$ 44,500 Total
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4. Estimates (Major Working Fund Receipts/Payments for 2007)

Estimates have been made for the ensuing year (Appendix 1). They only include income and expenditure for the major funds.

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Proposed Deliverances:

1. We record our thanks to God for the sufficiency in financial matters we have enjoyed during the past year.

2. Adjustment of Minimum Stipend (Excluding Manse, Car and Telephone) for 2007/2008 be made on 1st January and 1st July in line with the movement in the *Average Weekly Earnings, Australia (Full-time adult ordinary time earnings)* as published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. In the event of a negative movement in any six monthly review period, no adjustment be made.

3. Existing legislation, *Synod Delegates' Expenses* (Act 1 of Class 2, Synod 1984 - Decision Book page 16) Section [c] "Motor Vehicle Running Costs" (Amended Synod 2003, Synod 2005) be replaced with:

"Motor Vehicle Running Costs:

- Costs on basis of one claim per congregation represented at Synod.
- For church owned vehicles, reimbursement be *Running (operating) Costs* only, for church owned vehicles. For privately owned vehicles, *Running Costs* with an option to include *Fixed Costs*, if commissioners so desire.
- The NSW NRMA annual *Vehicle Operating Costs Survey* figures to be used as the basis for reimbursement. These figures to be adjusted on the last business day before Synod convenes, taking into account the average unleaded fuel pump price in the State where Synod is meeting."

4. Stipend Relief for 2006/2007 be granted to the following Deacons' Courts, on a strictly needs basis:

\$ 20,000 - Armidale (up to 50% of Minimum Stipend)
\$ 20,000 - Hawkesbury-Nepean
\$ 5,000 - Narre Warren

8:14 FOUNDATION

Contributions: No contributions were made during 2006. Funds increased during 2006 from the following sources:

\$4,506 - Interest
 \$4,626 - Increase in market value of share investments
 \$ 50 - Rent from St Georges Deacons' Court

 \$9,182
 =====

Funds in Hand:

Position as at -	31/12/06	31/12/05
Loan - Armidale Congregation	0	19,501
Working Funds in hand	90,765	81,583
	-----	-----
Total Funds -	\$ 90,765	\$ 101,084
	=====	=====

Excludes \$7,300 held on deposit.

Disbursements: There were no disbursements during 2006.

Loan Application: An application for a \$15,000 Car Loan was received, via the Clerk of Synod, from the Hunter-Barrington Deacons' Court on 13 June 2006. As it was necessary to purchase a second hand motor vehicle for the minister's use at the time and not to wait until Synod 2007 to consider the request, an interest free loan was approved with a term of four years with repayments of \$320 per month. The loan has been reduced to \$13,080 as at 31/12/06.

Because of time restraints and Car Loans having not previously been granted from 8:14 Foundation funds, it was drawn against Synod General Funds (part SN Ramsay bequest) pending confirmation by Synod 2007.

Loan Repayments: The outstanding balance of \$19,501 of the loan to Armidale congregation was waived (gifted) by Synod 2006 (Minutes 05.44)

Review of Regulations: A review of regulations governing the Foundation was conducted for the following reasons:

1. Committee membership
2. Principle
3. Name Change
4. Applications
5. Use of Funds - "*Borrowing Short – Lending Long*" etc

1. Committee Membership: The current membership of the Synod Committee is contrary to Regulation (Decision Book page 14 No. vi) viz: *The committee consists of the Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer of the Synod, together with a representative of each Presbytery.* Synod 2005 disregarded this when they joined the 8:14 Foundation Committee with the Finance Committee. A separate committee is not needed and operations can be under the purview of the Finance Committee.

2. Principle: Current Regulation (i) (Decision Book page 14) states “ There be a special fund, based on the principle of 2nd Corinthians chapter 8 verse 14 ...” This is only partly true as the regulations include provision for lending/borrowing and charging/paying interest to fellow believers.

The subject under discussion in chapters 8 and 9 of 2nd Corinthians is the work of charity (giving/donating) to other Christians.

In this eighth chapter Paul acquaints the Corinthians with, and commends, the good example of the Macedonians in the work of charity, and that Titus was sent to Corinth to collect their bounty (v. 1-6). He then proceeds to urge this duty with several cogent arguments (v. 7-15), and commends the persons who were employed in this affair (v. 16-24).

After putting forward several reasons in verses 7-12, another argument is taken from the discrimination which the divine Providence makes in the distribution of the things of this world, and the mutability of human affairs, (Matthew Henry Commentary) v. 13-15.

In verse 14 the Apostle is advocating equality among believers. He is not advocating an equality of goods, but speaks of the equal relief from the burden of want. (Matthew Henry Commentary)

There is no reference to lending money to, or borrowing from, fellow believers in verse 14, (with or without charging/paying interest) but the Macedonians gave (donated) funds for the poor saints at Jerusalem.

Therefore, as the current 8:14 Foundation regulations (iv and “a” and “b” Synod 1984) make provision for church members to place money on deposit with the Synod and Synod pay them interest on such, the Committee believes it is not proper to state the Fund is based on the principle of 2nd Corinthians chapter 8 verse 14. It would be nearer the principle if the deposit/interest provision was removed and only donations be accepted. But then the Synod can either donate or lend (with or without interest) to congregations from the fund (Regulations v, vii, viii).

Our recommendation therefore, is that reference to the Foundation being based on 2 Corinthians chapter 8 verse 14 be deleted from the regulations.

3. Name Change: The Committee believes it is misleading and unwise to call this Fund a “Foundation”.

The meaning of “foundation” from: Macquarie Dictionary – “that on which something is founded; the basis or ground of anything; a donation or legacy for the support of an institution; an endowment; an endowed institution”. Chambers Dictionary – the base of a building; the groundwork or basis; a permanent fund for a benevolent purpose or for some special purpose”

There is no perpetual donation, bequest (legacy) etc. to ensure the permanence of the fund, as Synod may apply all of the funds to loans or gifts to congregations. It started from scratch and gradually built up over time, mostly from small donations.

Our recommendation therefore is that the name be changed to “The 8:14 Fund”

4. Applications: Current Regulation (ix) states “Applications for loans or assistance from the fund shall be submitted to the Clerk of Synod in accordance with ordinary administrative procedures and be accompanied by all such information as may be necessary for the Synod to make a determination”.

Currently, applications made during the Synodical year are submitted to the Clerk of Synod who in turn immediately refers them to the Finance/8:14 Foundation Committee for consideration and recommendation to the Synod Administration Committee. If both committees agree to the request, applications are approved and then submitted via the Finance/8:14 Foundation Committee to the next Synod for confirmation of the action taken.

When applications have been submitted to the Clerk of Synod, shortly before Synod meets, he usually sends a copy to the Finance/8:14 Foundation Committee for consideration prior to Synod. After the Clerk presents the application to Synod, it seeks a recommendation from the Finance/8:14 Foundation Committee before a determination is made.

The Committee recommends the regulations be changed to better provide for these situations. There needs to be some procedure whereby applications can be considered and approved during the Synodical year as they often involve loans to assist in property purchase, which in some cases, cannot wait until the next Synod meets.

5. Use of Funds: “Borrowing Short – Lending Long” etc.

The operation of the 8:14 Foundation includes a provision to “*Borrow Short and Lend Long*”. The situation could arise where the Foundation could not meet its obligations.

Regulations 2.a, b, & c (Synod 1983) make provision for deposits to be made with the Foundation which are repayable to the depositor on 30 days notice (Term deposits fixed terms up to 3 years). This is “Borrowing Short” by the Foundation ie. It may have to return deposits on short notice. On the other hand, the Foundation can make loans to congregations for capital expenditure which are usually repaid over longer periods. This is “Lending Long”.

The situation could arise where there are insufficient funds in hand to meet deposits called up because of outstanding loans to congregations. There are no safeguards in the regulations to prevent this occurring. In essence it means only donated funds and interest earned should be available to lend to congregations. This is different, for example, to Banks in this country where they are regulated by the Reserve Bank who acts as a “lender of last resort” ie. Bank deposits are “guaranteed” by the Government of the day.

There were a number of small deposits made with the Foundation in its initial years but they were all withdrawn except for two which remain. The amount involved is \$7,300 (see beginning of report) which shows as a Liability in the Synod Balance Sheet.

Our recommendation therefore is that the deposit facility be removed from the Foundation.

6. Regulations: Fresh regulations have been drafted and set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

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Proposed Deliverances:

1. Synod confirm the approval of a \$15,000 Car Loan to the Hunter-Barrington Deacons' Court. The loan being Interest free over a term of four years, with repayments of \$320 per month and funded from Synod General Funds (part SN Ramsay bequest). Further, Synod authorise the transfer of the outstanding balance of \$13,080 as at 31 December 2006, to the 8:14 Foundation account.
2. That administration of the 8:14 Foundation be the responsibility of the Finance Committee, and operations etc. be reported to Synod annually.
3. That reference to the Foundation being based on 2 Corinthians chapter 8 verse 14 be deleted from the regulations.
4. That "The 8:14 Foundation" be now known as "The 8:14 Fund"
5. Applications for loans or assistance from the Foundation be submitted to the Clerk of Synod, in accordance with ordinary administrative procedures, who shall provide a copy to the Synod Finance Committee for consideration and recommendation to Synod. Should it be impracticable to submit the application to the annual Synod for determination, because of timing, the Finance Committee shall forward its recommendation to the Synod Administration Committee who shall make a determination on it. Applications shall be accompanied by all such information as may be necessary for the Synod/Synod Administration Committee to make a determination.
6. That the deposit facility be removed from the Foundation.
7. Synod approve the revised regulations for the Foundation as detailed in Appendix 2 of the Report (with any changes necessitated by any variation in the proposed deliverances).

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GENERAL TREASURER

1. Financial Needs: The financial needs of the Synod were adequately provided for during 2006. Total funds increased by \$92,028 to \$1,573,418 after allowing for \$285,914 held on behalf of congregations (Davis memorial Bequest), ministers' superannuation levies etc.

The net increase of \$92,028 resulted from:

Increases – (Mainly from Share revaluations)	
Capital Funds	\$ 65,058
Committee working funds	\$ 28,724
General Funds	\$ 8,564

	\$102,346
Decreases (Net) -	
8:14 Foundation	\$ 10,318

<u>Net Increase in Funds -</u>	<u>\$ 92,028</u>
	=====

For details of Increases/Decreases see Notes 8 to 14 in Synod's Balance.

2. Bequests: No bequests were received in 2006.

3. Congregational Contributions to Synod Funds: Contributions of \$17,046 by congregations to Synod Funds during 2006 decreased by \$1,928 (10%) on 2005. Refer to Congregational Contributions Summary at back of Financial Statements for full details. "Other" contributions were \$11,999 less than 2005 because \$14,400 was sent through the Synod account for the Tsunami appeal last year.

4. Synod General Funds: A surplus of \$1,020 was recorded in Synod General Working Funds.

General Funds as at 31/12/06 comprised:

Working Funds - IC MacKinnon bequest	\$ 13,520
- SN Ramsay bequest	\$ 51,991
- Remaining balance	\$ 23,983

Total General Funds -	\$ 89,494
	=====

5. Books of Account Audit: A satisfactory audit report has been obtained from Partlett, Chave & Rowland, Chartered Accountants of Caringbah and is included in the published Financial Statements.

Proposed Deliverances: Nil.

Appendix 1

FINANCE/8:14 FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES - MAJOR WORKING FUNDS for twelve months ending 31/12/2007

Fund	Balance as at 31/12/2006	Estimated Income to 12/07	Estimated Expenditure to 12/07	Estimated Surplus (Deficit)	Estimated Balance 31/12/2007	Transfer from Gen Funds
Church Extension	0	300	300	0	0	Nil
Chr/Extn - Stipend	0	3,000	3,000	0	0	Nil
Chr/Extn - Stipend (DAAB)	59,084	5,000	45,000	-40,000	19,084	Nil
Missions - General	184	24,000	9,000	15,000	15,184	Nil
Missions - (Legg/AIM)	0	6,000	38,000	-32,000	-32,000	Nil
Missions - (PFCF - DAAB)	89,268	9,000	0	9,000	98,268	Nil
Missions - (Fiji Support)	681	0	641	-641	40	Nil
Missions Relief	508,348	50,000	50,000	0	508,348	Nil
Training of Ministry	85,754	8,000	2,500	5,500	91,254	Nil
Youth & Fellowship	10,641	2,500	2,900	-400	10,241	Nil
General Funds (See below)	90,135	6,000	4,000	2,000	92,135	Nil
Total Estimated Transfers from General Funds						Nil
General Funds - Estimated balance 31/12/2007					92,135	
Less Estimated Bequest - IC McKinnon				14,000		
Less Estimated Bequest - SN Ramsay				55,000	69,000	23,135
Estimated Surplus in Synod General Working Funds as at 31/12/07						\$ 23,135

Notes:

- For budgeting purposes, the IC McKinnon and SN Ramsay Bequests have been deducted from the estimated Synod General Working Funds as at 31/12/07.
- Estimated deficit of \$32,000 in Missions - (Legg/AIM) can be covered from balances in Missions General and Missions - (PFCF - DAAB).

Appendix 2

The 8:14 Fund

(formerly The 8:14 Foundation)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

REGULATIONS AS ADOPTED BY SYNOD 1983

and amended Synod 1984, Synod 1985 and Synod 1993

1. That “The 8:14 Foundation” be known as “The 8:14 Fund” and referred to in these regulations as “the fund”.
2. The object of the fund is to provide a source of finance for capital expenditure in the work of the church.
3. The fund shall consist of money and property of any nature.
4. The fund shall be applied, both as to capital and income, in making available loans or gifts for such capital expenditure in the enterprises of the church, including presbyteries and congregations as may from time to time be approved by the Synod.
5. The Fund shall be administered the Synod Finance Committee. The cost of administration shall be a first charge on the fund.
6. Applications for loans or assistance from the fund shall be submitted to the Clerk of Synod, in accordance with ordinary administrative procedures, who shall provide a copy to the Synod Finance Committee for consideration and recommendation to Synod. Should it be impracticable to submit the application to the annual Synod for determination, because of timing, the Finance Committee shall forward its recommendation to the Synod Administration Committee who shall make a determination on it. Applications shall be accompanied by all such information as may be necessary for the Synod/Synod Administration Committee to make a determination.
7. All loans from the fund shall be subject to such arrangements for repayments as are approved by Synod/Synod Administration Committee.
8. When not immediately required for the purpose of the fund, the assets of the fund may be invested in suitable investments.
9. Receipts of *Lindfield Lease Account* be placed in the fund.
10. Synod Finance Committee shall examine and report annually to Synod on contributions to, disbursements from, administration and promotion of, and any other matters that may affect the fund

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SUPERANNUATION COMMITTEE

RS Ward (Convener 1978), Messrs JB Louden, J Audet, D Ramsay

A: Superannuation Fund

Messrs Yoa and M.G.Smith are additions since last report. The average age of the 11 current members is 57.3 years, with an average of 14.90 years of service.

1. Membership

Name	Service from	Service to 30.6.83	Total service at 31.12.06	Year 65
S.R.Tamata	16.10.1998	00.00	08.45	2006
R.W.Murray	11.12.1968	11.72	34.57	2006
J.A.McCallum	28.06.1985	00.00	22.50	2007
R.S.Ward	20.03.1976	07.28	30.78	2010
M.G.Smith	16.06.2006	00.00	00.54	2013
W.P.Gadsby	11.05.1977	06.14	29.64	2013
T.I.Leggott	11.03.1989	00.00	17.80	2014
D.K.Muldoon	29.11.2002	00.00	04.09	2017
G.D.Ball	01.12.1997	00.00	09.08	2020
D.P.Smith	16.11.2001	00.00	05.12	2025
T.W.Yoa	09.05.2006	00.00	00.64	2024

Note: Mr Murray's service excludes a one year absence in Scotland 1975/76. Mr Gadsby was admitted by authority of Synod 1977 but was not ordained until 18.8.1977. Other commencement dates are ordination or induction except Mr Ball whose service as an ordained minister began 1/12/97, and Mr Yoa from date of admission by Synod.

Benefits in respect of pre 30.6.1983 service attract different taxation provisions (see 1985 Synod Reports) but for those over 60 will be tax free on and after 1/7/2007.

The Superannuation Guarantee levy is 9% from 1/7/2002. Congregations which employ a preacher for an extended period on a supply basis are liable for this levy and should contact the Committee for advice/ assistance.

2. Church Contributions to Superannuation

1. *Superannuation Levy:* An email was issued 21/11/2006 indicating the levy for 2007 would be \$5,972 or \$1,493 a quarter based on estimated stipend of \$39,808 in 2007 (assuming \$11 increase 1/7/07). The concession to congregations receiving aid or that are vacant means that the levy for Armidale, Mt Druitt, and possibly Narre Warren, reduces to \$1,343 a quarter, and for vacant congregations (Brisbane, Ulverstone also the special case of Hastings) to \$747 a quarter.
2. *Superannuation Support Fund:* The old Widows and Orphans, Aged/Retired Ministers accounts have been consolidated into this account. The Capital stands at \$151,294, interest/dividend earnings were \$8,848, and accumulated working funds were \$4,361.93. We anticipate modest draw-downs from 2008 to assist in minimising the levy/improving benefits.

3. The Fund

1. *Default Fund:* All but two of our members have chosen HESTA for their contributions. The other two retain membership of the ING Fund. Those who have moved future contributions to HESTA may also move part or all their ING accumulation to HESTA (or another Fund). There is a very small exit fee with ING. In general there is wisdom in having superannuation in one Fund since one avoids two sets of overhead charges.
2. *Hesta benefits*

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HESTA introduced improved insurance benefits within the Fund as of 1/11/06. The automatic insurance benefit up to age 35 is \$160,000, at age 45 \$81,900, at age 55 \$24,580 and \$5,120 at age 65. Fuller particulars of benefits and options for Disability and total disablement cover were supplied by HESTA to members.

3. Performance

Results for the year to 30/6/06 are sent direct to members by the ING or HESTA, but before this occurred were also circulated in an information memo to members from the Convener dated 15/08/2006.

The **ING return** for the past three years on the default setting has been:

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Capital Guaranteed	3.1%	5.45%	6.85
Managed Growth	13.3%	13.11%	14.88
Average	8.2%	9.28%	10.865% 5 years to 30/6/06 5.39%

In the default Core Pool of the **Hesta Fund**, about 78% is invested in growth and 22% in defensive investments. Results have been:

<i>Core-pool</i>	<i>15.5%</i>	<i>13.4%</i>	<i>14.4%</i>	5 years to 30/6/06 <i>8.8%</i>
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6. Government changes

As of **1/1/2006** it became possible to split superannuation contributions from that date with one's wife, and members were advised of this provision by circular 13/12/2005. Then the May 2006 Budget announced significant changes. Some relevant to us follow. From **10/5/06** retirees will not be required to draw on their super once they stop working, and from **1/7/07** the tax situation is much simplified. Basically super benefits will be tax free if received at age 60 or over – this includes lump-sum withdrawals and payments from an income stream investment in the fund. Lump-sum death benefits will be tax free if the beneficiary is a spouse or dependent. From **20/9/07** the pension asset test will be eased.

B. Long Service Leave

We remind Synod members of the provision by Synod 2003 of an extra week of annual leave (5 weeks in all), which must be taken, or the provision of LSL at a week a year at the local level. Presbyteries are urged to keep a close eye on ministers' leave to ensure ministers do not suffer burn out through failure to take it.

C. Regulations

No changes are proposed.

Proposed deliverances:

1. Synod, note the levy for 2007 of \$1, 493 per quarter payable by the end of February, May, August and November with concessions as stated in the report.
2. Synod approve the immediate addition from the Super Support income account of \$4,361.93 to the amount treated as capital in the SSF.
3. Synod remind fund members of the advisability of seeking professional advice in regard to both choice of Fund and investments within any particular fund, and the effects of recent changes in Government legislation, so that it meets their particular needs, as this is their responsibility and not that of the church.

**QUEENSLAND TRUST CORPORATION
'PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA'**

Members: Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer

Deed and Common Seal: The title deed for the Church property at Kalinga is lodged in the Locked Deed Box of the Trustees of the Synod of Eastern Australia which is lodged with the National Australia Bank Ltd, 163 Rowe Street Eastwood NSW. There were no applications of the Common Seal in 2006.

Proposed Deliverances: Nil.

**N.S.W. TRUST CORPORATION
'THE TRUSTEES OF THE SYNOD OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA'**

Members: Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer of Synod

Deed Box and Common Seal: The Locked Deed Box of the Trustees of the Synod of Eastern Australia is lodged with the National Australia Bank Ltd, 163 Rowe Street Eastwood NSW. The seal was applied to the following documents during 2006:

214	27/2/06	Discharge Mortgage No.AB919995, Pauline Therese Bradshaw
215	5/9/06	Application for Subdivision, Taree CC, Lot 10, DP1062667, Tinonee Church
216	5/9/06	Development Application, Taree CC, Subdivision Lot 10 DP1062667, Tinonee

Bequests: No bequests were received by the Trustees during 2006.

Investments: Review of Results as at 31/12/06

Diversification - Specified Capital Funds

Amount Invested	Percentage of Total	Strategy Benchmark	Strategy Range	Where Invested
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
15,343	5%	5%	5% - 10%	Banks/Trustee Companies
75,669	23%	30%	20% - 40%	1 st Registered Mortgages
46,300	14%	15%	10% - 25%	Bonds/Debentures
197,170	58%	50%	40% - 60%	Equities (Shares/Units)
334,482	100%	100%		

Present investments are within the Strategy Ranges.

Return on Investments:

Growth: Total investments were increased by \$12,938 representing a return of 4.02% against a Target of 3.8% (CPI of 3.3% plus 0.5%)

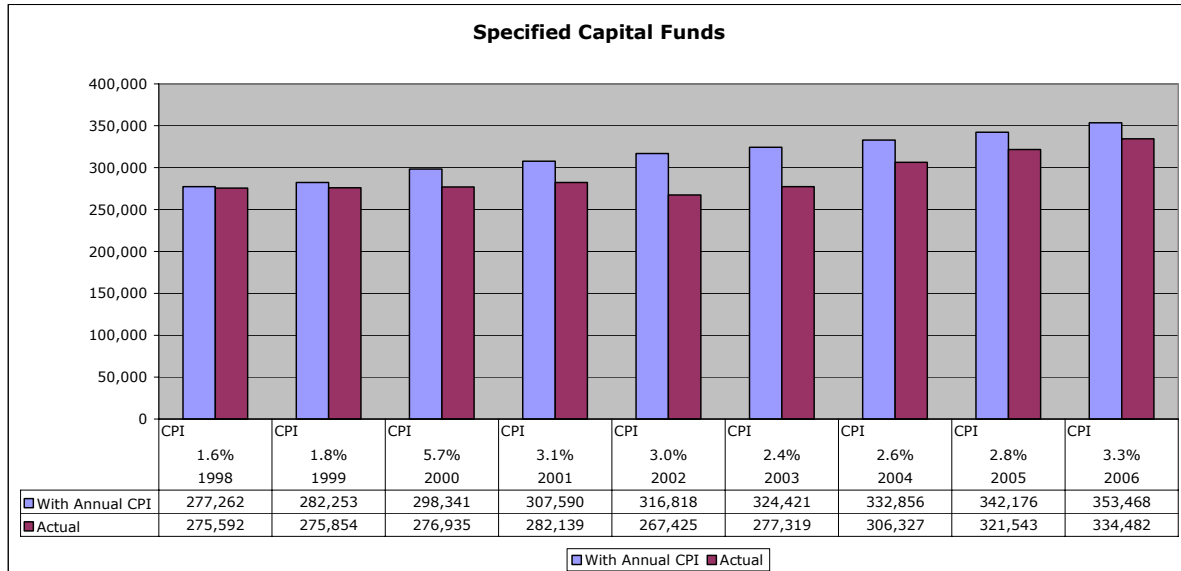
Income: Income of \$35,747 represented a return of 11.12% against a Target of 7.56% (Average Official Cash Interest Rate of 5.81% Plus 1.75%).

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Overall return: Growth of 4.02% plus Income 11.12% = 15.14% overall return on investments totalling \$321,543 as at 1/1/06.

Targets were exceeded for both *Growth* (5.89%) and *Income* (47.06%).

Review of Growth in Specified Capital Funds (Bequests)



As at 31/12/06 the total of Capital Funds “Actual” (\$334,482) still lagged behind the total of Capital Funds “with Annual CPI” added (\$353,468) by 5.37 % (\$18,986). This is only a very small improvement of 0.66% on the 2005 difference of 6.03% (\$20,633).

Overall growth in Managed Funds was stifled by large distributions received from two companies which included significant capital gains they achieved in managing their investments. This had a negative impact on the value of our investments. Steps will be taken in future to reinvest the capital gains portion of distributions received, which will assist in growth in our Specified Capital Funds.

Summary: Investments are adequately diversified, Income exceeded target and “real value” of Capital Funds (Bequests) stills lags by 5.37%, but is slowly catching up.

Proposed Deliverances: Nil

**THE TRUSTEES FOR VICTORIA
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA**

Synod Reports 2007

Members: JRB Webster (1966), JB Loudon (1985), WJW Hanna (1994),
AH Steel (2001 Secretary), DJ Ramsay (2002)

Administration: All business requiring attention was transacted via email. A quarterly report was sent to all members of the Body Corporate by the Secretary which included a record of business transacted and an update of investments made on behalf of Synod. Business requiring the Trust Corporation's attention included:

Property Holdings

Tasmanian Property: The Ulverstone Congregation sold their manse at 12 Thomas Street, Ulverstone with Southern Presbytery directing "the funds be held for the benefit of the congregation in a suitable spread of investments so as to endeavour to maintain their real value after inflation against the time a replacement manse may be found appropriate or to support payment of an adequate manse allowance without diminishing the real value over time, and that this Manse fund be accounted as a distinct fund in the accounts of the congregation, the income to be added to the capital meantime".

Bequests: No new bequests were received by Synod or reported to the Secretary by congregations during 2006.

Investments - Specified Capital Funds (Bequests)

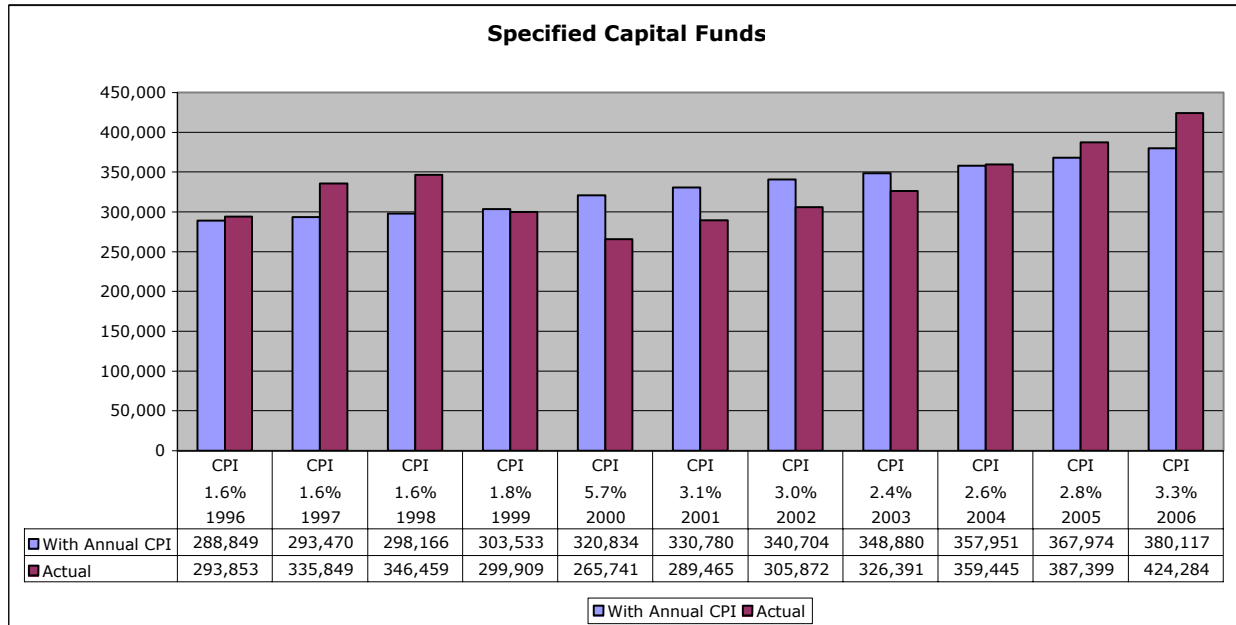
Diversification - Investment of *Specified Capital Funds* were within the Investment Strategy *Benchmark Ranges* as at 31/12/06 except for *Cash (1%)* which was slightly lower than the 5% - 10% range.

Actual as at 31/12/05		Asset Class	Investment Strategy	
Amount	Percentage		Benchmark	Range
3,316	1%	Cash	5%	5% - 10%
110,000	26%	Mortgage	30%	20% - 40%
70,000	16%	Debentures	15%	10% - 25%
240,968	57%	Shares/Units	50%	40% - 60%
-----			-----	
424,284	100%		100%	
=====			=====	

Return for twelve months ending 31/12/06 -

Growth – Total investments increased by \$36,884 representing growth of 9.52% against a Target of 3.8% (CPI of 3.3% plus 0.5%) The target was exceeded by 151%.

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The total value of Specified Capital Funds continues to appreciate at a rate greater than annual inflation (CPI). An excess of \$44,167 (11.62%) existed as at 31/12/06.

Income: Income of \$21,655 represented a return of 5.59% against a Target of 7.56% (Average Official Cash Interest Rate of 5.81 % Plus 1.75%).
Target shortfall was 26%

Overall return: Growth 9.52% Income 5.59% = 15.11% overall return on investments totalling \$387,399 as at 31/12/05.

Summary

Investments are adequately *Diversified* and with continuing low inflation and record growth in the stock market our *Investment Strategy Objective* was comfortably achieved in *Growth*, and *Real Value* of assets maintained. However, *Income* for the twelve months ended 31/12/06 fell short of our target. This mainly being caused by our inability to find suitable 1st mortgage investments for nine months of the year. However, the current mortgage of \$110,000 with interest @ 9.00%pa runs until 14/12/07.

Deeds/Bonds and Common Seal

Title Deeds/Student Bonds Custody – The only change to deeds and bonds held in *Safe Custody* at the National Australia Bank, Eastwood during 2006 was the uplifting and release of the Title Deed for the Ulverstone Manse at 12 Thomas Street, Ulverstone, which was sold.

Title Deed for 10 Bentley Street, Wantira, purchased in August 2004 by Knox Deacons' Court, was received at the time of writing this report and lodged with the National Australia Bank on 16/3/07.

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Common Seal Application –

The Common Seal was applied to the following documents during 2006:

No.	Date Executed	Executed by	Document Executed	On behalf of
69	27.2.06	AHS/WJW	Discharge Mortgage AB919995 - Pauline Therese Bradshaw	Synod
70	6.3.06	AHS/JBL	Request for Direct Crediting of Divns - NAB	Narre Warren
71	6.3.06	AHS/JBL	Request for Direct Crediting of Divns - Telstra Ltd	Narre Warren
72	23.3.06	AHS/JBL	Request for Direct Credit of Payments - Goodman Fielder	Knox
73	29.3.06	AHS/JBL	Transfer of Land- Vol 5096 Fol 16 12 Thomas St,Ulverstone	Ulverstone
74	26.9.06	AHS/JBL	Request Direct Crediting of Divns - CFS Comm Prop Office Fnd	Ulverstone
75	11.10.06	AHS/JBL	Discharge of Mortgage No.8770896 (AIM)	Knox
76	24.10.06	AHS/JBL	Off Market Transfer - CDF 5000 Units	Ulverstone
77	1.11.06	AHS/JBL	NAB On-Line Authorised Representative Authority (J Audet)	Narre Warren

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Proposed Deliverances – Nil.

Correspondence Item 1

**Southern Presbytery
Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia**

Clerk: Rev Dr Rowland S. Ward, BA, BTh (Hons), ThD
26 Roxburgh Road, Wantirna 3152
Tel/Fax: 9720 4871 Int + 613 9720 4871

Email: rowlandw@optushome.com.au

28 Feb 2007.

Clerk,
Synod of Eastern Australia,
PO Box 579,
SPRINGWOOD 2777

At a duly constituted meeting of Southern Presbytery on 27th February 2007, inter alia,

3. Status of Minister in Presbytery (vide #3, 24/11/06)

Dr Ward reported that there had been no negative reaction from the Law and Advisory Committee, and submitted a draft overture as follows:

(as attached)

The overture was approved and, and Rev M. G. Smith was appointed to state the same. The Overture is attached and certified by the Clerk.

Extracted from the records of the Southern Presbytery

Rowland S. Ward
CLERK

OVERTURE RE STATUS OF MINISTER IN PRESBYTERY

WHEREAS it appears correct to state that a minister is a member of Presbytery in respect of his status as a minister but his membership of the church as such belongs to the congregation he serves or to which he has attached himself, so that resignation, retirement or even deposition from the ministry does not automatically remove him from church membership;

AND WHEREAS it appears that practice has been somewhat inconsistent so that ministers who resign or retire have not necessarily been on a communicants' roll as church members;

NOW THEREFORE the Southern Presbytery humbly overtures the Synod of Eastern Australia appointed to meet at Cardiff 7/5/07 to take these premises into consideration and declare that

a minister is a member of Presbytery in respect of his status as a minister but his membership of the church as such belongs to the congregation he serves or to which he has attached himself, so that resignation, retirement or even deposition from the ministry does not automatically remove him from church membership. Synod direct that the name of the minister be added to the Communion Roll of the congregation he serves, if it is not already there, that this taken into account when preparing statistics to avoid double counting, and that the Handbook (2.10) be adjusted accordingly when next reprinted.

OR to do otherwise for this object as Synod may deem best.

Southern Presbytery
27/02/2007.

Correspondence Item 2

**Southern Presbytery
Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia**

Clerk: Rev Dr Rowland S. Ward, BA, BTh (Hons), ThD

26 Roxburgh Road, Wantirna 3152

Tel/Fax: 9720 4871 Int + 613 9720 4871

Email: rowlandw@optushome.com.au

28 Feb 2007.

Clerk,
Synod of Eastern Australia,
PO Box 579,
SPRINGWOOD 2777

At a duly constituted meeting of Southern Presbytery on 27th February 2007, inter alia,

4. Minister's retirement from inducted service (vide #10, 24/11/06)

Dr Ward submitted the following draft overture which in its essence he had circulated after the last meeting, the intention being it be enacted according to Barrier Act procedure.

(as attached)

The overture was approved and, and Rev M. G. Smith was appointed to state the same.
The overture is attached and certified by the Clerk.

Extracted from the records of the Southern Presbytery

Rowland S. Ward
CLERK

OVERTURE RE MINISTERS' RETIREMENT FROM INDUCTED SERVICE

WHEREAS a minister is ordained for life unless removed by disciplinary process,
AND WHEREAS tenure of a particular congregation may be limited without breaching this principle;

AND WHEREAS the above positions are illustrated in the retirement of the Old Testament priests at age 50 (Numbers 8:24-25), and can also be seen in the appointment of men to particular tasks for a specified time which may or may not be extended;

AND WHEREAS it is respectful both to a minister who is advanced in years and to the congregation in which he serves to set a mandatory retirement date from tenure of a particular charge, without precluding him from such other service as may be appropriate to his personal circumstances including as stated supply;

AND WHEREAS retirement provision for ministers through Superannuation is much more satisfactory than in earlier times;

AND WHEREAS it was clearly the mind of Synod 1984 that normally ministers retire from inducted service at age 65 except with the express concurrence of the congregation and presbytery of the bounds but this rule was rescinded in 1991 purportedly because it had not passed under the Barrier Act;

AND WHEREAS a mandatory retirement age from tenure of a particular charge is the practice in the Free Church of Scotland since 1989, and is common in other churches of Reformed character;

NOW THEREFORE the Southern Presbytery humbly overtures the Synod of Eastern Australia appointed to meet at Cardiff 7/5/07 to take these premises into consideration and to enact, using Barrier Act procedure, as follows:

"Synod decides that, in line with the law of the Free Church of Scotland since 1989, ministers inducted to charges or appointed to full time positions subsequent to the passing of this Act are obliged to retire by the 30th September following attainment of their 70th birthday.

Nothing in this Act precludes a man retired under this provision from such other service as may be appropriate to his personal circumstances, including as stated supply, nor the customary position of a minister being permitted to retire with the consent of Presbytery upon attaining 65 years, or earlier if adequate medical grounds are shown.

This Act may be cited as ACT CONCERNING RETIREMENT AGE OF MINISTERS."

OR to do otherwise for this object as Synod may deem best.

Correspondence Item 3

**Southern Presbytery
Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia**

Clerk: Rev Dr Rowland S. Ward, BA, BTh (Hons), ThD

*26 Roxburgh Road, Wantirna 3152
Tel/Fax: 9720 4871 Int + 613 9720 4871*

Email: rowlandw@optushome.com.au

28 Feb 2007.

Clerk,
Synod of Eastern Australia,
PO Box 579,
SPRINGWOOD 2777

At a duly constituted meeting of Southern Presbytery on 27th February 2007, inter alia,

11. Mr David Kerridge

Mr Kerridge's application dated 12 February 2007 to be recognised as a student was received. The Presbytery met in closed court to discuss the application.

The presbytery met in open court and resolved that the application lie on the table to be taken up at the meeting in Newcastle in May when it is expected Mr Kerridge will be present, and that the Presbytery, considering that Mr Kerridge will only reside in the bounds of this Presbytery from the time of his extended supply in Ulverstone beginning 14 March 2007, overture Synod for authority to admit Mr Kerridge to the status of a student for the ministry at such time as Presbytery judge fit. The Presbytery Clerk is to advise Mr Kerridge of its pleasure at receiving his application and assure him of our interest and prayers.

Extracted from the records of the Southern Presbytery

Rowland S. Ward
CLERK

OVERTURE RE DAVID KERRIDGE

Mr Kerridge's application dated 12 February 2007 to be recognised as a student was received. The Presbytery met in closed court to discuss the application.

The Presbytery met in open court and resolved that the application lie on the table to be taken up at the meeting in Newcastle in May when it is expected Mr Kerridge will be present, and that the Presbytery, considering that Mr Kerridge will only reside in the bounds of this Presbytery from the time of his extended supply in Ulverstone beginning 14 March 2007, overture Synod for authority to admit Mr Kerridge to the status of a student for the ministry at such time as Presbytery judge fit.

OR to do otherwise for this object as Synod may deem best.

Correspondence Item 4

**Southern Presbytery
Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia**

Clerk: Rev Dr Rowland S. Ward, BA, BTh (Hons), ThD

*26 Roxburgh Road, Wantirna 3152
Tel/Fax: 9720 4871 Int + 613 9720 4871*

Email: rowlandw@optushome.com.au

28 Feb 2007.

Clerk,
Synod of Eastern Australia,
PO Box 579,
SPRINGWOOD 2777

At a duly constituted meeting of Southern Presbytery on 27th February 2007, inter alia,

8. Overture to Synod re Hamilton

It was moved and seconded.

WHEREAS the Free Presbyterian Church Property Act 6 (11) regulates action in the matter of congregations that have been dissolved;

AND WHEREAS the bulk of the assets of the Hamilton congregation arise from the grant of land in Brown Street, Hamilton by the Victorian Government to the Congregation in 1869;

NOW THEREFORE the Southern Presbytery humbly overtures the Synod of Eastern Australia appointed to meet at Cardiff 10/5/07 to take these premises into consideration and

1. Confirm the action of the Presbytery in dissolving the Congregation
2. Accept the assurance that the Presbytery will do what they can to ensure the reasonable pastoral care of remaining members in the district, as also the possibility of renewed work in Hamilton in the foreseeable future.
3. Declare that \$400,000 of the assets of the Congregation, after the allocation of \$5,000 to the Presbytery to assist in the object in (2) above, be henceforth held in trust for the provision of manse and church facilities in Melbourne for the projected Glen-Huntly-Dandenong congregation in that city and that the balance added to the Church & Manse Fund of Southern Presbytery referred to in Synod Minute 06.025.

OR to do otherwise for this object as Synod may deem best.

The motion was carried, Mr Hamilton abstaining.

Dr Ward was appointed to state the overture.

The Overture is attached together with supporting minutes.

Extracted from the records of the Southern Presbytery

Rowland S. Ward
CLERK

OVERTURE TO SYNOD RE HAMILTON

WHEREAS the Free Presbyterian Church Property Act 6 (11) regulates action in the matter of congregations that have been dissolved;

AND WHEREAS the bulk of the assets of the Hamilton congregation arise from the grant of land in Brown Street, Hamilton by the Victorian Government to the Congregation in 1869;

NOW THEREFORE the Southern Presbytery humbly overtures the Synod of Eastern Australia appointed to meet at Cardiff 10/5/07 to take these premises into consideration and

4. Confirm the action of the Presbytery in dissolving the Congregation
5. Accept the assurance that the Presbytery will do what they can to ensure the reasonable pastoral care of remaining members in the district, as also the possibility of renewed work in Hamilton in the foreseeable future.
6. Declare that \$400,000 of the assets of the Congregation, after the allocation of \$5,000 to the Presbytery to assist in the object in (2) above, be henceforth held in trust for the provision of manse and church facilities in Melbourne for the projected Glen-Huntly-Dandenong congregation in that city and that the balance added to the Church & Manse Fund of Southern Presbytery referred to in Synod Minute 06.025.

OR to do otherwise for this object as Synod may deem best.

SUPPORTING EXTRACT MINUTES OF SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY 27/2/07:

6. Report re Hamilton

Dr Ward reported: A letter from the Interim-Moderator dated 15/12/06 had been circulated to church members after being passed by Messrs Ball and Smith. A supportive letter from Mr Pateman dated 11/1/07 was read and received by Presbytery. At the Congregational meeting at Hamilton 18/1/07 there was a full discussion and the following 9 resolutions unanimously agreed to. On only point #7 was their any real question. The last sentence in #7 was added by the meeting.

- “1. We recognise that in the providence of God there is no realistic possibility of developing the PCEA work in Hamilton into a viable pastoral charge at this time.
2. We recognise that we have good reason to believe that PCV ministry under Rev David Schulz will be Biblically based.
3. Even though regular public PCEA worship has ceased we desire to see a service at the Eventide Home on PCEA lines continue.
4. We accept the assurance of Southern Presbytery/Knox Session that every endeavour will be made to maintain the Eventide Home service, and to provide ministry for the bereaved.
5. Subject to the above we recognise that PCEA work in Hamilton should be reckoned as not that of a formal congregation but as a provision for the remaining members.
6. We desire for the time being to retain our membership with the PCEA Melbourne.
7. We recommend to Southern Presbytery that the assets of the Congregation be used to further the work of the PCEA within its bounds, so maximising the possibility of future work in Hamilton, however remote that possibility may now appear. But we also ask that consideration be given to retaining the funds as a trust for say 5 years to provide for possible reestablishment of the Hamilton Congregation.
8. We place on record our sincere and humble gratitude to Almighty God for initiating and sustaining the Hamilton Congregation for some 150 years. Eternity alone will reveal the good that has been done and the blessings channelled through the Congregation by the good hand of God dispensing his grace and the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.
9. We also record our thanks to the Interim-Moderator of the Hamilton Congregation for his diligence and hard work in maintaining regular services, as possible, since his appointment in 1992.”

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Dr Ward further reported that the four members not present were visited before the meeting. Two strongly favoured the presbytery, another (age 97) acquiesced without vocal opposition, the other (age 93) was perhaps not clear enough in mind to fully grasp the issues but also raised no objection. (Her son is former PCEA and Session Clerk of St Andrew's PCV.) Dr Ward also reported a most cordial meeting of himself and Mrs Ward with Rev David and Mrs Isabel Schultz, and the willingness of Mr Schultz to assist in the manner outlined. The report was received.

7. Winding up of Hamilton Congregation

It was resolved:

WHEREAS the Hamilton Congregation was reduced to a preaching station with effect 31/8/1992 with the hope of eventual progress to development status, but through age and other circumstances including lack of ministers, the work has not progressed but the reverse;

AND WHEREAS the seven members remaining are all but one of advanced years (three being in nursing facilities);

AND WHEREAS the members have expressed their mind concerning the future of the work at a duly constituted congregational meeting on 18/1/07 (and personally in respect of those not present at that meeting) and have acknowledged without dissent that the work can no longer be regarded as that of a formal congregation;

AND WHEREAS the Presbytery do not see the re-establishment of the Hamilton Congregation as a possibility within the next five years, nor, unless the Lord raises up a strong body of people, as the priority to which the resources of the Presbytery should be directed given the pressing demands of existing promising work, but does agree that the stronger the church is elsewhere in Victoria the more likely work might be re-established, though perhaps many years from now for the benefit of a future generation;

NOW THEREFORE the Southern Presbytery formally dissolve the Hamilton Congregation, giving thanks to God for the positive work of the Gospel accomplished over the past generations, and reaffirms that they will provide such reasonable pastoral care as may be possible to remaining members in the district.

Mr Hamilton lodged his dissent on the grounds (1) further consultation with the Congregation is desirable; (2) reservation on the reference to 'five years' in the fourth whereas clause.

These minutes extracted from the records of Southern Presbytery,

Rowland S. Ward
CLERK